


## Editorial

# Peer review and publication delay

Fernando FERNANDEZ-LLIMOS , Pharmacy Practice 2018 peer reviewers.

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### Abstract:

Selecting peer reviewers is a crucial stage of the editorial process that ensures the quality of scholarly publications. An alternative to selecting peer reviewers from data bases created with expressions of interest of volunteers consists in systematically searching PubMed for similar articles and inviting their authors to act as peer reviewers. Although this process might identify more appropriate peers, it also can increase the time of the editorial process. In 2018, Pharmacy Practice had to invite 4.70 (SE=0.33) potential reviewers per one accepting. The time from the first reviewer invitation to the last reviewer report received was 61 days (SE=2.1). These figures confirm the existence of a peer review crisis which is significantly increasing the publication delay.

**Keywords:** Peer Review; Peer Review, Research; Open Access Publishing; Periodicals as Topic

Despite the efforts that some publishing platforms are devoting to convince researchers about the convenience of eliminating pre-publication reviews, these pre-publication peer review externally-done process continue to be the gold-standard in scholarly publication. However, we have to recognize that the peer review crisis does exist. Some optimistic editors in the early 2010s refused to accept the facts, reporting that the proportion of reviewers invited per accepting reviewer increased only from 1.38 (SE=0.02) in 2001 to 2.03 (SE=0.05) in 2010.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, other editors started recognizing the increasing difficulty recruiting peer reviewers, with an increase from 1.8 (SE=0.07) attempts to obtain an acceptance in 2008–2011 to 2.3 (SE=0.13) in 2014–2016, and 15% papers requiring more than 8 invitations.<sup>2</sup> Many alternatives to the traditional external peer review have been suggested, but their efficiency could not be demonstrated.<sup>3</sup> But, more importantly, their influence in evidence-synthesis has not been evaluated at all. Should we include an article uploaded to a pre-print repository in a systematic review or a meta-analysis, before a sufficient number of post-publication reviews have been performed?

In 2018, Pharmacy Practice publicly recognized suffering from the peer review crisis.<sup>4</sup> During 2018, Pharmacy Practice invited 879 potential peer reviewers, but only 198 (22.5%) accepted the task. This means that Pharmacy Practice invited 4.70 (SE=0.33) potential reviewers per one accepting. Additionally, 15 reviewers who accepted to review a paper did not deliver the review report. Peer reviewer selection process performance indicators in Pharmacy Practice seem to be quite below the two aforementioned journals. In fact, after the complete automation of the editorial process, selecting peer reviewers became the most time-consuming task in Pharmacy Practice's editorial process.

Pharmacy Practice editorial board started an in-depth analysis of the causes and potential solutions to solve this problem, while ensuring maintenance of high quality standards. Many journals created reviewer databases using the expression of interest received to act as a peer reviewer. Commonly, these databases use candidate-reported keywords as a means to identify areas of expertise to facilitate manuscript assignment. Criticisms regarding the poor quality of peer review reports received are frequent. Every researcher has personal anecdotes about their experience with peer reviewers' reports. One of my systematic reviews was rejected in a journal based on a reviewer's report that criticized our selection of bibliographic databases. The reviewer asked why we have not used Medline or Embase, when we had reported using PubMed and Scopus. In 2013, and to avoid the potential excessive self-esteem of spontaneously offered reviewers, Pharmacy Practice established a systematic peer reviewer selection process based on searching similar articles on PubMed and identifying the authors of those articles as the hypothetical best reviewers for the new manuscript.<sup>5</sup> This selection process involves inviting researchers that have previously volunteered to serve as reviewers for the journal, which may partially explain the lower acceptance rate in Pharmacy Practice.

