

Some things to do and not to do

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The review

The main purpose of the review process is not to reject a manuscript but to make suggestions as to how to improve it

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What if you have already reviewed this paper?

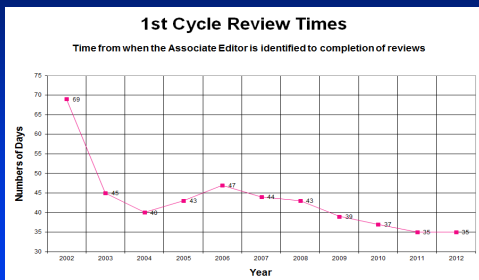
- ◆ Let the Editor know if you have already reviewed this paper for another journal but still go ahead and review it if the author has made the suggested changes
 - *if the changes have not been made simply reject the paper and let the Editor know why*
 - *you don't need to tell this to the author, the Editor will do it*

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What not to do

- ◆ Do not accept an assignment to referee a paper if you cannot do it in a timely fashion
 - typically, if you can't do it within 2 - 3 weeks then say no
 - it's unfair to the author (and the Editor) if you hold up publication excessively

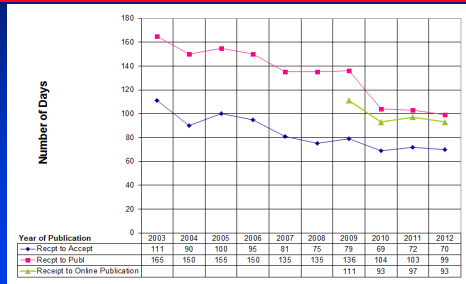
Review times for Medical Physics



The 2nd cycle review

- ◆ Don't hold up publication by taking too long for the 2nd review
 - just check that the author has made all the changes you recommended (or adequately explained why not)
 - always do this within one week if possible

Total publication times for *Medical Physics*



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Don't be cruel!

- ◆ The author has put lots of work and time into this so don't say things in your review like "this is utter nonsense" or "of no earthly value", etc.
 - *by all means say this to the Editor in confidence but not to the author*

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Some things to do

- ◆ Watch out for plagiarism
- ◆ Plagiarism* is the use of text or other items (figures, images, tables) without permission or acknowledgment of the source of these materials

* Council of Scientific Editors White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications

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Common forms of plagiarism

- ◆ Reproducing, word-for-word, sentences of others, and often complete paragraphs
- ◆ Reproducing figures and illustrations without indicating the source
- ◆ Problem: with electronic publications it's too easy to copy-and-paste

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What else watch out for

- ◆ Are the conclusions statistically significant?
 - *has the author even tried to find out if they are statistically significant?*

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Has the theory section already been published elsewhere?

- ◆ Many authors reproduce their theory section in several papers
- ◆ Better to simply state the basic theory and give a reference
- ◆ Most readers will already have read the theory elsewhere anyway, so why waste reader's time and energy (and journal space) reproducing it here

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What to look for in the Discussion section

- ◆ Has the author attempted to explain or justify unexpected results?
- ◆ Is there excessive redundancy with the *Results* section?
- ◆ Are all the claims made in the Discussion warranted by the results?

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What to look for in the References

- ◆ Has the author given appropriate recognition of the work of others?
- ◆ Has the author adhered to the reference style of the journal?
 - *if not, then it's likely that the paper was originally sent to another journal first and was rejected*
 - *tell the author in your review that the reference style is wrong and tell the Editor*

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