

# The Editors' guide for peer review of papers submitted to *Endoscopy*

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## Bibliography

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## What do editors expect from reviewers?

Peer review is fundamental to the academic process and a journal's success depends to a large extent on the quality of its reviewers. *Endoscopy* is one of the leading journals worldwide in gastroenterology and endoscopy and our reviewers contribute significantly to that status.

A reviewer will:

- ▶ help the journal's editors, as an expert in the field, to *evaluate the originality* of the paper (the results have not been previously published, and of course that there is no plagiarism).
- ▶ *identify any flaws* in the paper (scientific and presentational) and point out what has been done better than in other cases/studies.
- ▶ *give constructive feedback to authors*, with suggestions for improvement.
- ▶ *comment objectively and fairly*. Reviewers need to bear in mind that their own expert interest in the field might influence their attitude. They must also clarify any potential conflict of interest and declare this to the editors.
- ▶ *send a timely response*. Timely peer review is very important for authors (and a key ingredient of a journal's success). Whatever the reviewer's recommendation, authors appreciate a reasonably quick response even if it is negative.
- ▶ *be aware that the paper under review is confidential*: the data and findings are the exclusive property of the authors and should not be disclosed to others.

Every year during EUG Week, prizes will be given to *Endoscopy's* top-rated reviewers. All reviews are rated by the editors according to the following criteria:

- ▶ completeness of the review and accuracy of assessment of the strengths and limitations of the manuscript
- ▶ constructiveness of comments
- ▶ timeliness

The aim of the present guide is to describe what the editors believe should be reported in a peer review for *Endoscopy*. It outlines what should be included in a confidential report to the editors on the one hand, and on the other it gives a structure for the comments to the authors. The points are summarized in a checklist in the peer review template (below). This template is also sent to reviewers when they agree to review a paper.

## What should be addressed in a peer review?

- All reviews must address the manuscript's scientific content, and also the clarity of presentation, before acceptance or rejection is considered. The peer review primarily asks and answers the following questions (these are also in the checklist):
- ▶ Is the research question original?
  - ▶ Are the research methods, including statistics, valid and sound?
  - ▶ Are the results and the discussion valid?
  - ▶ Is there appropriate awareness of related work?
  - ▶ Are conclusions from the work drawn accurately?
  - ▶ Are the findings clearly discussed and communicated?

These questions relate to the originality of the research and the relevance of the results. They also address the adequacy of the research methods and procedures and the soundness of the literature review.

The research question and the methods cannot be improved by revising the manuscript and there-

\* on behalf of the Editors of *Endoscopy*

fore it is most important to identify any weaknesses in this area. Evaluation of statistical methods and the clarity of presentation of results should also be considered. If appropriate, consider whether the sample size studied is correct. Good reviewers undertake a literature review to ensure that relevant articles have been cited and that there are no prior or related publications by the authors that might constitute duplicate or redundant publication.

The peer review also addresses questions of relevance and presentation:

- ▶ Is the work of interest to most of our readership?
- ▶ Is the reasoning in the paper logical and understandable?
- ▶ Is the abstract adequately structured and does it describe the results accurately?
- ▶ Are the tables and figures simple, clear, and self-explanatory?

Reviewers should comment on the presentation and clarity of the message. The review should show whether the presented work is understandable and is of interest to our readers.

### Uploading your review to ScholarOne

#### “Recommendation” field

When submitting your review, you must select one of the following recommendations:

- ▶ Accept: the paper may be accepted as it is
- ▶ Minor revision: the paper may be accepted after minor revision
- ▶ Major revision: the paper may be accepted after major revision
- ▶ Reject: the paper should be rejected with no opportunity to resubmit
- ▶ Reject – resubmit: the paper should be rejected, but if significant improvement is made it may be resubmitted as a new paper, although with no guarantee of acceptance.

#### “Confidential comments to Editors” field

When you are invited to a review a paper you will also receive the template mentioned above that you can use to help with writing your review.

Your confidential comments to the editors should state your recommendation, and justify it on the basis of the originality and relevance of the manuscript and the validity of the methods and procedures. If the manuscript has flaws that may preclude its acceptance, please summarize them starting with the major ones, followed by the minor comments. Please take into account that *Endoscopy* accepts only high quality research. You should also state whether essential revisions of the statistical analysis and/or presentation of results have been requested. In addition, please comment on the soundness of the discussion and please indicate if key references to articles in *Endoscopy* or other journals are missing.

