

GUIDELINE FOR PEER REVIEW PROCESS of HIR

GOALS OF PEER REVIEW

Peer review is an important part of the quality control mechanism that is used to determine what is published, and what is not. The peer review process acts as a filter for interest and relevance to the field being targeted by HIR. The general purposes of peer review are the following:

1. To help select quality articles for publication (filter out studies that have been poorly conceived, designed, and executed) with the selection being based upon:
 - The scientific merit and validity of the article and its methodology
 - The relevance of the article to the greatest interest to the readership
 - The presentation and understandability of the article itself
2. To improve the quality and readability of the manuscript
3. To check against malfeasance within the scientific community
4. To provide editors with evidence to make judgments as to whether articles meet the selection criteria for their particular publication

HIR PEER REVIEW PROCESS

HIR's peer review process is depicted in Figure 1, and the process is described below.

1. Phase 1: Manuscript Submission
 - 1) Once an author submits a manuscript through the online submission system, it is automatically logged and checked to ensure that the submission is complete. At this time, a receipt of manuscript acknowledgement is sent to the author, Editor-in-Chief (EIC), and the HIR office staff.

2) Upon receiving the manuscript, the HIR office staff assesses its suitability for HIR according to the “instructions to authors” and “checklist for authors” determined by the editorial policy. The staff also checks for plagiarism by running Crosscheck, and the author is asked to revise the manuscript if the similarity rate is too high. Based on those initial checks, the staff can return the manuscript to the author and ask the author to make corrections and resubmit the corrected manuscript to the online system.

2. Phase 2: Review of the Manuscript

- 1) Preliminary review: The EIC assigns the manuscript to a handling editor once the manuscript is assessed. The EIC or the handling editor briefly reviews the manuscript and determines whether it meets the following requirements of the HIR editorial policy: (1) The content falls within the scope of the journal, (2) The manuscript follows editorial policy and procedural instructions, and (3) The content does not contain an unacceptable level of overlap with manuscripts that are already in press. A manuscript can be rejected without additional review for one or more of the previous reasons, in which case the author would be notified.
- 2) First review: If a manuscript passes the editorial pre-review, the handling editor sends it out to three reviewers for peer review via the online system.
 - Reviewers should reply within seven days stating whether they will accept or decline the request to participate in the peer review. If a reply is delayed, the handling editor can assign the manuscript to a new reviewer.
 - The reviewers return their recommendations and reports in English to the editor via the online system within 14 days. The decision by each reviewer fall into one of the following four choices: (1) Accepted, (2) Accepted after

minor revisions, (3) Major revisions needed for resubmission, or (4) Rejected.

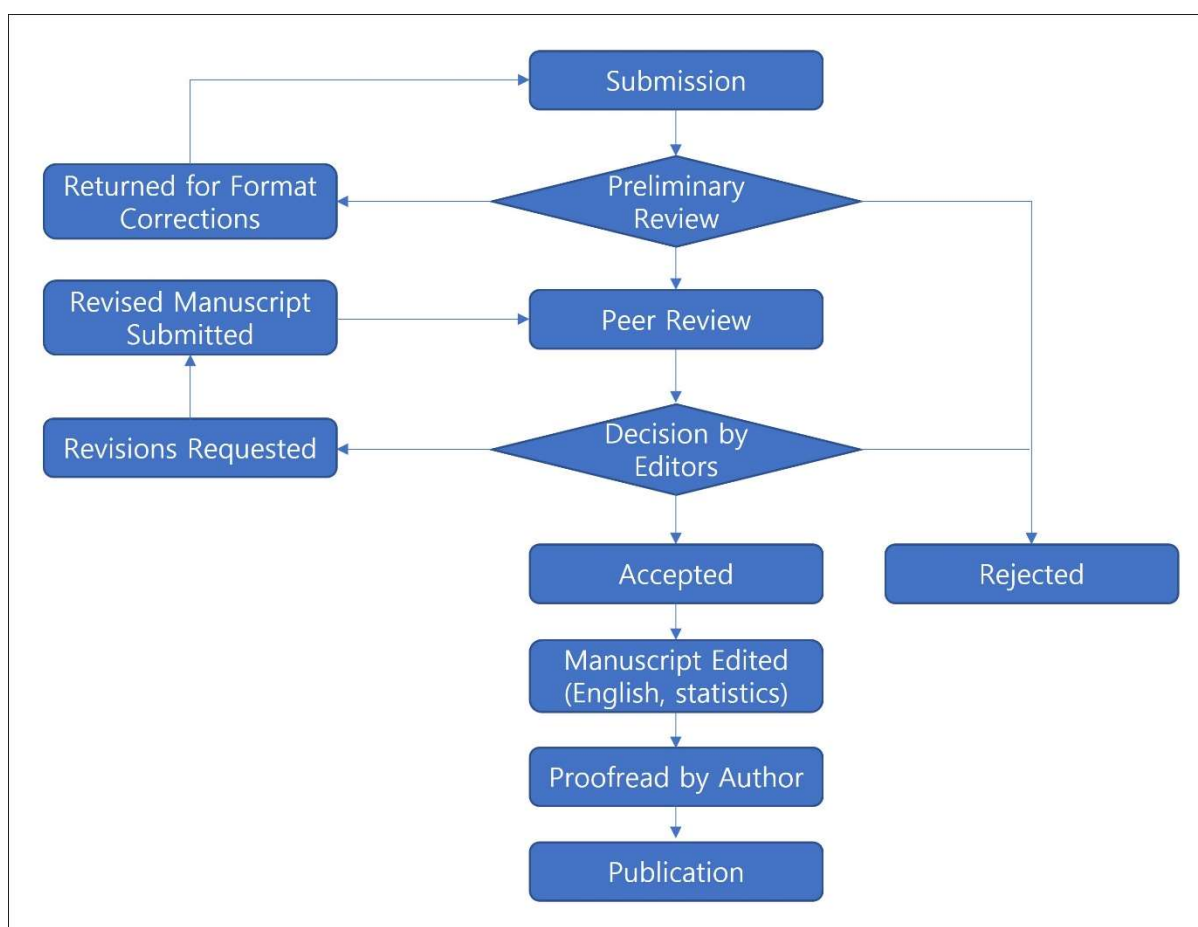
- 3) Initial decision: The handling editor considers all reviews before making an overall decision on whether to accept or reject the manuscript or withhold judgment pending major or minor revisions.
 - If the reviewer recommendations diverge widely, the handling editor may act as a referee or invite a fourth reviewer to evaluate the manuscript before making a decision.
- 4) First notice: The EIC's decision is sent to the author via e-mail with any relevant reviewer comments.
- 5) Revision(s): For manuscripts pending revisions, the authors must submit a revised manuscript with responses to the reviewers' comments within 21 days (up to three revisions allowed).
- 6) Subsequent review(s): The handling editor sends the revised manuscript to at least one reviewer to check whether it has been revised satisfactorily based on the reviewer comments and recommendations.
 - If only minor changes to content are recommended, the handling editor may choose to conduct the final review without involving peer reviewers.
- 7) Final notice: Based on the handling editor's decision, the EIC makes a final decision and sends an e-mail to the author.

