

# Reproductive Health Matters

## Peer Review Guidelines

\*\*\*\*\*

*You have kindly agreed to review a paper submitted to RHM for publication.*

*Please return your review within 2–3 weeks of receiving the paper unless otherwise agreed.*

---

RHM operates a system of open peer review, in which authors and readers know each others' names. Most reviewers and authors find this policy a positive experience; some even contact each other to share information. However, there are legitimate reasons why a review might better be done anonymously; if so, please let us know and we will honour your request. Unless you tell us otherwise, however, we will assume the review is open.

You should treat the contents of the paper as confidential. You must not copy it or show it to anyone else, quote from it or use the information in your own work. Please return it to us or destroy your copy after the editor has confirmed receipt of your review.

Please use the following guidelines:

---

### **Recommendation to the editor**

Based on your review of the paper, please make one of the following recommendations as to whether you think we should – or should not – publish the paper, with any comments meant for the editor only. You need not repeat what you have said to the authors.

1. Recommend publication of the paper with minor changes, as described in the review.
2. Recommend publication of the paper only with substantial changes, as described in the review.
3. Recommend the authors revise and resubmit the paper, possibly for further review, with changes as described in the review. Offer to re-review the paper if necessary.
4. Recommend not accepting the paper for publication, for reasons outlined in the review.

Please note that where a paper contains valuable data, ideas, perspectives and experiences but needs additional information, substantial editing or re-writing in order to be publishable, our policy is to try to work with the authors to achieve this, rather than to reject the paper. A good peer review is crucial to this process.

Finally, if there is something you feel you cannot say to the author directly, but you think it ought to be said, tell the editor, who will say it herself.

---

## Peer review for the author(s)

We will hand on your comments – as you have written them – to the authors. Please write your review in as much depth as you yourself would find helpful if it was your own paper. Please be constructive, and if you think RHM should aim to accept the paper, give as much guidance as you can on how it must be improved.

Please put your review in a Word file, and send it by e-mail to the editor of RHM – not to the authors – along with your recommendation to the editor. Please include the following in your review:

1. Author name(s), title of the paper, and your name, position, institution and country – at the top of the review.
2. Say briefly what the strong points of the paper are.
3. Overall remarks – How could the paper be better structured? What could be expanded upon or moved around? If it is too long, what might be omitted? How might the paper be improved?
4. Specific aspects of each section of the paper, e.g. on what should be added, omitted or amended:

Methodology and findings – What more needs to be added or clarified?

Discussion – What value or significance do you think the data, issues or findings have which is not mentioned?

Conclusions and recommendations – What additional or different conclusions can be drawn? What else might be recommended based on the findings?

References – Note any assertions that are not backed up by evidence or adequately referenced. Provide some of the most important additional references or information that you think should be included, or give help on where to find these.

Few papers are ready for publication when they are submitted. The more guidance you can give, the better. Praise only or one-line comments (e.g. the paper could be better structured) without specific suggestions for improvements are not useful. The purpose of your review is to help the author to bring the paper to a high standard and to make it ready for publication. Put yourself in the author's shoes.

---

## The process from start to finish

1. Agree to do the review or send regrets within 2–3 days of receiving the request.
2. If you cannot do the review, suggest at least one other knowledgeable reviewer to approach, with their e-mail address.
3. Check with the editor if the paper has not arrived by return in response to your acceptance of the review.
4. Confirm you have received the paper.
5. Send your recommendation and review to the editor by e-mail within the time agreed. Reviewers are all busy people, but we hope you can respond in the time agreed once you have received the paper. We will send you reminders to help you.

6. If the editor does not acknowledge receipt of your review in a few days, check she has received it.

---

**Many thanks!**

We very much appreciate your support. Your name will be included in the list of reviewers in the next journal issue, and we will send you a complimentary one-year subscription to the journal as our thanks.

We hope you will continue (or begin) to subscribe to the RHM journal and will consider submitting a paper yourself in future.

---

**Return to:**

**Marge Berer, Editor, Reproductive Health Matters**  
**E-mail: [mberer@rhjournal.org.uk](mailto:mberer@rhjournal.org.uk)**