

Reviewer Guide

The following guidelines have been adapted from a previously published editorial written by Alfred Bent, MD. (*Female Pelvic Med Reconstr Surg* 2010;16:77–78)

How to Review a Manuscript

1. Read the manuscript and get a feel for it. Focus initially on the question the research intends to answer or any perspective the authors intend to present. Begin identifying strengths and weaknesses.
2. Do a literature search to enhance your understanding of the topic. Doing so offers several advantages to you, the editors, and the potential readers.
3. Do a literature search on all the authors to see if the article has been published in any other form. If so, this should be communicated to the editor.
4. Read the introduction to see if it develops a rationale for the study. Pertinent background information should be presented while avoiding a complete review. The specific aims of the study should be stated clearly.
5. Evaluate the methods section for potential bias. Is the statistical analysis appropriate?
6. Critically review the results, paying attention to any tables. Verify that numbers and percentages add up correctly. Can the presentation of results be simplified and/or clarified? Results with no statistically significant difference should have a power calculation.
7. Review the discussion: Pay close attention to whether the results logically support the conclusions. Alert the editor to instances where conclusions are overstated or are not supported by the results presented. Evaluate instances where statistical analysis did not reach significance or where hypothesis testing failed.
8. Carefully review the abstract. Are the study aims stated clearly? Are the research design and analysis described adequately? Are the results representative of those presented in the results section? Are the conclusions supported by the results? Keep in mind that many readers read only the abstract.

Submitting a Report

1. Grade the manuscript according to the editor's criteria. This puts the manuscript in perspective. Even if the study is perfectly designed and executed and the manuscript written clearly and concisely, it may not be appropriate for the journal.
2. Write comments to the editor: Begin with a sentence describing the type of study presented and its specific aims. Address previous publications of the same material. Address the importance of the research to both the journal and the field. Briefly summarize the study design, interpretation, and scientific merit of the study. Conclude with a statement regarding your recommendation for the manuscript.

3. Write comments to the author: Consider copying your comments to the editor first. Then edit these comments to provide more detail, including specific areas where the manuscript and/or research can be enhanced. Avoid outright criticism. Assisting authors with the improvement of their manuscript is an important, though indirect effect of the peer review process.
4. List specific points: Refer to the original manuscript and list each area of concern. Avoid listing grammatical errors unless they interfere with the reader's understanding of the manuscript.
5. Save the manuscript and your review for future reference.

The ideal reviewer will:

1. Decline or accept review request quickly.
2. If unable to review, suggest alternate reviewer.
3. Follow guideline for "How to review a manuscript."
4. Complete an accurate and thorough review promptly.