

On the peer-review process

Raul H Sanchez-Lopez
EDITOR of AUDITIO

The peer-review process is a vital and of great importance process in scholarly publishing. Articles that are published in a scientific journal are evaluated by at least two external reviewers. The mission of this evaluation is to ensure that the scientific article has important scientific questions, adequate and accurate interpretations and conclusions, and a well-executed methodology. Quoting verbatim the words of Kelly et al., (2014): "[...] peer-reviewed articles provide a reliable form of scientific communication."

Brief history

Peer review was implemented in scientific journals as early as the XVII century. In the XVIII century, journals published by societies mentioned in their editorial policies that members of society, with interest or experience in the subject of the article, would receive the submission for their evaluation. Also, that the identity of peer reviewers may not be revealed. This practice, sometimes called "arbitration", was implemented in most academic publications as early as the XIX century and has remained until now. Currently, a new revolution is taking part on peer-review process, trying to make the process more dynamic and transparent due to to new

technologies. For a read on the history of peer review I recommend a recent entry of the F1000Research blog post written by Yousuf Al-Mousawi (2020).

The workflow of a scientific journal

A scientific article is not like a newspaper article, written by a journalist, that can appear in a magazine. The process before publishing a scientific article involves several steps in which different actors (authors, reviewers, editors) are involved.

Inspired by the content of the course "How to become an editor" of the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) School, I have adapted the steps to follow to the specific case of AUDITIO.

1. Pre-review process

- 1.a) The author prepares and submit the manuscript.
- 1.b) The editor-in-chief oversees the submission, ensuring that this is complete and that it can be considered further. If the manuscript is

incomplete, the editor will request changes before being submitted for peer review.

- 1.c) The editor and editorial team evaluate and decide if the submission can be sent for review. If the subject of the submission does not fall within the scope of the *journal* or the submission does not comply with what is stated in the guide for authors, it may be rejected.

2. Peer-review process:

- 2.a) The editor (either the journal editor, associate editor, or guest editor) is responsible for overseeing the process, selecting and inviting reviewers, and making the final decision on its publication.
- 2.b) Reviewers evaluate the manuscript for scientific validity, consistency, and readability. They must complete an evaluation report following the guidelines of the journal.
- 2.c) The editor then makes the decision to "accept", "reject" or "request revisions".
- 2.d) In the case of requesting revisions, the editor returns the manuscript to the authors along with the reports of the reviewers.

3. Revision and resubmission

- 3.a) Authors will have to review their manuscript based on the reviewers' reports and respond to their comments. Certain notions and advice on the style and form of the response letter can be found in Annesley, T.M. (2011).
- 3.b) The author resubmits the manuscript, this time not as a new submission but as a revision of the original submission.

- 3.c) The editor must check that the comments have been answered point by point. The editor can then make the final decision or conduct a new round of review.

- 3.d) In case of submission for review, the revised manuscript is sent back to external reviewers, which returns the manuscript to peer review process 2.

The final decision of the editor will be "accept" or "reject". Processes 2 and 3 may be repeated several times if the manuscript requires additional revisions for the editor to make the final decision. On some occasions the editor may suggest the manuscript to be submitted to another section of the journal where the content of the article might be more suitable.

In AUDITIO, all articles submitted to the "Research Articles" and "Research Communications" sections are reviewed by three reviewers, at least one of them being an academic expert on the subject and another of the reviewers a hearing care professional. The aim is to ensure the interest of the contribution for the scientific and clinical community and to foster a style suitable for a broad and multidisciplinary audience.

How to perform a review

A review is an opportunity to provide an external opinion that can improve the content of a scientific publication. It is important to emphasize that review is a confidential process. The content of the article is considered intellectual property of the authors that should not be shared with third parties, and the reviewers must maintain their anonymity and not

disclose their identity to the authors and third parties during the process. In addition, the process must be rigorous, the reviewer has to be impartial and evaluate the manuscript objectively even if he/she does not share or approve the opinion or conclusions of the authors.

In AUDITIO, the review report comprises three parts; 1) a summary of the contribution in the words of the reviewer; 2) Comments and considerations; and 3) Specific comments. The way of writing these parts I have summarized in these "4Cs" easy to remember:

- Be **constructive**: the aim of the review is to improve the quality of the manuscript. However, it is also important to highlight the strengths of the manuscript and not only to base the report on pointing out the points to be improved.
- Be **concise**: The review should be easy to read (i.e; contain complete and useful information) but should not be unnecessarily extensive.
- Be **clear**: perhaps the most important of the "4Cs". Clarity does not only mean concreteness, but also avoiding any kind of ambiguity. Authors should know exactly "how" they can improve their manuscript and "where" they should focus their efforts during the revision.
- Be **courteous**: A scientific article involves a lot of work so derogatory, biased, or ironic comments do not benefit either the author or the publication.

Other *journals* such as PLOS ONE summarize this piece of advice in "Dos and don'ts". Overall, the reviewers must be empathetic and assess his review from the perspective of the author, asking themselves, "Would I be able to improve the manuscript based on these comments myself?"

AUDITIO, communication and scientific pedagogy

At AUDITIO, we are aware that many of the readers are not familiar with the processes behind scientific journals. However, we believe that it is important that the members of the Spanish Audiological Society (AEDA) participate in this process, regardless of their previous research work or their experience in the specific topic. That is why the editorial team in collaboration with the new AEDA workgroups, is committed to help new authors and reviewers contribute to the life of the scientific journal AUDITIO. This editorial, as well as future communications, support our mission to do scientific pedagogy in the broad and multidisciplinary community of Spanish-speaking researchers and professionals in the field of audiology.

References

Annesley, T.M. (2011). Top 10 tips for responding to reviewer and editor comments. *Clinical Chemistry*, 57(4), 551-554. <https://doi.org/10.1373/clinchem.2011.162388>

[ENGLISH](#) (translation)

Kelly, J., Sadeghieh, T., & Adeli, K. (2014). Peer Review in Scientific Publications: Benefits, Critiques, & A Survival Guide. *EJIFCC*, 25(3), 227-243.

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (2019). Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals. Archive Available in [ENGLISH](#) and [SPANISH](#).

PLOS ONE "How to write a peer-review". Internet Archive [Link](#)

Yousuf Al-Mousawi (2020) "A brief history of peer-review". F1000 Blog entry [Link](#)

To cite this article:

Sanchez-Lopez. A. (2021), On the Peer Review Process vol. 5(2) 39-42. <https://doi.org/10.51445/sja.auditio.vol5.2021.0076>

<https://journal.auditio.com>

Published: 31.08.2021

© the Author. This article is published under a Creative Commons Attribution license 4.0.Ia which allows the use, redistribution and creation of derivative works without prior permission.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.es>