All peer review process is double-blinded, and the information of authors and reviewers is not disclosed.

3. Phase 3: Production for Publication

- 1) When the manuscript is accepted, it is put into the production process to be prepared for publication.
- 2) The timing of the publication will be decided at an Editorial Board meeting.

Figure 1. Peer Review Process of Manuscript in HIR.



CHECKLIST OF PEER REVIEW

During the review, the peer reviewers should notify HIR immediately if they discover a conflict of interest that was not clear when they agreed to the review. Also, when the peer reviewers read the manuscript, they should be well aware of the *Guideline for Peer Review Process*, *Code of Ethics*, and *Instructions to Authors* of HIR as references for their review.

The peer reviewers should make sure that they make specific useful comments on the writing, organization, methods, and interpretation of the results and provide a constructive review to authors.

Note that the following lists with triggering questions to guide reviewers should be best utilized when the peer reviewers review papers, especially under the category of Original article.

List of Check Points for Peer Review (long version)

FOR ALL ARTICLES
Is the topic appropriate for HIR?
Will it help HIR readers to make better decisions? If so, how?
Will the article add enough to existing knowledge?
Does the article read well and make sense? Does it have a clear message?
FOR ORIGINAL ARTICLES
Originality — does the work add enough to what is already in the published literature? If so, what does it add? Please cite relevant references to support your comments on originality.
Importance of the work to HIR — does this work matter to clinicians, researchers, policymakers, educators, or patients? Will it help our readers to make better decisions? If so, how? Is a general medical journal the right place for it?
Scientific reliability
Research question — Is it clearly defined and appropriately answered?
Overall design of study — Is it appropriate and adequate to answer the research question?
Participants — Are they adequately described, are their conditions defined, and are inclusion and exclusion criteria described? How representative were they of patients whom this evidence might affect?
Methods — Are they adequately described? Is the main outcome measure clear? Is the study fully reported in line with the appropriate reporting statement or checklist (these are all collected and regularly updated at http://www.equator-network.org/)? Was the study ethical (this may go beyond simply whether the study was approved by an ethics committee or IRB)?

Results — Do they answer the research question? Are they credible and well presented?
Interpretation and conclusions — Are they warranted by and sufficiently derived from/focused on the data? Are they discussed in the light of previous evidence? Is the message clear?
References — Are they up to date and relevant? Are there any glaring omissions?
Abstract/summary/key messages/what this paper adds — Do they accurately reflect what the paper says?
Documents in the supplemental files: e.g., checklists for reporting statements-- CONSORT, PRISMA, and STROBE (see http://www.equator-network.org for other examples and for extensions to existing statements); and the protocol for an RCT. Do these properly match what is in the manuscript? Do they contain information that should be better reported in the manuscript or raise questions about the work?

List of Check Points for Peer Review (short version)

Is the topic appropriate for the HIR?
Will it help HIR readers to make better decisions? If so, how?
Will the manuscript add enough to existing knowledge?
Does the manuscript read well and make sense? Does it have a clear message?
Does the manuscript discuss the originality of the study?
Does the manuscript describe scientifically rigorous methods (e.g., study design, data collection, and data analysis)?
Does the manuscript draw interpretation and conclusions appropriately — Are they warranted by and sufficiently derived from/focused on the data?

REFERENCES

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