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‘How To Review a Manuscript’
The Reviewer’s Role

Siri Rostoft 2014

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Should I accept to review?

- Is the paper about a topic that I am familiar with/interested in?
- Think about yourself as a “general reader” in the field
- Are you familiar with the methodology? (Statistical help available)

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General Impression and Abstract

General Impression	Short summary of the article	General comprehension of the manuscript Language/style/grammar Reviewer's general level of enthusiasm
	Avoid personal remarks about the Authors	Add such remarks to "comments to Editor"
Abstract	Is it a real summary of the paper?	Including the key results
	Is it too long?	Journals set a limit for the number of words

Validity of study

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the study
- Is the design right for answering the research question?
- Were the data collected adequately? Was the sampling right?
- Are the methods described adequately?
- Are the analyses right? Should they be redone?

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Validity of study

- Ideally you might add up some of the tables. You probably can't do this for all tables, but if one or two are wrong it raises important questions
- Are the conclusions supported by the data?
- Do the authors go beyond the evidence in their conclusions?

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Ethical issues

- Important point
- Do you have worries regarding ethical issues?

- All studies considered for publications in JGO need to include an ethical approval (in the US: IRB, various committees in Europe and outside Europe)
- Even for retrospective studies (need permission to access medical records)

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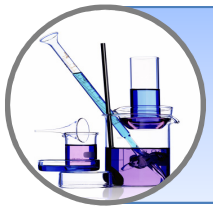
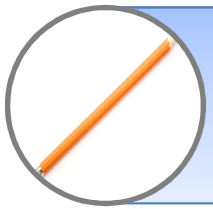
Introduction

Is it effective, clear and well organized?



Does it really introduce and put into perspective what follows?

Suggest changes in organization and point Authors to appropriate citations



Don’t just write “the Authors have done a poor job”

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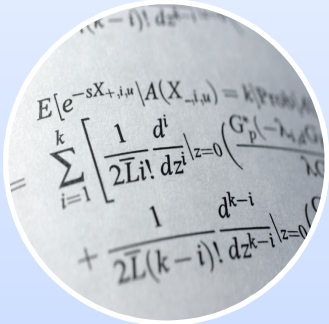
Can a colleague reproduce the experiments and get the same outcomes?

Did the Authors include proper references to previously published methodology?



Is the description of new methodology accurate?

Could or should the Authors have included supplementary material?

Results should not be in the methods section

Assessing the Methodology

Statistical assistance is available

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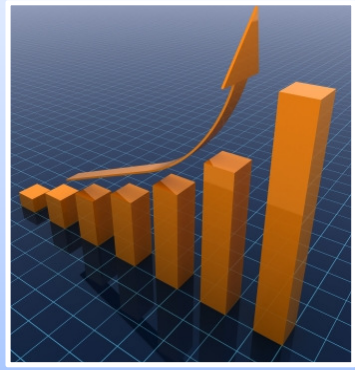
Results and Discussion



Suggest improvements in the way data is shown

If you find the results difficult to understand, others will too!

Comment on general logic and on justification of interpretations and conclusions

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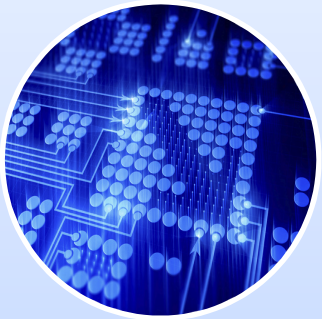
Comment on importance, validity and generality of conclusions



Request toning down of unjustified claims and generalizations

Request removal of redundancies and summaries

The abstract, not the conclusion, summarizes the study

The conclusion is often too long

Assessing the Conclusions

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References: Tools for Reviewers (I)

For Editors	• Plagiarism detection tool at time of submission – will soon be implemented
For Reviewers	• Free access to ScienceDirect: All content published by Elsevier • Free access to Scopus: The world's largest abstract and citation database • Reference-linking and resolution in PDF of the manuscript

ScienceDirect

Scopus

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Editors' View:
What makes a good Reviewer?

- Provides a thorough and comprehensive report
- Submits the report on time
- Provides well-founded comments for Authors
- Gives constructive criticism
- Demonstrates objectivity
- Provides a clear recommendation to the Editor

Example of outstanding review

- Thank you for an interesting paper, with informative results on the incidence and mortality trends in SEER data in EE vs younger patients/individuals from 1973-2009. I really enjoyed reading the paper, and particularly liked Table 2.

- I have some suggestions for improvements which I would like to see addressed or responded to, and they are outlined below. I also have some minor issues, which may be resolved at the authors discretion, as indicated below.

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Review example cont.

- Concerns to be addressed/responded to:
- 1. The abstract conclusion is only descriptive (i.e. a summary of results), and do not link up to the title and screening focus otherwise portrayed.
- 2. I appreciate the analyses presented, but I would like to see also the age group 70-85 included. If this will not be done, for some reason, please include an explanation for why this group was left out, and discuss possible consequences of this exclusion. In my opinion, changes in screening rates would first portray themselves in this age group, so I have a hard time following the line of argumentation when this group is not included.

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Review cont.

- 3. I follow the discussion for changes in incidence, but I have a hard time following the discussion on changes in mortality, as there is no or little discussion of the change in life expectancy and the change in mortality for other competing causes of death in the time period considered.

- 8. There are certain concerns voiced on screening, please refer to the pro/contra screening discussion and include som publications on why screening may be problematic (e.g. numerous articles by Welch et al.)

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Thank you!

- Reviewers are invaluable for JGO
- We need more reviewers
- We need YOU!

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