

Reviewer's guideline

Dear reviewer

Thank you for accepting our invitation to review this manuscript. Your professional advice has paramount importance for the journal to publish high-quality articles and make them reputable. To ease the communication with the editorial office and authors, and above all to improve the content, organization, and readability of the article, you are cordially advised to read the editorial policy, guidelines for authors, and the guidelines for reviewers as presented below.

Responsibility of a peer reviewer

The peer reviewer is responsible for critically reading and evaluating a manuscript in his/her specialty/field, and then providing respectful, constructive, and honest feedback to authors about their submission. It is appropriate for the peer reviewer to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the article, ways to improve its strength and/or quality and evaluate the relevance and originality of the manuscript. All unpublished manuscripts are confidential documents.

The associate editors rely on peer reviewers' expert assessments to ensure that the journal publishes high-quality research of significant scientific interest. Reviews of the peer reviewers also assist the authors in improving the presentation of their research. Peer reviewers can make recommendations regarding revision or additional data that must be included before the article is accepted for publication.

Confidentiality

- Reviewers are required to treat all submitted manuscripts in strict confidentiality to maintain the integrity of the review process. Peer reviewers do not discuss the manuscript they are reviewing with anyone outside the Editorial Office without specific permission from the Editor-in-chief or associate editors.
- Peer reviewers do not copy, disseminate or share information in the manuscript for any purpose.
- If peer reviewers have reviewed the article before for a different journal, let the editor know there is a conflict of interest.

- When peer reviewers have completed and submitted their review, they should delete or destroy all copies of downloaded or printed manuscript files, as they are the property of the submitting authors.
- Peer reviewers approve, recommend major or minor revisions, or rejection of the manuscript in the version as submitted.

Reviewer assessment before reviewing article

Please consider the following:

- **Does the article you are being asked to review match your expertise?**

Yes No

If you receive a manuscript that covers a topic that does not sufficiently match your area of expertise, decline the invitation and we appreciate it most if you recommend an alternate reviewer.

- **Do you have time to review the paper?**

Yes No

The reviewers should finalize and submit their reviews of an article within two to three weeks. If you think you cannot complete the review within this time frame, please let the editorial office know and if possible, suggest an alternate reviewer. If you have agreed to review a paper, but will no longer be able to finish the work before the deadline, please contact the editorial office as soon as possible.

- **Are there any potential conflicts of interest?**

Yes No

While conflicts of interest will not disqualify you from reviewing the manuscript, it is important to disclose all conflicts of interest to the editors before reviewing. If you have any questions about potential conflicts of interest, please do not hesitate to contact the editorial office.

Declaration of competing interests

Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?
4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?
5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?
6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer “**no**” to all of the above questions, write '**I declare that I have no competing interests**' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below (**Limit 300 Characters**).

- **Level of interest**

Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript: Please select a response

- An exceptional article
- An article of importance in its field
- An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

An article of limited interest

- **Quality of written English**

Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript: Please select a response

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Needs some language corrections before being published

Acceptable

1. Scope: Is the article in line with the aims and scope of the journal?

2. The review process

When reviewing the article, please keep the following in mind:

3.1. Content quality and originality

- Is the article sufficiently novel and interesting to warrant publication?
- Does it add to the large body of knowledge about the area of the study?
- Is the objective or research question an important one?
- Does the article adhere to the journal's editorial policy and guidelines?
- To determine its originality and appropriateness for the journal, it might be helpful to think of the research in terms of what percentile it is in?

You might wish to do a quick online literature search to see if there are any reviews of the area. If the research has been covered previously in a similar setup, pass on references of those works to the associate editor.

3.2. Organization and clarity

3.2.1. Title: Does it clearly describe the content of the article? Is the title in line with the stated objective? If not, do you recommend any modification?

3.2.2. Abstract: Does it reflect the content of the article? How powerful it is to let the readers read the body of the article?

3.2.3. Background

Does it describe what the author hoped to achieve accurately, and clearly state the problem being investigated? Normally, the background should summarize relevant researches done before to provide context and explain what other authors' findings, if any, are being challenged or extended. It should describe the purpose, the hypothesis(es), and the general experimental design or method. It should also clearly state the identified gap to be filled by the output of the current study.

