

## How to Become a Peer Reviewer for MCN

MCN is always interested in hearing from qualified peer reviewers who want to read and critique submitted manuscripts for our journal. If you are a loyal reader of MCN and other nursing literature, and you are currently practicing in one of the maternal child nursing specialties (perinatal, neonatal, midwifery, pediatrics), I'd like to suggest you could contribute to the journal in an important way by applying to become a peer reviewer for the journal. I'm not sure that nurses who are clinically-based understand the role of the peer reviewer, or realize that they could contribute in this way, so I'll explain. Every manuscript submitted to MCN is read by me and then, if the manuscript is appropriate for MCN, is then sent to several nurse experts to read and review. Currently there are 105 nurses in my peer review panel, and I could use more! The peer reviewers for each manuscript are chosen on the basis of their areas of expertise, and their ability and willingness to read a manuscript critically and submit a review to me within one month. When a nurse first starts as a peer reviewer, I send a packet of instructions, and then send at least one "test" review to help get started. Then, if he/she does well, and I agree, his/her name is added to the panel (the full panel of reviewers' names are printed in MCN in each January/February issue and are on MCN's website).

If you are interested in adding this new role to your nursing career, this is what you should do:

- Contact me at [krsimpson@prodigy.net](mailto:krsimpson@prodigy.net) and let me know of your interest
- Send me your CV via email
- Tell me if you have reviewed for other journals and published articles in the literature. I prefer it if you have experience reviewing and/or publishing, but I accept nurses who have neither of those qualifications if they truly have the desire to do reviews (nurses without previous experience receive feedback from me to help them do complete and helpful reviews).

Peer review is meant to assist an author to make a manuscript the best it can be. To that end, clinical articles are sent to clinical nurse reviewers, and research articles are sent to nursing research experts. No one is ever asked to review an article on a topic about which they have no experience. The reviewer needs to be a person who is familiar with the literature, and can point an author in the right direction if they have left out an essential reference. The reviewer is especially important in identifying areas where the author needs more clarity in their manuscript, or more description. It is extremely rare that a manuscript cannot be improved in some way, and the people responsible for improving it are the peer reviewers and the editor.

What would you get out of reviewing? It's a challenge and a thrill to add new expertise to your experience as a nurse. Reviewing for a journal automatically marks you as a nurse who is knowledgeable and savvy about the literature. When you receive a manuscript, and review it, you have a renewed feeling of being a part of the knowledge base of nursing, and making an important contribution to the larger nursing audience. You also have the opportunity to read things that are on the cutting edge of our profession; things you might not ever have read if not for reviewing. Reviewing challenges your mind, causes you to think in new ways about issues in nursing, and even inspires you to browse through similar literature to determine if this manuscript is different or important. This is knowledge work, and most reviewers I know feel fulfilled and revitalized through doing it. At MCN, most reviewers receive one manuscript every

two months or so, depending on their stated areas of expertise and the types of submissions we receive. Rarely is it overwhelming, although it is another responsibility that must be fulfilled once you agree to do so.

I urge those of you who love nursing and nursing knowledge to contact me if you'd like to be a volunteer peer reviewer. I'll be happy to have a conversation with you about it, and to help you with some trial reviews if you care to. It's essential that we all keep our knowledge growing, and that we challenge ourselves. How about contributing to MCN as a peer reviewer as your next challenge?

Editor-in-Chief

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