



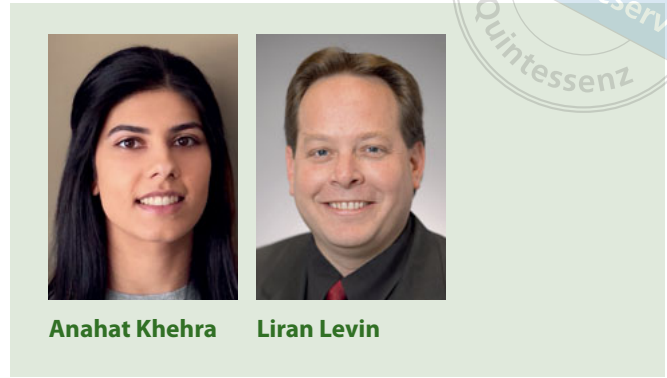
## EDITORIAL

# Peer review: not only for the old guard

An integral and fundamental part of scientific publications is the peer review process. The process includes assessment of submitted manuscripts by individual researchers that are considered experts in the relevant field of interest. The role of the peer reviewers is to ensure standards of quality are being met and to assist the journal editor and associate editors in determining if the manuscript should be published and, if so, whether there are revisions to be made to improve the article prior to publication. Several qualities are assessed, including originality, validity, and significance. Questions like “Is the manuscript original work?”, “Are the methods appropriate and useful to answer the research question?”, “Are the conclusions supported by the results?”, and “Does the manuscript provide added value to the field and share novel information with the readers?” are some of the queries asked when considering a paper for publication. These questions are usually best answered by experts in the specific research area.

The peer reviewers are invited by the journal to review based on their expertise and knowledge in the research area. Traditionally, reviewers are researchers who have dedicated years of clinical, scientific, and academic work to their field of interest. The experts demonstrate a level of science that provides them with the tools to be able to critically evaluate manuscripts. At one point, however, the now-experts reviewed a manuscript for the very first time and were new to the peer review process. We all must start somewhere before becoming an expert. But how does one start? It takes time and exposure to become familiar with the peer review process. The new generation of scientists, clinicians, and researchers should be educated on the importance of peer review and provided with opportunities to be involved in this process early on in their careers.

A dire need for mentorship and guidance exists to bridge the gap between the experts and the new generation. Moreover, the experts may have limited time or availability to conduct reviews, making it difficult for editors to recruit quality and reliable reviewers. The role of mentorship may help to offset these difficulties. The learning curve of being able to critically analyze manuscripts can be supported through proper mentorship. The mentee can benefit from this relationship by gaining exposure, learning essential skills, and building confidence. The mentee’s



ability to critically analyze literature and write manuscripts may also be improved by gaining better critical analysis skills. The tools provided through excellent mentorship can shape the mentee into a quality reviewer and, thus, a better scientist. This can be achieved, at first, through analyzing articles together and providing feedback. When improvement is seen in the mentee’s work, the mentor may guide them through a more independent review of selected papers. Later in the process, the mentee could be invited to perform reviews on their own. Further along the way, they might be invited to write editorials and, in turn, also asked to submit special invited papers. In this way, the responsibilities are being shared between the mentor and the mentee and the knowledge and skills are transferred to the next generation. The mentee can apply these newly learned skills as a clinician-academic-scientist and, when the time comes, share what they have learned with the next generations to come.

Additionally, the future of scientific knowledge can be positively shaped by the mentor through the training of mentees. The mentor can identify individuals who have the potential to become competent and fair reviewers. In turn, the quality of manuscripts being shared with the scientific community can continue to be at the highest level. An opportunity also exists to pave the way for future journal editorial board members, associate editors, and finally, editors-in-chief. The mentor can provide professional advice to mentees for career development and ensure the future of the journal is in good hands. The power of mentorship is undeniable. It should be encouraged and utilized at each step to ensure a bright future for the field of research and clinical advancement.

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