

GLOSSARY

Peer review

This short glossary covers some terms used in the peer review process.

AUTHORS' EDITOR

A professional writer/editor usually employed by the authors' institution to help prepare publications and grant applications. More common in the US than in Europe.

CONSORT

A set of guidelines for reporting the results of randomised controlled trials.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

The author whose full contact details appear on a publication and who is the point of contact with the journal for handling reviewers' comments, proofs, etc.

EDITOR

The person in overall charge who makes final decisions about acceptance, policy, etc. Larger journals may employ several editors who handle papers and also technical editors (or sub-editors).

HANGING COMMITTEE

The *BMJ* editorial board (named after a committee that decided which paintings should hang in an exhibition)

HOUSE STYLE

Style imposed by a journal on anything to be published. It will include things such as the typeface of headings, the format of references, the type of abstract used, conventions for abbreviations, etc.

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The glossary is based on the content of *How to survive peer review*, by Elizabeth Wager, Fiona Godlee, and Tom Jefferson.

HTML

HyperText Mark-up Language: a computer code used to create electronic journals and web pages

ICMJE

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors—a group of journal editors who prepared the Uniform Requirements for Submissions to Biomedical Journals and who issue occasional statements about aspects of publication such as authorship and conflicting interests. Also known as the *Vancouver Group*.

MICRO-EDITING

Making changes to grammar, spelling, etc, without changing the overall structure of a piece of writing

PAGE PROOFS

Proofs in the form that the final pages will appear (also known as *galley proofs*).

PAY JOURNAL

A journal that charges a fee for publication, either in the form of a page charge or a requirement to buy a certain number of reprints.

PEER REVIEW

The process by which submissions to a journal (editorial peer review) or grant giving body (grant application peer review) are assessed critically by the authors' peers, namely subject matter experts, prior to a decision being taken.

POST-PUBLICATIONS PEER REVIEW

The process by which articles published in a journal are commented on critically by the authors' peers, namely subject matter experts. This form of peer review can take the form of letters to editor or formal comments (as in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews).

MANUSCRIPT

A hand written document, but often used to refer to any unpublished submission. More correctly these are usually referred to as typescripts.

MASKING

The process of removing the authors' details from a paper before it is sent to reviewers and of removing the reviewers' identity from any comments sent to authors. The opposite of open review. Sometimes called blinding.

OPEN REVIEW

Peer review in which the author knows the identity of the reviewer and vice versa.

REVIEWER

Somebody who assesses work for scientific content and presentation and offers opinions about the originality, usefulness, ethical and methodological soundness, and validity of the study and the accuracy and clarity of the reporting. Also known as a *Referee*.

SUB-EDITOR OR TECHNICAL EDITOR

Somebody who puts accepted papers into the journal's house style, edits the language, and checks for completeness and consistency.

FURTHER READING

Wager E, Godlee F, Jefferson TO. *How to survive peer review*. London: BMJ Books, 2002.

Godlee F, Jefferson TO, eds. *Peer review in health sciences*. 2nd edn. London: BMJ Books, 2003.

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Conflicts of interest: Tom Jefferson co-edited the book "Peer review in health sciences" and co-authored the book "How to survive peer review" and the Christmas board game "Get Peered".