KMUJ
MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION POLICY AND PEER REVIEW SYSTEM

"The most helpful review is one that articulates the strength of a paper while also assiduously [regularly, carefully, and without fail] identifying the limitations of a manuscript that can be addressed in a revision."
Roberts L., Coverdale J., Edenharder K., & Louie A. (2004). How to review a manuscript: A "down-to-earth" approach". Academic Psychiatry, 28(2):81-7.

MANUSCRIPT EVALUATION

- KMUJ: KHYBER MEDICAL UNIVERSITY JOURNAL is a quarterly peer reviewed journal published by KHYBER MEDICAL UNIVERSITY Institute of Medical Sciences, Kohat.
- Every new manuscript submitted to KMUJ is immediately assessed by an editor for an initial inspection (internal peer review).
- An article with publication potential is sent to two external peer reviewers to evaluate the suitability of the article for publication based on its quality, novelty, and relevance for publication.
- A time frame of minimum 4 weeks will be given for a reviewer to go through a manuscript and send his suggestions to the editor. Failing which will generate a reminder from the editor with additional 4 weeks time for review to be completed.
- If a reviewer is unable to meet the time frame agreed upon or he declines to review the manuscript, the manuscript will be sent to another reviewer.
- The editor may establish a system for *rapid review of especially important manuscripts*. This may include review only by editors or asking reviewers to complete their evaluations within a shorter period of time than is allowed routinely. Authors who seek rapid review should explain why their manuscripts merit such review.
- Reviewers are advisors to authors and editors. The editor may ask reviewers to make recommendations regarding acceptance or rejection of manuscripts, and should pay attention to the recommendations, but the editor must be the one who makes the decisions.
- The editor may reject manuscripts without outside review, for example if the subject matter is outside the purview of the journal, a manuscript on the same

topic is just about to be published, the quality of the manuscript is poor, or criteria for the submission of manuscripts are not met.

REVIEWERS: THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES, SELECTION, AND REWARDS

KMUJ is aiming to set a panel of peer-reviewers with diversity in knowledge, viewpoint and expertise in relevant specialties with extensive experience as faculty members, researchers, and published authors.

A. RESPONSIBILITIES OF REVIEWERS

I. The first responsibility of reviewers is to evaluate manuscripts critically but constructively and to prepare detailed comments about the research and the manuscript to help authors improve their work. The reviewers have to assess the manuscript according to the reviewers proforma sent to each reviewer along with the manuscript. The evaluation should include

- assessments of the originality and importance of the research;
- the design of the study;
- the methods of study, including analytic and statistical methods;
- the presentation of the results;
- possible confounding; the strength of the conclusions; and
- the overall quality of the manuscript.

II. The second responsibility is to make recommendations to the editor regarding the suitability of the manuscript for publication in that journal. Reviewers may be asked to write some narrative comments about the manuscript that support their recommendation to the editor regarding acceptance or rejection. They also can be asked to grade some characteristics of the manuscript, such as originality, quality, accuracy, readability and interest to readers, or to complete detailed questionnaires about these qualities and even assign a priority score.

III. Reviewers should declare to the editor any potential conflicts of interest with respect to the authors or the content of a manuscript they are asked to review, and in most instances when such conflicts exist should decline to review the manuscript.

IV. Other responsibilities of reviewers include treating the manuscript as a confidential document and completing the review promptly. Reviewers should not show the manuscript to anyone else without the express consent of the editor.

V. Reviewers should not make derogatory comments about the manuscript in their comments for the authors. If reviewers do make such comments, the editor may choose to edit the comments or even withhold all the reviewer's comments from the authors.

VI. Reviewers must not make any use of the work described in the manuscript.

VII.   Reviewers should not communicate directly with authors or even identify themselves to authors, except by signing their reviews.

VIII.   The editor should provide guidance to the reviewers, particularly new reviewers, regarding how the editor wishes the reviewers to evaluate the manuscript and how the reviewers should meet their dual responsibility of providing constructive comments for the author and advice to the editor.

VIII.   Reviewers should meet the agreed-upon deadline (usually 4 weeks) for manuscript review and should respond to the reminders if sent any.

B.   IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF REVIEWERS

I.   The editor will establish a reviewer database that includes information about the expertise of each reviewer as well as addresses and other contact information.

II.   Fifty percent of reviewers will be from Pakistan and 50% will be selected from abroad.

III.   The editor may identify potential reviewers on the basis of personal knowledge of the topic or from among the authors of references in the manuscript, the membership of the society that publishes the journal, or computer searches of databases such as PubMed, Medline or by asking for names from reviewers who decline to review the manuscript (see below).

IV.   Authors may suggest reviewers for their manuscript, whether invited to do so by the editor or not. The editor may choose to use one or more of these reviewers, but are under no obligation to do so. (Authors may ask that certain people not be asked to review their manuscript, but editors are not obligated to accept these requests either.)

