

# Accepted Manuscript

Title: The important role of the peer-reviewer

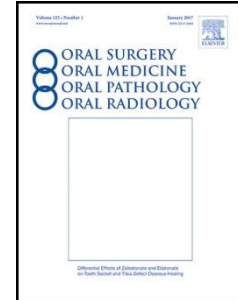
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PII: S2212-4403(18)30831-9

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oooo.2018.03.001>

Reference: OOOO 1973

To appear in: *Oral Surgery, Oral Medicine, Oral Pathology and Oral Radiology*



Please cite this article as: Joshua E. Lubek, The important role of the peer-reviewer, *Oral Surgery, Oral Medicine, Oral Pathology and Oral Radiology* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oooo.2018.03.001>.

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## The Important Role of the Peer-Reviewer

Very soon after having accepted the position of section editor for Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in the journal *Oral Surgery Oral Medicine Oral Pathology Oral Radiology*, I quickly discovered one of the most stressful tasks encountered by all editors of peer-reviewed scientific journals. How does one find an appropriate reviewer who will provide a meaningful critical review, in a timely fashion in order to avoid publication delays?

The aims of a scientific medical/dental journal are to publish current, high quality clinical or translational research that will attract the readership, inspire further research, manuscript citation and of course increase the journal impact factor and subscription rate. For these goals to be achieved the editor relies on the Peer-Reviewer, to critique the submitted manuscript with both positive and negative detailed comments that the editor can use in the decision process for article merit and publication. These comments are also beneficial to the authors as they provide guidance for manuscript improvement during the revision or re-submission process. Research and publication is vital to both the individual (ie. academic promotion, personal satisfaction) and to the profession (ie. improvements in patient care and increasing specialty awareness). Authors spend much time and effort in preparing their scientific manuscripts and certainly deserve the reciprocal quality efforts of the reviewer.

After discussions with other editors it is becoming more apparent the number of Peer-Reviewers is either declining or those that have accepted to review are often late with their responses. Possible reasons include reviewer fatigue, the rapid increase in the number of journals available for manuscript submission, time commitment, lack of reviewer recognition and the request for specific individuals considered to be the experts within the field (often those who are well published and internationally recognized). The scientific journal industry has become highly competitive as the number of journals available for article submission and publication continues to rise. Publishing companies requests for article submission is even easier with the use of mass email. I cannot count the number of spam emails I receive during the day requesting to submit a manuscript to that particular journal. An author may choose to submit a paper to a lower impact and less well-recognized journal, in the hopes of manuscript acceptance and rapid time to review. This is further compounded with newer forms of publication in which the authors' pay for expedited peer-review and publication. Many publishers have recognized that author submission to their respective journal is also related to time for peer-review and editor decision. Time for expected peer review has been reduced from 1 month to 2 weeks in some journals. All of these suggested reasons have ultimately led to the increased volume of manuscripts requesting peer-review, which has no doubt resulted in reviewer fatigue and specific individual referee overuse.<sup>1,2</sup>

Various software available to the editor can track reviewer productivity with regards to number of papers reviewed, time taken for the reviewer to both accept the task and complete the review. The use of publisher search engines, allow for the identification of potential reviewers within the scientific community that have interest or expertise in the subject matter. An email

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