



Monika Bolek is Adjunct Professor at the University of Lodz, Poland and one of the ESJ's outstanding reviewers. She joined the editorial team in 2013. Not only she has conducted reviews of numerous manuscripts but she always provides quality reviews, thoroughly elaborating her suggestions and decisions. When she accepts a manuscript to review, she sends the review within a reasonable timeframe, supporting the agile peer review procedure promoted by ESJ.

It is with immense pleasure that we present to the public her attitudes and suggestions on some crucial issues in the area of academic publishing.

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1. Why is peer review procedure important?

The concept of peer review is important as a quality check, a revision of the scientific methods and the scientific soundness of an article by an expert in the same area of interest. It usually provides useful suggestions on how and why the paper could be improved. However, the reviewer also has a responsibility to prevent the publication of non-scientific, unethical or insupportably controversial content.

Moreover, the peer review process provides an opportunity to analyze the findings of other scientists from a different point of view, sometimes with a dose of criticism, and to discuss uncertainties before the paper is published. As such, journals represent avenues of communication between reviewers and authors, playing an important role in securing an impartial publishing procedure.

2. Peer review within a reasonable timeframe!

Sound scientific results deserve to be published at the earliest possible opportunity. The agility in the process is important – the more time is given to the reviewer, the more time may be wasted. Even though as academics we all have various tasks and activities, in my opinion when a reviewer decides to accept an assignment, several days is sufficient time for a manuscript to be thoroughly analyzed.

Moreover, when the review procedure extends beyond a reasonable timeframe, the results could become obsolete or new literature on the topic may be published. Promptness, though, must not adversely influence quality. The reviewer assigned has to ensure this, through careful inspection of the manuscript.

3. Open access to scientific research:

Developing new ideas, research methodology, the writing and publishing of a scientific article is clearly a process composed of phases. In order to achieve a certain scientific character, every paper should be based on the findings of previous researchers. For this reason, unconstrained access to publications is very important. The results of scientifically sound research must be published, in order to serve as a ground for new research and to contribute to societal development. This process is cyclical in its nature – we use what has been found, develop some new ideas based on the published papers and possibly present new ones. Open science certainly makes it possible for our research to be used by a wider audience and for researchers to verify or challenge the results.

Everybody should have access to research without restrictions. I always opt for open-access journals for my publications. At the same time, publication charges, designed to cover the printing and operating costs of open-access journals, should be set at a reasonable level, i.e not aimed at making a profit.

4. What would you recommend to the reviewers?

My approach to my work as a reviewer is to be efficient and effective. Firstly, I read the paper straight away and note some obvious comments. Then I turn to other tasks, but with the concept, methodology and the idea of the paper in my mind. After that, usually the next day, I return to the revision, reading the paper again and preparing my decision, through suggestions and comments. It is important that the European Scientific Journal enables authors to have a response regarding their papers shortly after submission. I believe that every academician is happy to receive a review of his or her work at the earliest possible opportunity and that motivates me further as a reviewer.

5. Other comments:

We create science and we are responsible for its ethics and quality. What has been discovered belongs to society. Research is our duty and the peer review process is a privilege, designed to strengthen communication and cooperation between each other.