


How to be a journal referee

(Panel Discussion)



John M. Boone, Ph.D. FAAPM, FSBI, FACR
 Professor and Vice Chair (Research) of Radiology
 Professor of Biomedical Engineering
 University of California, Davis
 Sacramento, California

Former Relevant Roles :
 Deputy Editor, **Medical Physics** (6 years)
 Associate Editor, **Medical Physics** (16 years)
 Associate Editor, *Radiology*
 Chair, Journal Business Management Committee
 Member, Editor Search Committee (1998 and 2012)
 Member, Publisher Assessment Team (1995)
 Reviewed over 150 **Medical Physics** Manuscripts in last decade

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Why be a journal referee?

- Part of being an academic scientist
- Part of being a clinical medical physicist
- Let's you know where the field is headed
- Allows you to steer its direction

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Duties as a scientist to review?

- Peer review is the bedrock of U.S. Science
- If you expect to submit manuscripts for publication, you have a duty to review manuscripts. For every manuscript you submit, the minimum is to review 6 manuscripts.

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Nitty-Gritty of Review (1)

- **General Comments**
- **Specific Comments**
- **Minor Comments (usually grammatical)**

For most journals, you can either input your report as a text cut and paste or as a PDF – if you are going to cut and paste, text formatting does not matter as it is usually lost in the paste. If you have math to discuss or other content requiring special fonts – submit your review as a PDF.

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Nitty-Gritty of Review (2)

- **Specific Comments**

Number your comments

Refer to locations in the manuscript, usually like:

Page 5, line 34: This sentence

or

Line 459: The word “incidents” is used in the

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Nitty-Gritty of Review (3)

- **General Comments**

- Should be written last
- Need to summarize the scientific aspects of the manuscript (1-2 sentences) so that the authors know that you understood it.
- Then comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript
- Do not make an explicit recommendation of “reject” or “accept” in the body of the review

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Nitty-Gritty of Review (4)

Efficiency (1): getting the job done

- Recommend voice recognition software (DNS)
- Print out or tablet read
- First red – pen document (specific comments)
- Second Read (if necessary) – brush up on the big picture for your overall assessment

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Nitty-Gritty of Review (5)

Efficiency (2): Keeping track of your reviews

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REVIEWS
GRANTS
MANUSCRIPTS
AJR
  Medical_Physics
    2011_08_11_CT-Dose.docx
    2011_12_08_MTF-eval.docx
    2012_04_15_TaxDay.docx
    2013_08_06_Referee.docx
PMB
Radiology
    
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Final Comments

- The reviewer is not a collaborator on the team
- Do not redesign the experiments and suggest that they all be redone. This is the authors' science, not yours, and your job is to evaluate their science, and not make it your own.
- Recognize the work that addressing your comments would require. If you are suggesting changes of some sort, put yourself in the shoes of the authors. The criteria for experimental methods is acceptability, not perfection
- Rather than requiring more months of experiments, reject the manuscript with good explanation

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El Fin

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The collage features five distinct images: a city skyline with a prominent skyscraper, a large stadium filled with spectators, a grand classical building with columns, a zoo enclosure with several elephants, and another city skyline featuring a tall tower.