An immediate consequence of the number of failed review requests is the increased publication process time. During 2018, Pharmacy Practice original research articles obtained the first response after peer review comments in 92 days (SE=5.7). The time from the first reviewer invitation to the last reviewer report submission was 61 days (SE=2.1). As major aim for 2019, Editorial Board have established the reduction in the time to make decisions, which means reducing the about 30 days that currently takes to: a) decide sending the manuscript out for peer review or desk-reject it; and b) analyze peer reviewers' reports received to decide whether manuscript modifications could make the article acceptable. Reducing the remaining 61 days will depend on our ability to convince pharmacy practice researchers that acting as a peer reviewer is probably the most important part of a collaborative publishing scheme.

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**Pharmacy Practice 2018 peer reviewers.**

Following the tradition initiated last year, Pharmacy Practice is pleased to recognize the contribution to the journal of those who served as reviewers, and reward their efforts by publishing the first editorial of the year with a collective authorship including all the reviewers that contributed during 2018.

### Pharmacy Practice 2018 peer reviewers

#### Two reviews:

Rana K. Abu Farha, Applied Science Private University, Jordan  
Mohamed E. Amin, Manchester University, United States  
Suleiman I. El-Sharif, University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates  
Shazia Q. Jamshed, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia  
Emily Peron, Virginia Commonwealth University, United States  
Jarred Prudencio, University of Hawaii, United States  
Naser Y. Shraim, An-Najah National University, Palestine  
Henok G. Tegegn, University of Gondar, Ethiopia  
Fernanda S. Tonin, Federal University of Parana, Brazil  
Monica Zolezzi, Qatar University, Qatar

#### One review:

Mera Ababneh, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Jordan  
Hani Abdelaziz, Barnabas Health, United States  
Samirah N. Abdu-Aguye, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria  
Molla Abebe, University of Gondar, Ethiopia  
Wuraola Akande-Sholabi, University of Ibadan, Nigeria  
Sarah Alameddine, Nova Southeastern University, United States  
Saeed K. Alzghari, Gulfstream Genomics, United States  
Xavier Armoiry, Lyon University Hospitals, France  
Isabelle Arnet, University of Basel, Switzerland  
Omar F. Attarabeen, Marshall University, United States  
Minyon Avent, University of Queensland, Australia  
Ahmed Awaisu, Qatar University, Qatar  
D. Rhys Axon, University of Arizona, United States  
Hafiz A. Aziz, University of Queensland, Australia  
Marion Bennie, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom  
Harika Bheemavarapu, Talla Padmavati College of Pharmacy, India  
Susan J. Blalock, University of North Carolina, United States  
Helena H. Borba, Federal University of Parana, Brazil  
Alisha J. Bradley, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, United States  
Cecilia Brata, University of Western Australia, Australia  
Oscar Breukels, Meander Medisch Centrum, Netherlands  
Emily J. Cameron, Dalhousie University, Canada  
Jean T. Carter, University of Montana, United States  
Jamie J. Cavanaugh, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, United States  
Leanne Chalmers, Curtin University, Australia  
Farid Chekani, University of Houston, United States  
Brooklyn T. Cobb, University of the Sciences, United States  
Anwen L. Cope, Cardiff University, United Kingdom  
Marco Cosentino, University of Insubria, Italy  
Philip J. Crilly, Kingston University, United Kingdom  
Fatemeh Dabaghzadeh, Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Iran  
Saibal Das, Christian Medical College & Hospital Vellore, India  
Michael J. Davies, Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom  
Hans De Loof, University of Antwerp, Belgium  
Rebecca Dickinson, University of Leeds, United Kingdom  
Marlise A. Dos Santos, Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Marieke Ebbens, St Jansdal Hospital, Netherlands  
Stephen F. Eckel, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, United States  
Erika J. Ernst, University of Iowa, United States  
Titilayo O. Fakeye, University of Ibadan, Nigeria  
Wentong Fang, Nanjing Medical University, China  
Maryam T. Fazel, University of Arizona, United States  
Stefanie P. Ferreri, University of North Carolina, United States  
James W. Fetterman, South University, United States  
Karen Fong, NYU Langone Health, United States  
Lucia Franco Trigo, University of Technology Sydney, Australia  
Jessica L. Gaskins, North Carolina State University, United States  
James Gilmore, Brigham and Women's Hospital, United States  
Maxine Gossell-Williams, University of The West Indies, Jamaica  
Vicki Groo, University of Illinois at Chicago, United States  
Rafel Guayta-Escobies, Council of Catalonian Pharmacists Associations, Spain  
Salman Y. Guraya, University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates  
Reginald Gyapong, Nova Southeastern University, United States  
Souheil Hallit, Lebanese University, Lebanon  
Carrie Harvey, University of Tennessee, United States  
Mohamed A. Hassali, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia  
Ana L. Hincapie, University of Cincinnati, United States  
Maya Hites, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium  
Kreshnik Hoti, Curtin University, Australia  
Sherilyn Houle, University of Waterloo, Canada  
Narumol Jarernsiripornkul, Khon Kaen University, Thailand  
Susanne Kaae, University of Copenhagen, Denmark  
Sofia Källemark Sporrang, University of Copenhagen, Denmark  
Maram G. Katoue, Kuwait University, Kuwait  
Hanna Kauppinen, University of Eastern Finland, Finland  
Viviane Khalil, Monash University, Australia  
Maher Khmour, Al-Quds University, Palestine  
Annika Kiiski, University of Helsinki, Finland  
Peter Knapp, Hull York Medical School, United Kingdom  
Laura M. Koppen, University of Illinois at Chicago, United States  
Sandra V. Kovačević, University of Belgrade, Serbia  
Janet Krska, Medway School of Pharmacy, United Kingdom  
Martine Kruijtbosch, SIR Institute, Netherlands

