

Instructions for Peer Reviewers

All manuscripts submitted to Touch Medical Media journals undergo double-blind peer review. Peer review is the critical assessment of manuscripts submitted to journals by experts who are usually not part of the editorial staff. The process aims to provide authors with objective feedback to improve their work and allows the editor to assess the paper's suitability for publication in the journal.

The [COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers](#) and [ICMJE's Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals](#), set out the basic principles and standards to which all peer reviewers should adhere during the peer-review process. Please refer to these before accepting to review a paper and throughout the review process.

Invitation

The editor will email you with the paper, peer-review form and the deadline for receiving the final comments. We request that you respond to the invitation as soon as you can – any delays in responding slows down the review process. If you decline the invitation it would be greatly appreciated if you are able to provide suggestions for alternative reviewers.

Peer Review Form

The editor will provide you with a form to complete; the form is made up of 3 sections and includes a number of questions to consider whilst reviewing the article. At the top of the form you will be asked to provide one of the following recommendations:

- Accept (if you believe that the paper is suitable for publication in its current form you must justify why no revisions are required and provide a summary of the article)
- Revise – either major or minor (explain the revision that is required, and indicate to the editor whether or not you would be happy to review the revised article)
- Reject (explain reason in report)

Reviewers' comments should be constructive, honest, and polite. Consideration should be given to whether the paper is suitable for the journal it is submitted to. Each journal's aims and scope is available under the Journals tab on the website.

Please focus the review on the content of the manuscript and not on grammatical or spelling errors, all accepted articles are sub-edited by our in house editor prior to publication.

Deadline for Completion of Peer Review Form

We request that reviewers respond promptly to invitations and once agreed, return the completed peer review form to the editor by the date provided in the invitation email. If you need more time please notify us immediately so that we can keep the authors informed.

Confidentiality

Reviewers are required to treat all submitted manuscripts, associated material, and the information they contain, strictly confidential and should not share information about submissions with any other parties. Reviewers must not retain the manuscript for their personal use and should destroy paper copies of manuscripts and delete electronic copies after submitting their reviews.

We expect that reviewers will not make use of any material or take advantage of any information they gain through the peer review process. Reviewers must not publicly discuss authors' work and must not appropriate authors' ideas before the manuscript is published. Reviewers must not retain the manuscript for their personal use and should destroy copies of manuscripts after submitting their reviews. Reviewers who seek assistance from a trainee or colleague in the performance of a review should acknowledge these individuals' contributions in the written comments submitted to the editor.

Using artificial intelligence (AI) technology to provide peer review feedback of manuscripts may violate confidentiality. Reviewers should be aware that AI can generate authoritative-sounding output that can be incorrect, incomplete, or biased. Therefore, use of AI is forbidden for use in peer review of manuscripts submitted to Touch Medical Media journals.

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Conflicts of Interest

Reviewers are asked to not critique a manuscript they are invited to review if they have relationships or activities that could complicate their review. Reviewers must disclose to the editorial office of any relationships or activities that could bias their opinions of the manuscript, and should recuse themselves from reviewing specific manuscripts if the potential for bias exists. Reviewers must not use knowledge of the work they are reviewing before its publication to further their own interests.

All editorial staff regularly publish their own disclosure statements and are available at request.

Editorial Process

The editor makes a decision based on the reviewers' comments and recommendations, seeking guidance from the Editorial Board where necessary. Reviewers are notified of the ultimate decision to accept or reject a paper, and the journal will acknowledge the contribution of peer reviewers to their journal. Peer reviewers are able to request proof of work upon request.

Conflicting Reviews

If reviewers appear to disagree the editor will send all the comments to the relevant Section Editor and ask that they make the final decision.

Revisions

Revised manuscripts and rebuttal letters are assessed by the editor. Manuscripts that undergo major revisions may require re-review by the original reviewer or a member of the editorial board to provide guidance or review, if original reviewers are unavailable.

Appeals

If an author feels they are able to revise their rejected article based on the peer reviewers' comments we will ask that they submit the revised article and a rebuttal letter. We will then return the revised article to the original peer reviewers to be reconsidered for publication in the journal.