V.   The editor should ask reviewers, by telephone, fax or e-mail, if they are willing to review a particular manuscript, and give them a date that the review is due at the editorial office (usually 3 to 4 weeks), rather than simply sending the manuscript to the reviewer. As the same time, the editor can ask for the names of others who might review the manuscript should the person initially contacted decline.

VI.   The editor is responsible for keeping track of reviewers, and taking steps to make sure reviews are completed in a timely manner. Each peer review is rated by the editor assigned to the manuscript and stored with the reviewer's profile in the Rapid Review reviewer database. This rating becomes part of the reviewing history of each peer reviewer, and can be viewed by the editors as they select potential reviewers for future manuscripts. The reviewer database also contains information on the reviewers' areas of expertise; the number of previous invitations to review and number accepted; dates of submitted reviews, and days taken to produce reviews. Reviewers who consistently decline invitations or who write brief unhelpful reviews are eventually removed from the database.

VII.   To avoid overworking reviewers, each reviewer will be asked to evaluate no more than one manuscript per month.

VIII.   If a reviewer does not complete a review on a timely basis, the editor should proceed with evaluation of the manuscript. He can make a decision to

accept or reject the manuscript based on the comments and recommendations of another reviewer(s) or his own evaluation of the manuscript, or by seeking additional review.

C.   **REWARDING REVIEWERS**.

- Each reviewer may be rewarded by being publicly thanked for reviewing in the journal each year and will be given free copies of journal.

D. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**
- Please clarify whether you have a financial or other conflict of interest with the authors or the topic of the submitted paper, such as: employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria from a relevant funder; patents or patent applications; a personal or close professional relationship with any of the authors; work in direct competition with the submitted paper; or any other strong beliefs that may influence or bias your review.
- NO: I have no conflict of interest of any type with the authors or the submitted paper (type your name and date):
- OR YES: I have a conflict of interest and here are further details:……………………………………………………………………
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DECISION MAKING AND COMMUNICATION TO AUTHORS

- The editor makes a decision about the manuscript (accept, invite a revision, or reject) based on a consideration of all the reviewer comments, his own critique, and other external factors.
- What considerations should enter into the decision? These may include the comments and recommendations of the reviewers, the availability of space, and—most important—the judgment of the editor(s) regarding the suitability of the manuscript for the journal and the value and interest of the manuscript to the journal's readers.
- The editor may always seek additional review and advice if required.
- Decisions are communicated to authors by the editor. This means that the editor may need to provide explanations for the decision independent of the comments of the reviewers that are to be sent to the authors.
- Decisions to reject a manuscript may be based on scientific weakness (poor research design, inappropriate methods of study), lack of originality, lack of importance and interest to readers, or simply lack of space. The editor will explain to authors the reasons for decisions to reject manuscripts. This is particularly important when the editor rejects a manuscript but the tone of the comments of the reviewers that will be sent to the authors is favorable.
- The editor should actively encourage revision of manuscripts thought to be potentially acceptable. When an editor seeks revision of a manuscript, he should make clear which revisions are essential, and which are optional. If the comments

of the reviewers are contradictory, the editor must decide and tell the authors which comments the authors should follow. Editors may add their own comments and suggestions for revision, and they (or some person in the editorial office designated by the editor) are responsible for ensuring that manuscripts meet the journal's policies regarding length and style.

- In general, manuscripts that are potentially acceptable but need very major revision or additional data should be rejected, but the editor can encourage resubmission. When this is done, the editor should explain precisely what is needed to make the manuscript acceptable. It is a disservice to authors to request revision and then later reject the manuscript. As an alternative, the editor may choose to work closely with the authors to make the manuscript acceptable for publication.

- The editor should not make decisions regarding manuscripts about which he may have a conflict of interest, for example manuscripts submitted by members of the editor's own institution or people who have been collaborators of the editor in the past. In this instance, the manuscript should be handled by an assistant editor or preferably a person outside of the editorial office who is given full power to select reviewers and make decisions regarding acceptance or rejection. The same policy should be followed if the editor himself submits a manuscript - other than an editorial - to his journal, which he should only rarely.

- Revised manuscripts should be evaluated by editors, to determine if the revisions are satisfactory, and not returned to reviewers. An exception might be when the revised manuscript includes changes that may have introduced important new shortcomings about which the editor needs advice from one or more of the original reviewers. Revised manuscripts should not be sent to new reviewers.

- Editors should immediately reject a resubmitted manuscript that was previously rejected and has not been revised.

POST-PUBLICATION PEER REVIEW

After an article is published, the peer review process continues with critical appraisal by readers. We welcome correspondence in the form of "letters to the editor," which must be submitted before the publication of next issue.