

PEER REVIEW POLICY

The Journal of Rehman Medical Institute (J Rehman Med Inst.; JRMI) adheres to the principles and policies determining global best practices in medical journalism, of which by far a good example is Peer Review. The worth of a scholarly work can only be professionally assessed by its peer group, and wisdom dictates that editors avail the services of subject experts, seasoned researchers, statisticians, and bibliographers before accepting or rejecting a scientific manuscript sent for publication to a journal. Guidelines of the Committee for Publication Ethics (COPE; publicationethics.org) and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE.org) are the prime consideration for JRMI Peer Review Policy.

The advent of online publishing platforms like OJS has made it convenient for editors to perform peer review expeditiously and transparently; it also assures authors that their work is being given due importance and the final product has high chances of being internationally acceptable as a standard publication.

JRMI follows the online peer review process for submitted manuscripts. An initial scrutiny is made by the editorial team as to the suitability of the manuscript for JRMI, and for possible major omissions in the manuscript format; in case these issues exist, the manuscript is declined at the outset or sent to the author for correction and resubmission. If acceptable, manuscripts are sent to two or more relevant reviewers in double blinded form, so that associated biases can be avoided. It also assures authors that their work was not subjected to any personal opinions or subjective biases, but was reviewed based on accepted review criteria. A standardized checklist is sent to reviewers so that important items are not missed and a thorough review is conducted; reviewers are also allowed to submit their reviews based on their own criteria, as long as these are according to standard practices. Tracking systems in MS Word documents are extremely helpful for editors to view the review process, suggestions, comments, and decisions made by the reviewer; reviewers are therefore encouraged to upload their reviewed copy in which they undertook the tracking process, in addition to the standard reviewer checklist.

The normal review time given to a reviewer is two weeks, followed by a reminder and/or contact by other means, if needed. However, if a reviewer has not responded by four weeks (or earlier), an alternate reviewer is chosen.

Reviewers' decisions are carefully considered by the editorial team, and the ones pertinent to the author in terms of revisions, errors, or rejection, are conveyed to them. Adequate time is given to authors to address these issues and/or appeal against them. The final decision to publish or not is determined as a mutual decision between the authors and the editors. In case the manuscript is to be published, a final, formatted version is sent to the corresponding author for acceptance or final revisions before publication. Journal editors reserve the right to modify manuscript in line with current accepted format, guidelines, or practices, and will inform the authors why the changes were made.

Peer review statistics can be made available upon request.