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Dorothy Lall, Institute of Public Health Bangalore, India  
Miranda G. Law, Howard University, United States  
Leticia Leonart, Federal University of Parana, Brazil  
Igor Locatelli, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Kevin P. Lonabaugh, Virginia Commonwealth University, United States  
Jac K. Low, Monash University, Australia  
Giancarlo Lucchetti, Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil  
Márcia Malfará, University of São Paulo, Brazil  
Saima M. Malhi, Dow University of Health Sciences, Pakistan  
Meghan E. May, BayCare Health System, United States  
Fadia Mayyas, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Jordan  
Faizan Mazhar, University of Milan, Italy  
Kofi B. Mensah, Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Ghana  
Razan G. Mhanna, Lebanese International University, Lebanon  
Jenner Minto, University of Montana, United States  
Darko Modun, University of Split, Croatia  
Joanna C. Moullin, Curtin University, Australia  
Tareq L. Mukattash, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Jordan  
Sabina O. Nduaguba, University of Texas, United States  
Siew-Yen Ng, Ampangan Health Clinic, Malaysia  
Sujin Nitadpakorn, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand  
Marina Odalović, University of Belgrade, Serbia  
Lucas M. Okumura, Hospital de Clinicas de Porto Alegre, Brazil  
Angus N. Oli, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria  
Amanda Olsen, University of North Carolina, United States  
Suan E. Ong, National University of Singapore, Singapore  
Lais L. Pantuzza, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil  
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Julie A. Patterson, Virginia Commonwealth University, United States  
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Samuel K. Peasah, Mercer University, United States  
Brian J. Piper, Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, United States  
Adji Prayitno, Universitas Surabaya, Malaysia  
Mohammad S. Rahman, University of Asia Pacific, Bangladesh  
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Mitchel C. Rotholz, American Pharmacists Association, United States  
Inajara Rotta, Federal University of Parana Teaching Hospital, Brazil  
Magdalena Rzewuska, University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom  
Arif Sabah, Ziauddin University, Pakistan  
Bandana Saini, University of Sydney, Australia  
Fahad Saleem, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia  
Teresa M. Salgado, Virginia Commonwealth University, United States  
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Mostafa Sayed Ali, Assiut University, Egypt  
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Carmen B. Smith, St. Louis College of Pharmacy, United States  
Jiraporn Sri-on, Navamindradhiraj University, Thailand  
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Nasriah Zakaria, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia  
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