

## Reviewer Guidelines – How to Conduct Your Review

[Go to <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/permj> and log in to your Reviewer Center. From there you can access your manuscript to review.]

The first step is to read the manuscript closely. Many reviewers find it useful to print out the article and make notes in the margins.

Reviews for *The Permanente Journal* have three sections:

- 1) Decision recommendation
- 2) Comments to the editor
- 3) Comments to the author

### 1) Decision recommendation

**Accept:** The manuscript cannot be substantially improved (discounting issues that would normally be addressed in copyedit) and deserves to be published in *The Permanente Journal*.

**Accept with Minor Revision:** If specific minor content changes were made, this manuscript would be ready for publication.

**Accept with Major Revision:** Substantial changes need to be made, and you believe the author can and will rewrite or rework the manuscript.

**Reject:** Even with major revisions this paper would not be fit for publication in *The Permanente Journal*.

### 2) Comments to the editor

This section is not required. Use it to briefly relay to the editor your thoughts about the paper and your reasons behind your decision recommendation that you do *not* want to share with the author. Be concise and clear, and be open with the editor if there were aspects of the paper that were

beyond your expertise or if you consulted with other experts or colleagues. This section should also be used if you suspect any ethical or plagiarism issues.

### 3) Comments to the author

This section is required to complete your review. There is no required format for your comments, but we ask that you consider the following elements:

**- Is the paper relevant?** Does the research matter to readers? Will it help readers improve their practice of medicine? Is it a good fit for *The Permanente Journal*, a general medical journal?

**- Is the paper original?** How much does the work add to already existing research and published literature? Please cite references if possible to support your comments here.

**- Is the paper valid?** Do the research results progress clearly and logically from the methods? Do the conclusions progress clearly and justifiably from the results? Is the question the authors were asking answered?

**- Is it a quality paper?** Is the research sound? Did the author conduct the study properly? Is the information presented clearly? Grammatical and syntax errors can be ignored since they will be addressed if/when the paper reaches the copyediting phase.

Moving beyond these general questions, specific comments should be focused on issues important to either improving and clarifying the manuscript or supporting your more general assessment of the paper. We are looking for concise and

substantiated comments on both the weaknesses and the strengths of the paper. Criticisms should be supported by examples from the text and phrased constructively—this is your chance to help another researcher and writer improve. Please elucidate on areas for improvement, even if you are recommending that we reject the manuscript. Please also make very clear the line or paragraph you are referencing.

### **Structural Guide for Papers**

Below is a structural guide for reviewing manuscripts. Different types of papers (ie, Clinical Medicine, Review Articles, Commentary, etc) can differ in content and structure, but most articles will be comprised of the elements below.

*Title:* Titles have a major impact on whether or not readers will delve into an article. The title should be concise and true to the content of the paper. Please make title recommendations if you believe there is cause.

*Abstract:* An abstract is required for almost every type of paper. Some questions to ask here are: Is the abstract well constructed? Does there need to be one? Does it convey adequate and appropriate information?

*Body:* This is the bulk of an article, where methods, results, and conclusions are discussed. Is the research sound? Is the content appropriate to the thesis and subject? Are the results clear?

*Supplemental Materials:* Are the tables and figures pertinent, clear, and supportive? Is the information in a table already presented in the text, therefore making the table redundant? Are tables and figures cited in the text

appropriately? Is there information in the paper that would be best displayed as a table? If tables and figures are not included in the review materials (and they are mentioned in the text), please contact Katy Drawhorn in the Editorial Office immediately  
katy.x.drawhorn@kp.org; (503) 813-3286

*References:* Almost every type of paper requires references. Are they up to date and relevant? Are there any glaring omissions? Are you aware of important studies that have been overlooked? If so, please list them.

*Length:* If a manuscript seems too long, please comment and elaborate on why (ie, tangential discussion, repetition, excessive speculation).

### **Reviewing a Revision**

If, when completing your review of a manuscript, you agree to review the revision of that manuscript, it will be assigned to you when the authors submit their revision.

The process for accessing the revised manuscript and review materials is identical to first drafts—either click the link in the invitation email or log into your account on our site and select the appropriate manuscript in your Reviewer Center.

The author's response to *all* reviewer comments on the first draft can be seen by clicking the blue "Author Response" button in the upper right corner of the manuscript review page.

The review process is also the same. We ask that reviewers make sure to comment upon the changes the author has made based upon their suggestions.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As an expert reviewer for a peer-reviewed medical journal, it is your responsibility to report to the Editor or Editorial Office if you suspect or discover *any* duplicate submission, plagiarism, or fabrication while reviewing the manuscript.

Here is a very useful link to ethical guidelines for reviewers from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE): <http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines>.

The *AMA Manual of Style* also states, “[Reviewers] who review manuscripts that are similar to their own unpublished work may be especially at risk for charges of plagiarism. Reviewers who foresee such a potential conflict of interest should consider returning the manuscript to the

editor without reviewing it” (*AMA Manual of Style 10th edition*, 5.4.2).

As a reviewer you have access to privileged information and data that may have an impact on authors’ careers or may be copyrighted. It is your ethical duty to keep information about a manuscript confidential (AMA 5.7.1)—maintaining the integrity of the peer review process is of utmost importance to the growth of medical and scientific knowledge. We also ask that you delete all information and files relating to the manuscript you are reviewing once your review has been submitted.

**If you have any questions or concerns about our process, please do not hesitate to contact the Editorial Office at (503) 813-3286 or [permanente.journal@kp.org](mailto:permanente.journal@kp.org).**