Abstract 12

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Abstract Information

Abstract Title:
Abstract: Immediate rejection of manuscripts by a scientific peer-reviewed journal: an unavoidable burden?

Abstract:

**Background:** Journals receive a large amount of manuscripts, which are subjected to immediate rejection (before peer review), an undesirable event, both for the authors and the journals. The objective of this research was to establish the causes of immediate rejection of the manuscripts received at *Revista Panamericana de Salud Pública / Pan American Journal of Public Health (RPSP/PAJPH)* and to evaluate possible ways to reduce its incidence.

**Methods:** For this descriptive study, we considered all the manuscripts submitted to *RPSP/PAJPH* from 2010 to 2014. Absolute and relative frequencies of manuscripts by type and outcome (immediate rejection, rejection after peer review, immediate acceptance, acceptance after peer review, withdrawn, and double submission) were calculated. Causal analysis of
immediate rejections focused on manuscripts received in 2011-2014.

**Results.** In the 5-year period, RPSP/PAJPH received 3,996 manuscripts; 124 (3.2%) of them were immediately deleted because authors wrongly submitted them twice: 0.9% of original versions, 10.9% of first revisions, and 2.9% of second revisions. Out of 3,990 remaining manuscripts, 2,541 (65.7%) were rejected without peer review. There were no significant differences between the type of manuscript or the rejection rates in the studied years. The main reason for immediate rejection (74.7%) was the limited, local significance and impact of the papers, far from the scope of the journal and the expectative of its readers. This inadequacy was in terms of the characteristics of the studied sample/universe (65.7%) and/or the reduced, local scope of the results and conclusions (9.1%).

**Conclusions.** Rejected manuscripts because of their limited, local impact and duplicate submissions—particularly those of the first revised versions—account for a considerable waste of already scarce editorial resources and affect authors’ interests. Both problems may be reduced by including more explicit information in the instructions to authors and in the on-line submission system.