You might also consider and comment on other issues:

- ▶ ranking of the manuscript relative to others that you know of in the field
- ▶ readability
- ▶ ethical concerns (e.g. plagiarism)
- ▶ need for an accompanying editorial

#### “Comments to Authors” field

The peer review template has the following recommended structure for the part of the review that is to be sent to authors:

- ▶ First, *summarize the manuscript*. This is important because it makes your perception of the paper clear to the authors and editors. Please DO NOT include your recommendation regarding publication.
- ▶ Secondly, either give *major reasons for rejection* or report any *major essential revisions* that authors must address in case revision is recommended. Such issues concern, for example:
  - ▶ Inadequacy of background information presented by the authors (this would raise issues of originality and/or relevance)
  - ▶ Bias, for example relating to selection, measurement, blinding, and absence or inadequacy of power calculation
  - ▶ Inadequate or incomplete description of methods and procedures
  - ▶ Incomplete discussion, with regard to the limitations of the study and the comprehensive reporting of the relevant literature
  - ▶ Questions about the rationale of the statistical analysis
- ▶ Please remember to keep the comments constructive. If you think the authors did not explain something completely, ask them to do so, maybe noting that you could not understand – don't just tell authors they have done it wrong! Remember to reference your own suggestions to the specific parts of the manuscript.
- ▶ Finally, note any minor issues that authors need to consider such as:
  - ▶ Minor problems in the analysis and/or presentation of results, in figures, tables and their legends. For example, are all the figures and tables necessary?
  - ▶ Inaccuracies in the title and abstract: is the title specific and does it accurately reflect the content of the manuscript? Is the abstract structured and is it a good summary of what the authors did and what they found out?

Please number your comments (1,2,3... etc.). This helps the authors to give well-structured point-by-point replies to the peer review, and facilitates further assessment by editors and reviewers.

#### Reviewer checklist

Please consider this template as a suggested structure for the two parts of your review, one part for editors and one for authors. You may decide to use the text as a basis for your comments to the editors by replacing/deleting as appropriate. Possible points for your comments to the authors are also included below. Please add any other information that you feel is important.

Please number your comments (1,2,3... etc.). This helps the authors to give well-structured point-by-point replies to the peer review, and facilitates further assessment by editors and reviewers.

To the Editors of <i>Endoscopy</i>
My recommendation (accept/minor revision/major revision/reject/reject – resubmit...)
<b>This is justified because...</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The question addressed is <i>novel and original/has already been answered</i></li> <li>2. The chosen study design and selected procedures <i>allow/do not allow</i> a valid answer</li> <li>3. The statistical analysis is <i>adequate/inadequate</i></li> <li>4. The presented results appear <i>valid and adequate/invalid or inadequate</i></li> <li>5. The conclusions <i>are/are not</i> supported by the results</li> <li>6. The conclusions <i>are relevant because they contrast with/support previous knowledge</i> or The conclusions <i>are unoriginal because they add little to what is already known</i></li> </ol>
<b>Other considerations</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compared with other papers that I know in this field, I would give this manuscript a high/low ranking</li> <li>2. The readability is very good/very poor compared with other manuscripts</li> <li>3. I consider that plagiarism may have occurred</li> <li>4. I have serious ethical doubts or concerns</li> <li>5. I think the manuscript merits an editorial</li> </ol>
To Authors of <i>Endoscopy</i>
<b>Summary of the manuscript</b>
In a short paragraph describe what was done and what the major findings were. Please DO NOT include your recommendation regarding publication.
<b>Major points</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Correct/discuss potential for bias (in selection, measurement, blinding)</li> <li>2. Improve/clarify the methods and procedures and their quality/validity with regard to the research question and measurements of variables</li> <li>3. Improve the statistical analysis</li> <li>4. Improve the adequacy and completeness of the presentation of results</li> <li>5. Amend the conclusions that are based on the results</li> <li>6. Add key references that support/are in contrast to the findings</li> </ol>
<b>Minor points</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clarify details in data analysis, and/or presentation of results, for example in figures, tables and their legends</li> <li>2. Changes in the title and abstract</li> </ol>

**Table 1** Template for the review process

**Competing interests:** None.

### Bibliography and recommended reading

- 1 Benos DJ, Kirk KL, Hall JE. How to review a paper. *Advan Physiol Educ* 2003; 27: 47–52
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