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Standardizing Editorial Process Towards Quality

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Abstract

A quality journal depends upon well-organized, structured, and efficient editorial activity. In addition, it is also determined by robust peer-review, pellucid focus and scope of the journal, amiability to authors, and open access for scholarly exchange of scientific research for paramount researchers worldwide.

Key words: Editor; Journal; Peer-review

The quality of a journal depends upon the activity of the editorial work. The editorial team is the most important member, depicting the journal and editor-in-chief as the captain of the ship (Journal). Our Journal editorial team, national advisers, and international advisory members are all related to the scope of our journal, and all are specialists with the highest degree as MD. From 2021, we have included editorial interns who are residents of dermatology to encourage them to learn editorial work in the early phase of their career journey. We invite specialists MD (Dermatology) reviewers from different institutions unrelated to the author's submission from Nepal and neighbouring countries like India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. In the new editorial team, we have International advisory members from neighboring countries like India, China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Sweden, and Switzerland. The editorial office duties include monitor submission, peer-review, copyediting, and publication, which is a great responsibility. Regarding work of the editorial flow in our Journal Nepal Journal of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology (NJDVL), with our new editorial team, we have divided groups/teams into case reports/letters to the editor, original articles/review articles, and copyediting/publishing teams to move on the editorial work smoothly. Whenever a submission is there, the respective teams check for plagiarism (which we take very seriously), initial editorial evaluation of the manuscript for the

format according to our journal, reference checking then assigns to peer-review and once accepted forward to copyediting team.

Peer-review is a necessary process that evaluates the scientific submission for its validity and improves the quality of the academic work. Peer-review has been defined as a method of subjecting an author's original work, research, or ideas whom the experts in the respective field scrutinize.¹

According to Brian Lucey, the characteristics of a peer-reviewer are being professional, pleasant, read the invite, helpful scientific, timely, realistic, empathetic, open, and organised.² Different types of peer-review are available double-blind, single-blind, open, public, transparent, collaborative, post-publication, and transferable peer-review.³ In our Journal, we have a double-blind peer-review process. The reviewers and the editorial team are the key players to run a quality journal. After submission, the manuscript goes to the respective teams according to the submission type (original articles/case reports). Preliminary editorial review is done especially check for plagiarism, format submitted according to journal or not. Authors

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resubmit their manuscript according to editorial review comments. A reviewer is selected who is an expert (MD specialist) in the field of the scope of our Journal, and a blinded copy of the manuscript is sent to the reviewer.

Our Journal NJDVL invites articles or the articles to go to the peer-review process only related to our field (dermatology, venereology, and leprosy) otherwise rejected.

The author's definition is, whose contribution is sufficient to a scholarly scientific work.⁴ Journals usually provide guidelines on authorship in author's guidelines. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) guidelines are internationally accepted, consisting of 4 criteria that include substantial contributions to the conception, drafting the work, and final approval, agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work.⁵ Our Journal allows all the authors to submit their submissions and adhere to the guidelines of ICMJE. The submissions are under our Journal's scope, but if found for plagiarism, not according to journal format, we request the authors to modify and resubmit it before sending it for peer-review process. A quality journal has a transparency that elaborately mentions the journal's scope, fees, editorial policies, authors guidelines, vigorous peer-review, author-friendly, open access, publication on time, working editorial team, and good communication from the journal. Our Journal meets all the criteria and maintains its standard towards a quality journal. In addition, the developing countries face challenges in striving for the reputation in international research to increase its global visibility. The Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS) framework provides detailed assessment criteria for the quality of publishing practices of Southern journals, which are initially used to assess the journals hosted on JOL platforms. Journals assessed against the JPPS criteria are given one of six levels: inactive title; new title; no stars; one star; two stars; and three stars. Our Journal has two stars according to JPPS criteria. Likewise, the detailed feedback from the JPPS assessment helps

the journal editors identify ways to improve their publishing practice and standards to achieve a higher level at the next assessment.⁶ NJDVL is also hosted on the JOL platform, which is provided with training and supporting services in publishing to strengthen its capacity to undertake its work itself. Our Journal also adheres to the COPE (Committee of Publication Ethics), Code of Conduct for Journal Editors designed to provide a set of minimum standards to all COPE members, including general duties and responsibilities of editors; relation with readers; relation with authors; relation with reviewers; relation with editorial board members; relation with journal owners and publishers; editorial and peer-review processes; quality assurance; protecting individual data; encouraging ethical research; dealing with possible misconduct; ensuring the integrity of the academic record; intellectual property; encouraging debate; complaints; commercial considerations; and conflicts of interest.⁷ Similarly, the editors of the journal provide direction for the journal and build strong management taking in care of responsibility for quality of consent; editors' responsibilities to authors; editors' responsibilities to readers and the public; editors' responsibilities to peer-reviewers; editors and conflict of interest; editorial decision making; determination of the niche, comparative advantage and content of the journal; possible types of contribution to the journal including editorials, research articles, review articles, debates or round table discussions, case reports, personal perspectives, news, letters to the editor, reviews of books or electronic media; manuscript evaluation and identification and evaluation of reviewers.⁸

In order to improve the quality, multi-disciplinary approach, and standard of the journal; strict monitoring of evidence-based literature with novel reports, originality, publishing high-quality figures, logically structured English grammar format has to be kept in mind. Our Journal may take time to overhaul as a science citation index journal. However, our continuous efforts may unlock our potential to grow internationally as Nepal's reputed scientific journal for dermatology, venereology, and leprosy.

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