

Guidelines for peer reviewers

The peer-review process of *IJME* follows the principles and procedures laid out by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE - <https://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines-new/cope-ethical-guidelines-peer-reviewers>). These guidelines set out the basic principle which all peer reviewers should adhere to before accepting a review request, during and after the peer-review process. We request reviewers to go through these guidelines carefully before accepting an invitation to review.

Role of peer review and peer reviewers

Peer review and peer reviewers play a key role in ensuring integrity in scholarly publishing. Peer review involves trust, and requires all those involved in the review process to perform their duties responsibly and ethically.

Reviewers are primarily expected to assess if the methods employed are valid, the data clearly presented and the conclusions supported by data, and whether the discussion is linked with the central theme of the submission. Editing grammar and syntax is not a part of their brief, though they should mention deficiencies in language.

It is helpful to editors if reviewers number their comments, clearly state which points are critical for revision and which are minor, and suggest how authors may deal with the concerns raised. The reviewer's recommendations should be consistent with their comments.

Basic principles of ethical peer review

According to COPE, peer reviewers should:

- only agree to review manuscripts for which they have the requisite subject expertise and which they can assess in a timely manner
- respect the confidentiality of peer review and not reveal any details of a manuscript or its review, during or after the peer-review process, beyond those that are released by the journal
- not use information obtained during the peer-review process for their own or any other person's or organisation's advantage, or to disadvantage or discredit others
- declare all potential conflicting interests, seeking advice from the journal if they are unsure whether something constitutes a relevant interest.

IJME review system

As a policy the *IJME* support the review disclosure system where the names and details of the authors, reviewers and review reports are disclosed in public domain. But due to current contextual constraints in the country, the *IJME* has been using the "single blinded" review system, where the names and other details of authors are disclosed to reviewers, but the name and other details of reviewers are not disclosed to authors and to readers.

In order to make transition to the review disclosure system, the *IJME* encourages and provides option to the reviewers to provide permission to the *IJME* to disclose their names and other details along with the publication of the manuscripts reviewed by them.

Review form

We expect reviewers to use our review format. We encourage reviewers to interact with the editors and editorial office if they have questions or need clarifications while carrying out the review.

Appreciation and acknowledgement of peer reviewers' contribution

We appreciate the important contribution of peer reviewers to maintaining standards in scholarly publication. The *IJME* publishes the names of peer reviewers in its print and online issues once a year.

Editors' responsibility to ensure ethical peer review Editors are responsible for ensuring compliance with the principles of ethical peer review. Editors are also mandated to respond to and take action in cases of violation of the ethical principles of peer review. Reviewers will be informed of the editor's decision regarding the publication of a manuscript they have reviewed.

REVIEW FORMAT

Manuscript evaluation guidelines:

Title:

Relevance of the paper

Is it topical?

Will it influence practice or policy?

Originality

Does the paper provide:

 New information?

 A fresh perspective on analysis or arguments?

Conclusions

Is the interpretation warranted, unwarranted, well developed?

Does the article contain loose generalisations?

Are there any important omissions?

Other comments

Recommendations

Accept as is

Accept with modifications (specify substance/style)

Separate comments for the author, if any: