

Formation of New Reviewers Board – A JOCR initiative

Reviewers are the backbone of any scientific journal and JOCR has always been in forefront in recognising contributions from reviewers [1]. We continue to publish names and photographs of reviewers in all our journal issues as well as issue certificates for their reviews. This all in an attempt to make a reviewers network [2]. In December 2016 we decided to formalise this reviewer's network and form a reviewer's board which will be official reviewers board displayed on the website. This board will run parallel to Editorial board but will only focus on review of articles.

There are definite aims for the reviewer's board but the main aim is to get fast review of the articles. As you must have noticed that JOCR issues are delayed by a month or two. This is due to huge backlog of case reports that has been submitted to us. Currently over 1100 case reports are awaiting decisions from reviewers. As a policy at JOCR, we await at least three reviewers to comment on a case report before an editorial board member looks at it and takes a final decision. However many a times one or two reviews are delayed. At times, even after repeated reminders we do not get reviews from our reviewers and we have to allot the case report to another reviewer. Also time constraints from our expert reviewers is also an issue. These delays in the review process are the main reason for delays in article processing. We believe reviewer's board can tackle this problem efficiently and providing fast reviews is the main aim of reviewer's board. We have received many applications for the reviewer's board and we have selected few of these reviewers to be on the board. Selection was done based on academic experience, number and quality of reviews done for JOCR and commitment to provide fast reviews. All the members on reviewer's board have agreed to provide reviews within one week for any case report allotted to them. We believe one week is enough time for an expert to review a case report and provide a feedback. Although we will continue to send all articles to two more blinded reviews, a decision for acceptance or rejection can be made based on two reviews from the reviewer board panel. We will send this decision to authors for revision and will get this first revised copies approved by the reviewers board. This will definitely help in fast tracking the review process and provide an early reply to our authors.

As far as normal blinded review by reviewers who are not on reviewer's board, we have made certain policy changes. The normal duration of reviews from reviewers who are not on reviewer's board will be reduced for current 4 weeks to 2 weeks and we will be prompt in our reminders and reallocating the reviews. We request our reviewers to please convey to us their availability for review of articles as soon as they get the request. This will save their time and also time of the authors. We understand that reviewers may be busy and at times will not be able to review articles. However once the reviewers convey their inability to review we can immediately send the article to another reviewer. If however the reviewer does not convey to the journal, we are bound to wait to 4 weeks before reassigning the case report. This delays the entire review process and even reviewer's board will not be able to help in this. We sincerely request all our reviewers to please convey their availability and also be prompt in their reply for review requests they have accepted. Case reports require relatively less time for peer review and a template for review is also provided with the request. More information on what is expected from reviewers of

<p>Access this article online</p> <p>Website: www.jocr.co.in</p> <p>DOI: 2250-0685.660</p>	<p>Author's Photo Gallery</p>  <p>Dr. Ashok Shyam</p>	<p>¹Indian Orthopaedic Research Group, Thane, India. ²Sancheti Institute for Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation, Pune, India</p> <p>Address of Correspondence Dr. Ashok Shyam, Department of Orthopaedic, Sancheti Institute for Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation, Pune, India. Email: drashokshyam@gmail.com</p>
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JOCR is already discussed in details in one of the previous editorials [1].

Reviewing article for a journal is a privilege as well as a responsibility. It is a way to contribute to your subject and help define the course of a journal and its quality. We at JOCR including all editorial board members are very grateful to all our reviewers for helping the journal grow in last 7 years. As mentioned above JOCR has always acknowledged our reviewers and formation of reviewer's board is another step in acknowledging the contributions of reviewers. I believe JOCR is the first orthopaedic journal in the world to create a parallel reviewers board. I think it's is only with help of our reviewers that will be able to clear the huge backlog and also provide timely service to our authors. We are still open to reviewer's application and anyone with decent reviewing experience can apply by sending us an email. We also invite the current reviewers to send their comments and views on how to improve the reviewing process of JOCR and to make it more efficient. Please send your views by email to us at editor.jocr@gmail.com

Regards

Dr Ashok Shyam

Editor – JOCR

References

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2. Shyam A. JOCR: Personalised Journal, Personalised Network and Clinical Decision Making (CDM). J Orthop Case Rep. 2012 Oct-Dec;2(4):2-3.

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