



Comment on the article: “Peer review practices in academic medicine: how the example of orthopaedic surgery may help shift the paradigm?”

Fernando Fernandez-Llimos¹

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To the Editor,

Chloros et al. [1] presented an accurate description of the current situation of peer review practices among orthopaedics journals. Together with the objective results reported, the authors also provided recommendations to the journals based on their opinions about the peer review system. Some of these recommendations, like blinding reviews, may not be in line with the science openness goal.

Chloros et al. supported their reluctance about open peer review on the potential retaliation of junior researchers and the potential less critical feedback of reviewers. At this point should be important to agree on what is the role of a peer reviewer. If we consider reviewers as “pit bulls”, they be better barking from the shade [2]. But peer reviewers can be terrific contributors to the final version of a published article. That is the main difference between peer-reviewed scholarly publications and preprints: a group of people devoted their time to provide comments to improve the initial manuscript. In a collaborative publishing system [3], these people deserve, not only being listed in a website where the number of reviewing exercises is reported (publons.com), but their contribution should be acknowledged in the final article published. Quite frequently, reviewers had a greater role in the final version of the article than the individuals listed in the acknowledgements section of the article. And, definitely, peer reviewers’ contribution is more important for the article’s final version than the role played by the 15,025 listed as collaborators (and indexed in PubMed as [IR]) [4]. If we want to minimize the peer review crisis, we should start

retributing peer reviewers by acknowledging their contribution to every single paper they reviewed, and we can only do that in open peer reviews. Should we promote the creation of a [PR] PubMed field to index article’s peer reviewers?

Additionally, it would be important to abandon the common practice of using Journal Impact Factor (JIF) as a surrogate measure of the quality of a journal’s editorial process. As demonstrated in many studies, JIF does not correlate with other quality indicators. This is because JIF is a visibility metric, and not a journals’ quality metric. We all should follow the several declarations and statements about research assessment (e.g., <https://sfdora.org/>, <http://www.leidenmanifesto.org/>, EU Commission Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment), not only when assessing individuals’ performance, but also when evaluating journal aspects different than journal visibility.

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Declarations

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Consent to publish Not applicable.

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✉ Fernando Fernandez-Llimos
fllimos@ff.up.pt

¹ Laboratory of Pharmacology, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal

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