HOW TO CONDUCT A REVIEW

Pre-review

Before you accept or decline an invitation to review, consider the following questions:

- Does the article match your area of expertise? Only accept if you feel you can provide a high-quality review.
- Do you have a potential conflict of interest? Disclose this to the editor when you respond.
- Do you have time? Reviewing can be a lot of work – before you commit, make sure you can meet the deadline.

Respond to the invitation as soon as you can – delay in your decision slows down the review process, whether you agree to review or not. If you decline the invitation, provide suggestions for alternative reviewers.

If you accept, you must treat the materials you receive as confidential documents. This means that you cannot share them with anyone without prior authorization from the editor. Since peer review is confidential, you also must not share information about the review with anyone without permission from the editors and authors.

First, read the article and then take a break from it, giving you time to think. Consider the article from your own perspective. When you sit down to write the review, make sure you know what the journal is looking for, and have a copy of any specific reviewing criteria you need to consider.

Review

Your review will help the editor decide whether to publish the article. Giving your overall opinion and general observations of the article is essential. Your comments should be courteous and constructive, and should not include any personal remarks or personal details, including your name.

Providing insight into any deficiencies is important. You should explain and support your judgment so that both the editors and the authors are able to fully understand the reasoning behind your comments. You should indicate whether your comments are your own opinion or are reflected by the data.

Checklist

Summarize the article in a short paragraph. This shows the editor you have read and understood the research.

Give your main impressions of the article, including whether it is novel and interesting, whether it has a sufficient impact and adds to the knowledge base. Point out any journal-specific points – does it adhere to the journal’s standards? If you suspect plagiarism, fraud or have other ethical concerns, raise your suspicions with the editor, providing as much detail as possible. Visit PHYSIOTHERPY’s web site or the COPE Guidelines for more information.
Give specific comments and suggestions, including ones about the layout and format, Title, Abstract, Introduction, Graphical Abstracts and/or Subject, Method, Statistical Section, Results, Discussion, Limitation, Conclusion, language and References.

Your recommendation

When you make a recommendation, it is worth considering the categories the editor most likely uses for classifying the article:
- accept without changes
- accept after changes suggested by reviewer
- rate manuscript once again after major changes and another review
- reject.

The final decision

The Editor-in-Chief ultimately decides whether to accept or reject the article. The editor will weigh all views and may call for a third opinion or ask the author for a revised paper before making a decision. The online editorial system provides reviewers with a notification of the final decision, if the journal has opted in to this function. If this is not applicable for your journal, you can contact the editor to find out whether the article was accepted or rejected.