

Peer review process

(Original articles)

This guide offers practical information, basic principles and norms that peer reviewers of the Journal of CM & NH should comply with during the review process.

- *Confidentiality*

Manuscripts submitted to the Journal of CM & NH are strictly confidential and premature disclosure of their content to a third party without the written consent of the editor is prohibited. Reviewers should treat manuscripts with the greatest discretion. Data or insights acquired throughout the peer review process may not be used to one's own advantage or for other than strict review purposes.

Reviewers should not seek contact with authors themselves and must not engage others in the review process without explicit permission of the editor. The identity of the reviewer will not be disclosed without the reviewers' written approval.

- *Timelines*

Reviewers are expected to respond promptly and to submit reviews within a reasonable, mutually agreed timeframe. Apart from exceptional cases, the review invitation will stipulate a deadline of 14 days. The editor should be notified if circumstances arise that threaten the submission of a timely review.

- *Competence*

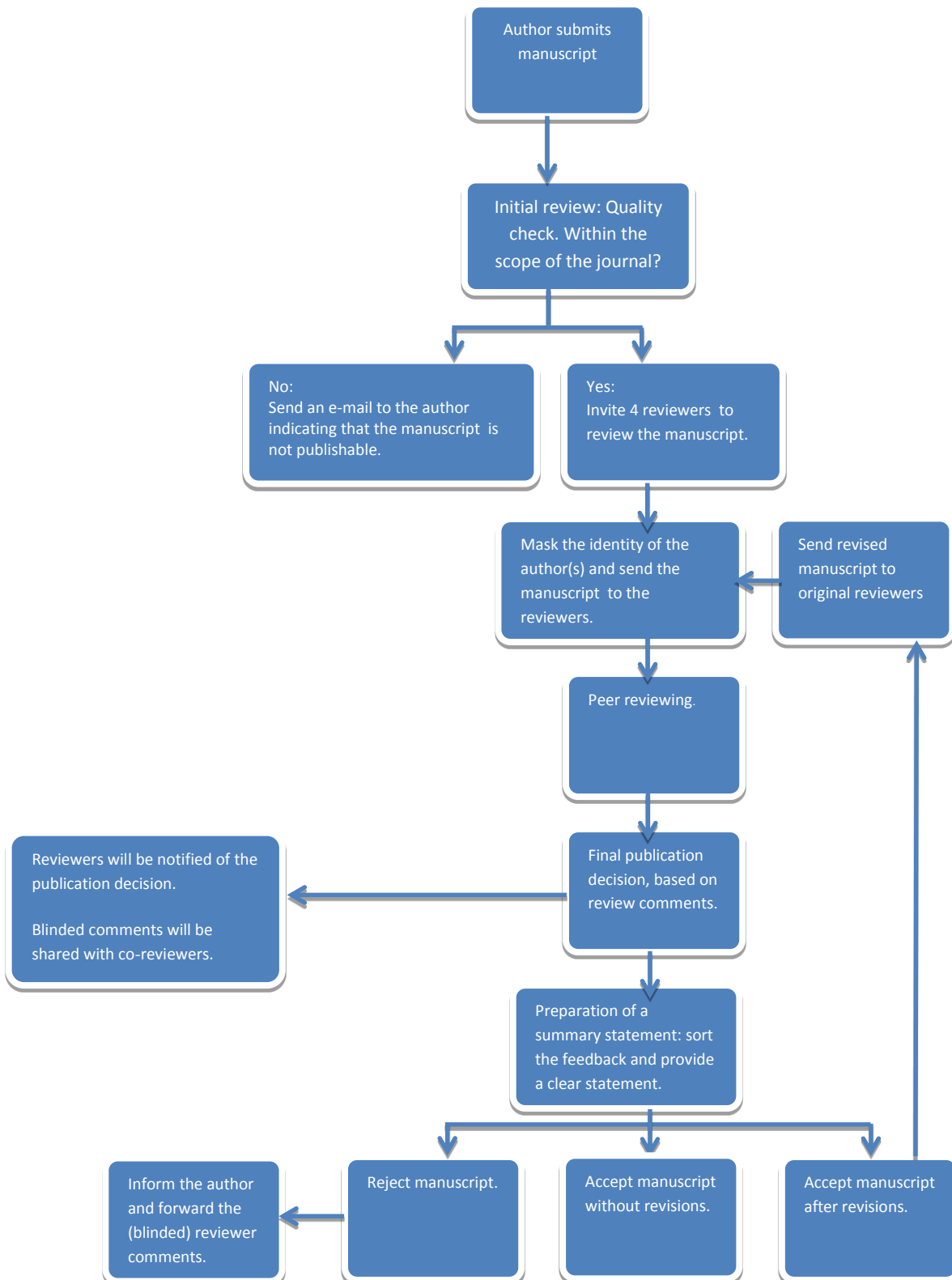
Reviewers should determine if they have the expertise required to assess the manuscript and should review the document only if they are confident they can provide an authoritative assessment within the established interval. The editor will be notified immediately if the reviewer's expertise does not cover all manuscript sections.

- *Conflict of interest*

Reviewers should disclose any potentially conflicting or competing interests that might affect objectivity and lead to decreased independence of judgement (personal, financial, intellectual, professional, political, religious or other motives for tangible personal benefit). Please consult the editor if prior or ongoing connections with the author(s) might be interpreted as a conflict of interest. If you experience any challenges preparing a fair, trustworthy review, please return the manuscript at once.

Make sure that your review is based on the merits of the work and not affected favorably or unfavorably by conflicting considerations, personal favoritism or confirmation/intellectual biases.

