

## **PEER REVIEWING INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACTA MEDICA MEDITERRANEA**

### **Introduction**

The primary aims of peer review are to decide whether or not an article should be published (based on quality and relevance to the journal), and to improve the article before publication. All submissions first go through an internal peer review process: an assigned editor makes an initial decision to accept or to reject the manuscript (e.g. topic is outside the scope of the Journal, important flaws in scientific validity, etc). If the editor believes the article may be of interest, it is sent out for external peer review. The reviewers are selected by area of expertise (reviewers who grant high quality reviews within the requested time are preferred). The editorial board is frequently consulted. Once reviews are obtained, the editor makes a judgment considering the critiques and recommendations from reviewers, and other factors such as relevance to the Journal's aims and usefulness to clinicians or researchers.

### **Peer Reviewer Selection**

Reviewers are selected according to their background and experience in some aspect of the subject. The most desirable reviewers identify the strengths and weaknesses of the submitted paper, and analyze it from different viewpoints. The peer reviewers are asked to read and analyze the assigned manuscript and provide a written opinion of its quality, novelty, relevance and suitability for publication in Acta Medica Mediterranea. Peer reviewers also make suggestions to assist the authors in improving the article. Reviewers must not only analyze and comment on the paper, but also provide opinions about general concerns such as clarity and quality of the writing, validity of scientific approach, and whether the article provides new information.

### **Ethical Guidelines for Journal Peer Reviewers**

When a selected individual accepts a peer reviewing assignment, the reviewer implicitly agrees to the ethical standards that are commonly accepted in biomedical publishing. Ethical guidelines for reviewers, authors, and editors are reported by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors in the 'Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals' available from: [www.icmje.org](http://www.icmje.org).

Reviewers for Acta Medica Mediterranea must agree to:

- Produce as careful and objective a review as possible
- Respect the editor's deadline.
- Consider with an open mind innovations or approaches different from those of one's own.
- Provide a balanced critique targeted not only to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the paper, but also to provide useful feedback to the authors to improve their manuscript, without being overly critical of minor points.
- Avoid scientific misconduct such as the misappropriation of intellectual property. Each manuscript should be treated as an extremely confidential document. The privacy of the authors' ideas must always be guaranteed.
- Direct comments about ethical concerns confidentially to the editors. Contacting an author with questions about the manuscript is not allowed. All critiques, including the latter, must be reported in the written critique.
- Declare any conflict of interest (real or perceived) identified to the editor before the end of review. Not every potential conflict necessitates a rejection. Reviewers are encouraged to discuss potential conflicts with the editors if they believe they can provide a fair review.

- Reject an assignment if the following conflicts are present: Financial interests (e.g. paid consultancies, stock holdings), significant professional or personal relationships or rivalries, antipathy toward study question/approach, political or special interest affiliations (e.g. religious or deep convictions that conflict with the manuscript topic).

### **Reviewer Guidelines**

Potential reviewers are contacted by E-mail, which contains the manuscript title, abstract, and assignment deadline. The selected reviewer accepts or declines the assignment within 7 days. Failure to reply within the prescribed time will be treated as an implicit rejection. It is acceptable to propose an extended deadline when the given deadline (usually 4 weeks from the task acceptance date) cannot be met. The selected reviewers usually have extensive experience as faculty members, researchers, and published authors. Sometimes reviewers from other specific areas are selected. This selection is always well thought-out, and we encourage such potential reviewers to consider the assignment if they can make a contribution to some aspect of the work. The following points must be provided by the reviewers in the written response:

- *General Overview*
- *Organized Critique*
- *Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses*: the following should be evaluated: Literature review is up-to-date; Methods align with study purpose or research questions; Methods described in sufficient and appropriate detail; Research design or study approach is adequate; Approach to data analysis is appropriate; Thoughtful consideration given to the study limitations; Manuscript provides new information that is likely to be of interest to our readers.
- *Possible improvements*
- *Commonly Overlooked Areas*: Reviewers should carefully note: title, abstract, tables and figures, references.

### **Editor's Final Decision**

After the peer review process has ended and an adequate number of reviews has been received, the assigned editor makes the final decision about the manuscript (accept, invite a revision, or reject) based on a consideration of all the reviewer comments, general critique, and other external factors (e.g. the article is consistent with the Journal purpose, similar articles recently published, number of accepted articles awaiting publication, potential impact of the article, etc.). Editors may consult with each other when making the decision. A decision summarizing the opinions of editors and reviewers will be sent to the corresponding author.