

# **Are the instructions to reviewers for reviewing manuscripts superfluous?**

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## Background

Peer reviewing is essential for scientific publications, **be it Medical Science or other disciplines**. However, it creates many problems for the editors and delays the process of publication. The quality of articles in a journal depends **considerably** on the quality of review of the manuscripts. For ensuring good standards of journals and their timely publication, it is necessary for the reviewers to respond promptly with well-argued comments. We tried to improve the response of reviewers by sending them tips for reviewing and the format of reporting the evaluation.

## Methods

In May 2015, we started sending to the reviewers the "Tips for reviewing" and the "Format of reporting the evaluation" along with the manuscript **for review**. The reviews received during 01.11.14 to 30.08.15 (8 months) were analyzed for their response rate, time taken for response, and structure of response.

## Results

Over the 8 months, 13 manuscripts were received in the first four months during which no Tips and Format were specified by the journal and 24 manuscripts were received in next four months during which the Tips and Format were specified. Manuscripts handled by the Editorial Office were excluded from the study. Each manuscript was sent to two reviewers. Without any reminder, only 10 out of 26 reviewers (38.4%) responded in the first half (response time 13.71 days) and 23 out of 48 (47.9%) responded in the second half (response time 12.04 days). Almost all reviews in the second half were structured and well-argued.

## Conclusion

Our reviewers are mostly researchers and teachers who are adept at reviewing manuscripts. Yet, it is better to provide them with tips of reviewing and formatting, if only to improve the quality and promptness of their response as-well-as the overall standard and punctuality of the journal issues.