

EDITORIAL

Peer Review Week 2022

This issue of the *PJHRD* comes to press around a week after the scientific publishing community concluded Peer Review Week 2022 (<https://peerreviewweek.wordpress.com/>). The theme for this year's event is "Research Integrity: Creating and supporting trust in research."

Research integrity refers to an "active adherence to the ethical principles and professional standards essential for the responsible practice of research" [1], and is recognized as an essential element in maintaining the public's trust in the scientific enterprise. While this central tenet still holds true today, the context in which it is applied has changed drastically. Digital media, preprints, and manuscript repositories are new and emerging outlets for scientific information which, while fast tracking the dissemination of scientific information, also poses a challenge as both verified and unvetted information compete for the public's interest. Now more than ever, then, the research community is faced with the daunting task of establishing that research findings – especially those that inform policy and practice, or have societal impact – adhere to the shared values of *honesty* (i.e., information is truthful), *accuracy* (i.e., findings are precise, errors are minimized), *efficiency* (i.e., resources are utilized properly), and *objectivity* (i.e., facts speak for themselves) [2].

Mechanisms for ensuring the integrity of research exist throughout the scientific process, with peer review playing a key role in the reporting of research findings. Peer review refers to the process of independent evaluation of a research work or idea by experts in the field [3]. While traditionally done in an anonymous fashion prior to publication of a piece of work, there are now emerging models where review is done openly (i.e., identity of authors and/or reviewers are not blinded), are submitted after publication, or where evaluation reports are published alongside the manuscript. Regardless of the approach, however, the end goal remains the same: to ensure quality of publicly available research findings through expert scrutiny and assessment. Given the substantial role that peer review plays in maintaining research integrity, the next important question is how journals assure the integrity and quality of peer review?

In the *PJHRD*, the following are among the mechanisms in place to safeguard the peer review process:

- Selection of potential reviewers based on subject matter and/or methodological expertise relevant to the manuscript under consideration, demonstrated through a track record of recent peer-reviewed publications, and who do not belong to the same department or institution as any of the authors of the submitted work. While the journal requires authors to nominate peer reviewers upon submission of manuscripts, the final selection is a decision left to the discretion of the Submission Editor.
- Employment of double anonymous peer review mechanism to ensure that the identity of authors do not bias the reviewers, and vice versa. This approach also allows reviewers to provide evaluation on manuscripts that is free from considerations of potential repercussions should they offer critical feedback.
- Use of a uniform assessment form, depending on the manuscript type, with guide questions to standardize and focus the assessment done by different reviewers.

I take this opportunity to convey our deepest gratitude to all peer reviewers who willingly lend their expertise and time to help the *PJHRD* maintain the quality and integrity of research outputs published in the journal.

Carl Abelardo T. Antonio, MD, MPH
Editor-in-Chief

References:

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3. Kelly J, Sadeghieh T, Adeli K. (2014) Peer review in scientific publications: Benefits, critiques, and a survival guide. *EJIFCC* 25(3):227-43.