- Peer review process



Before you accept or decline, please consider the following issues:

a. Does the manuscript truly match your area of expertise? Accept the invitation only if you are confident that you can provide a high quality review.
b. Do you have a potential conflict of interest: please fill in the peer reviewer statement. A conflict of interest will not automatically disqualify you as a reviewer but full notification will enable the editor to make an informed decision.
c. Do you have sufficient time to conduct a thorough review and meet the deadline? On average, an article will take 3 hours to review properly.

If you do not take up the invitation, make some recommendations for surrogate reviewers.

- *Review report*

We rely on your substantive knowledge and professional assessment. Be objective, constructive and precise. Avoid personal comments. Highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the document, list points of improvements, and provide recommendations that will guide the author during the revision of his/her manuscript.

Please distinguish between crucial and additional comments and mark which points of improvement are most significant and which notes are additional and solely relevant for improving the strength of the document. Confidential comments to the editor should not include denigration or false accusation.

Provide feedback for any of the following issues that influenced your assessment of the manuscript.

General Issues

- a. **Appropriateness of the journal:** Is the manuscript relevant to an international audience and the readers of the Journal of Cellular Medicine and Natural Health?
- b. **Originality:** Is the work original and convincingly compelling/fascinating to justify publication? Does it include more than a standard textbook chapter? Is its main question significant? Does the study make a significant contribution to the continual development of the knowledge base of the field?
- c. **Writing style:** Is it concise and straightforward? Engaging? Does it reflect appropriate academic credentials?
- d. **Cohesiveness of reasoning:** Does the manuscript show cohesiveness of reasoning? To what extent are conclusions supported by data or relevant arguments? Are there any careless omissions?
- e. **Scientific knowledge base:** Does the manuscript provide an up-to-date and state-of-the-art understanding of the subject matter? Are references relevant and up to date?
- f. **Structure:** Does the organization of manuscript elements/information units foster clarity? Is the document divided into clearly defined sections and are all decisive elements included?
- g. **Length-content ratio:** Are paper length and information density proportionally balanced? Are certain sections too extensive? Or too condensed?

Specific remarks

List your points of criticism in as much detail as possible and include evidence in the form of references to definite sentences or manuscript sections. Comments may be embedded directly in the original word file via track changes or provided in a stand-

alone document whereby remarks should be accompanied by line-numbers referring to the original manuscript.

Provide feedback for any of the following issues that influenced your assessment of the manuscript.

ISSUES

a. Title

- Does it clearly reflect the content of the article?
- Is it concise and informative?
- Does it serve electronic retrieval?

b. Abstract

- Does it offer a brief and balanced reflection of the contents of the article?
- Does the author(s) provide keywords?

c. Introduction/ Background

- Is the study situated in a theoretical context? Does the author familiarize the recipient with the rationale behind the research project?
- Is the problem investigated clearly stated and does the introduction provide a clarification of which previous findings will be expanded or challenged?
- Is the introduction to the point or does it comprise lengthy background information?

d. Objectives

- The introduction should include the main objectives and the

hypotheses tested.

e. Methodology

- Does the author document how the study/experiment was conducted and provide the rationale for the adaptation of specific procedures/materials.
- Does the author provide an account of preparatory steps and materials deployed?
- Is the sampling adequate?
- Is the study design suitable to verify the hypotheses posed?
- Does the article provide an outline of the research protocol?
- Do the methodology and material paragraphs sections provide enough quantitative and qualitative information to enable study duplication and facilitate evaluation of statistical procedures plus validity of results/conclusions?
- Are grounds for efficacy evaluation provided?

f. Results

- Are study findings presented in an objective manner?
- Are results presented in a rational sequence?
- Are the statistical analyses appropriate?
- Are illustrative materials (figures/tables) used effectively? Do they describe the data correctly and consistently?
- Did the author avoid text-graph data duplication? Are all illustrative elements clear and do they have an added value?

g. Conclusion/discussion

- Does the author provide an adequate outline of the main results and analyze the data in appropriate depth?
- Are conclusions supported by research data? Does the author provide alternative explanations?
- Are study findings related to previous study outcomes? Is the hypothesis confirmed or disproved by the study results?
- Does the author explore the significance of study results for future research and clinical practice?
- Are study limitations listed?
- Does the author evade speculation, over interpretation or inflation of significance?

h. Citations

- Are the references suitable and accurately numbered in order of appearance?
- Does the author respect the citation standards of the American Medical Association?
- Are all references listed cited in the text and is the reference list complete?
- Are there any significant publications that have been overlooked?

i. Ethical issues

- Fraud: if you have doubts about the correctness of the study data, discuss it with the editor.
- Plagiarism: if anomalies or similarities with other

manuscripts are detected or if you are disquieted about ethical issues of the work, you should inform the editor. Please include a reference to the copied work. However, concerns should be kept and communicated confidentially.

- Treatment of humans and animals: Has the study been carried out in a manner that is consistent with acceptable research practices?

j. Additional comments

- Did you detect any errors in reasoning, statistics, interpretation, citing or other aspects of the document, which were not mentioned in previous sections?
- Do you have any additional comments?

k. Your recommendation

Is the manuscript suitable for publication? When you make a recommendation, please use the following categories:

- The article should be rejected for its poor quality or because it is out of scope.
- The article should be published without revision.
- The article should be accepted after revision (indicate clearly what revision is needed and indicate whether or not you want to review the revised article).

l. Comments to the editor only

- Confidential comments to the editor.

