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Editorial communication with authors

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KEY WORDS: *Communication; Publishing; Authorship; Periodicals; Peer Review; Conflict of Interest*

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ESTABLISHED PROCESSING

The editorial board must establish the system how to decide whether a submitted manuscript is acceptable for publication. Will the final decision be made by the editor, editorial board, or in coordinate opinion with associate editors and scientific board? Some scientific associations have granted to the editors sole responsibility to accept or reject manuscript for publication without interference by society establishment. That is to ensure that published paper does not represent endorsement of the society itself and reaffirm healthy science based on an open exchange of findings.

DECISION POLICY

The decision policy includes overall interest of the journal for the manuscript, suitability as related to the scope of the journal, the comments and/or recommendations of reviewers and editorial opinion. The manuscripts must be subjected to proper review, preferably peer-reviews with the established list of questions for the reviewers and space for further comments. The peer-review process is complex, relating author-editor-reviewer responsibilities and rights that must be protected. Therefore, confidentiality is an essential component of decision process. The editor communicates decisions to the corresponding author. The explanations related to the decision are needed especially when the editor suggests revision of a manuscript. The editor may add his own opinion to the reviewer's comments suggesting on essential and optional points to ensure that manuscript meets the journal's standard.

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COMMUNICATION WITH AUTHOR

Time points in communicating information to the authors and prompt response on their queries are important. Revised manuscripts are evaluated first by the editor and if essential by one or all of the reviewers. It is not preferable to include new reviewers. When the manuscript is rejected but potentially of interest for journal readers and acceptable with major revision or additional data the editor should encourage the authors and suggest resubmission. If manuscript is rejected, the editor should explain to authors the reasons for such decision.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The ethical point is stressed if the manuscript is rejected due to the editor's own conflict of interest. Conflict of interest might be based on financial interest that is increasing with commercialization of science and medicine in particular. Submission of manuscript by editor himself or his collaborators and members of editorial board can undermine the credibility of the editor and publication. In these circumstances associate editors should communicate manuscripts.

EDUCATION

Communication of the editor with authors and reviewers has an educational scope that is more than just correspondence and decision transfer. This is of particular importance for less experienced scientists and may put forward high standards proposed through the process of handling and processing of the final results of research.

SUGGESTED LITERATURE

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5. Utiger RD. A syllabus for prospective and newly appointed editors. Available from: URL: <http://www.wame.com>