

Guide to Writing a Review for the Journal of Clinical Neurophysiology

Peer reviews from experts are necessary to judge the scientific and clinical merits of a manuscript being considered for publication. The editor(s) rely heavily on these reviews to help them adjudicate the manuscript. The information below is designed to help reviewers provide the most useful information to the editor(s).

When reviewing a manuscript, remember that the Journal of Clinical Neurophysiology (JCN) focuses on all aspects of clinical neurophysiology. As you review the manuscript, judge not only the scientific and clinical merits, but also the language used. There are a few basic questions that you should consider as you read the paper.

Introduction/Rationale: Is the study question one that is scientifically and clinically relevant? Does the introduction set up the question(s) clearly and provide rationale about why it is important to address?

Methodology: Is the methodology appropriate to answer the question(s) asked? Are there biases that have not been considered? Has the study been approved by an appropriate ethics board if necessary?

Results: Are the results presented in a clear, understandable way, and do they answer the question(s) asked? Are there an appropriate number of figures and tables to explain the results? Is there redundant information presented?

Discussion: Is the importance and significance of the results discussed in the appropriate scientific/clinical context? Is prior work in this field discussed? Are the limitations appropriately addressed? Are the references appropriate?

Are there any other relevant comments, such as about language or readability that the editor(s) should know about?

Once you have formulated your thoughts about the manuscript, you will be asked to complete the JCN manuscript review form in Editorial Manager. This form has two main sections, *Comments for the Editor* and *Comments for the Authors*.

The *Comments for the Editor* section has queries about the scientific and clinical interest, language and length of the paper. Additionally, appropriateness of the references, tables and figures should be noted, including the quality of the figures. Please also provide a priority score for the manuscript, i.e. is it in the top 10% of manuscripts, top 25%, top 50% or bottom 50%. Confidential comments to the editor can also be provided. These should include comments that you do not want to send to the authors but feel are important for the editor to know. Inappropriate use of English or significant ethical concerns can be noted here if appropriate.

The *Comments for the Authors* section is designed to provide feedback to the authors to help them make the manuscript better. Under some circumstances, these suggestions may help make the manuscript suitable (or better) for acceptance for publication. It is very important to not identify yourself in this section, as this is a blinded peer review. Identifying statements may be “when I published my results on this topic in JCN in 2012, I found that...”. Additionally, please refrain from recommending acceptance or rejection in this section. The authors should not be able to explicitly determine your final recommendation after reading your comments.

When providing comments to authors, it is best to start with a 1-2 sentence summary of the paper. Thereafter your major concerns should be listed. This can be followed by minor concerns. Alternatively, you can list concerns based on Introduction, Methods, Results, or Discussion sections. A point-by-point list of your concerns will make it easier for the authors to revise their manuscripts based on your comments.

The final part of the review will be selecting your recommendation for the paper: Accept, Accept with Revisions, Revise and Re-Review, or Reject. “Accept” should be used if you feel there is absolutely nothing in the paper that needs to be corrected. It is unusual for a paper to get “Accept” after first review. “Accept with Revisions” should be used if the paper needs only very minor changes, and you don't think you need to review it again before it is accepted. “Revise and Re-Review” should be used if the paper has potential for publication but requires significant revision. The changes, if made by the authors, will need to be reviewed by the reviewer (you). “Reject” should be used if the paper is unlikely to be acceptable for publication even after substantial revisions.

Please remember that one of the main reasons for peer review is to help our fellow researchers improve their manuscripts. Peer review is time consuming, and I am grateful for your contribution. As I am sure you know, all of us benefit from peer reviews when we submit manuscripts. Feel free to contact me with questions.

Additional information about article reviews can be obtained from these helpful sites:
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