

## Scientific Review and Editor's Role

Prof Gehanath Baral

Journal of Nepal Health Research Council, Ramshahpath, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Reviewers serve as intermediary experts in between author who creates scientific information and the editor who organizes and processes those information based on set standards.

Editor will have a lodestar role in the process of scientific publication. It comprises of quality assurance and control namely entry process in the system (trafficking), judging quality and relevance of product (signaling), customization and improvement for acceptability (facilitating) and acting on pre and post publication state (deciding). Thus throughout the process of publication editor puts every effort singly or in a team depending on the publisher's capacity.

There is challenge in every step of reviewing process starting from receiving article through to finalization procedure like preliminary scan for basic requirements; categorization by type, specialty and priority; finding appropriate reviewer; receiving comments and decisions, finding out another reviewer; forwarding to author; rechecking corrections received if any; and keeping this to and fro process until finalized.

Finding proper reviewer is a difficult task for the multi-specialty study area. The criteria on reviewer an editor expects are- who is the subject expert, reads and writes articles him/herself, understands common statistical parameters, preferably not a part of editorial staff, willing to do the required job, and can devote time.

The preferred quality an editor requires on those reviewers for the quality publication is the structured concept on the following: should not be in direct competition with authors; should understand the hypothesis underlying the work done by author; should be familiar with the methodology, concept and model used; able to judge quality of data, analysis and its validity; able to assess the importance and priority of work; and familiar with the journal requirement.

Though the professional societies expect from their member editors and reviewers a quality publication, they do not receive any remuneration and just work for the society in most of the journals. The self motivated members take this additional job as an honor, recognition of expertise, benefits to own profession, refreshing to the existing knowledge, facilitating dissemination of new information, advancing own career and receiving CME credit hours during trainings.

By virtue of professional etiquette the reviewers' comment is supposed to be professional, thorough, familiar with journal requirement, helping attitude to improve writing and quality of journal, timely response, advice to both author and editor, providing conflict of interest if any, based on own expertise and confidential.

Reviewing would be either blinded (single or double blind) or open. Single blind review means author does not know but reviewer knows author and reviewer can compare the progress of author, but there is likelihood of bias either positive or negative. Double blind review means both author and reviewer do not know each other, thus the likelihood of bias is less, but a perfect blinding may not be achieved due to closeness or known work or profession. Open review is practically post-publication review that would not be communicating a new knowledge without confusion.

Decision making will not always be favorable to both author and editor. For the good quality of work and the required type of work, acceptance will be as it is or with minor correction or with major correction. But rejection is difficult to communicate to be fair and scientific. There is no harm rejecting particular write-up if we could provide reason in a polite way so that there will be a room to improve it further or to provide an alternative scientific solution.

The constraints faced by editors so far are on getting active reviewers; getting good quality articles

**Correspondence:** Prof Gehanath Baral, Journal of Nepal Health research Council, Ramshahpath, kathmandu, Nepal. Email: [gehanath@gmail.com](mailto:gehanath@gmail.com).

scientifically, grammatically and ethically; delay in receiving from reviewer and author; appropriate ethical clearance; authenticity of work and their acceptable time frame; and pressure for acceptance.

There are some delays throughout the process like- too many articles to review, longer initial screening process, taking too long for peer review and taking too long to authors for correction. Obviously the substandard and poorly written one does not go to reviewer and the article not complying with the journal requirement get returned back with suggestion to follow authors'

guideline.

The current challenges faced by every editors in developing country are as follow: editors' job is not a profession in Nepal, it is taken as additional responsibility without remuneration; there is no dedicated time slot so any spare time if available is utilized; publishing is not guided by an interest but by a compulsion; publication itself is not fully institutionalized; and likewise a peer reviewers' job is also taken as an honor as well as honorary.