3.2.4. Methods

- Does the author describe the study setting well?
- Does the author describe the study population sufficiently?
- Does the author accurately explain how the data was collected?
- Is the design suitable for answering the question posed?
- Are sample sizes adequate if relevant?
- Is there sufficient information present for you to replicate the research?
- Does the article identify/describe the procedures followed?
- Are the measurements in SI and metric units?
- Are drugs and species names in generic and scientific names, respectively?
- Are these ordered in a meaningful way?
- If the methods are new, are they explained in detail?
- Are the statistical analyses appropriate, correct?

- Was the sampling appropriate?
- Have the equipment and materials been adequately described?
- Does the article make it clear what type of data was recorded? Has the author been precise in describing measurements?
- Is the ethical issue well addressed?
- Are the necessary formats followed, particularly for meta-analysis and clinical trials?

3.2.5. Results and data

This is where the author/s should explain in words what he/she discovered in the research. It should be laid out and in a logical sequence.

- Are they clearly summarized?
- Are data in the text and tables/figures consistent?
- Are tables/figures/illustrations/pictures included necessary?
- Is information needlessly repeated? You will need to consider if the appropriate analysis has been conducted.
- Are the statistics correct? If you are not comfortable with statistics, please advise the associate editor when you submit your report. Interpretation of results should not be included in this section.

3.2.6. Discussion

- Does the discussion start by describing the main finding of the study only in words?
- Are the claims in this section supported by the results, do they seem reasonable?

- Do the authors interpret the result precisely?
- Have the authors indicated how the results relate to expectations and earlier research?
- Do the authors give enough justifications for finding differences if there are any?
- Does the article support or contradict previous theories? If yes, does the justifications are scientifically plausible?
- Does the conclusion explain how the research has moved the body of scientific knowledge forward?
- Are the recommendations supported by the current study findings?

3.2.7. Tables, Figures, and Illustrations

- Are they appropriately labeled and per the journal's policy and guidelines?
- Do they properly show the data?
- Are they easy to interpret and understand?
- Is each legend self-explanatory?

3.2.8. Citations

- Are the citations according to the Vancouver style with superscript sequential numbering after a full stop?
- Are the cited references pertinent and current?
- Do they support any assertions of fact, not addressed by the data presented in this paper?

3. References

- Are the references listed according to the journal's guidelines?
4. Do not make a specific statement regarding acceptance or rejection in your comments to the authors. Comments should be courteous, constructive and should relate to the manuscript and not to the authors. Structure your comments by numbering them. It makes the editor's life a lot easier.

You can also divide them into major and minor issues to help authors prioritize corrections. Keep comments to authors separate from the confidential ones to editors. But, make sure your comments to authors correspond to your assessment on the confidential review and review checklists/score sheets.

Reviewer confidential comments to editor

It is used to provide advice regarding acceptance, major revision, revisions minor, or rejection.

Information Sheet to Editor

1. Is the article within the scope of the journal?

Yes No

2. Will the article add enough to existing knowledge?

Yes No

3. Does the title describe the contents of the article well?

Yes No

4. Organization and the extent to which the abstract reflects the aspects of the study (background, methods, results, conclusion, and keywords)

1. Clear and very well

2. Medium

3. Poor

5. Clarity of the description of the literature review, study rationale, and objective in the background

1. Clear and very well

2. Medium

3. Poor

6. Appropriateness of the study design

1. Clear and very well

2. Medium

3. Poor

7. Are sample size and/or power adequate?

Yes No

8. Is the sampling technique appropriate and the finding generalizable?

Yes No

9. Description of the methods and instruments of data collection

1. Clear and very well

2. Medium

3. Poor

10. Appropriateness of the methods of data analysis

1. Clear and very well

2. Medium

3. Poor

11.The logical presentation and appropriate displays and explanations of the findings

- 1. Clear and very well
- 2. Medium
- 3. Poor

12.Articulation of key findings and their implication

- 1. Clear and very well
- 2. Medium
- 3. Poor

13.Justification of the conclusion by the results

- 1. Clear and very well
- 2. Medium
- 3. Poor

14.Relevance and appropriateness of the references

- 1. Clear and very well
- 2. Medium
- 3. Poor

15.Appropriate presentation of tables and figures

- 1. Clear and very well
- 2. Medium
- 3. Poor

16. Recommendation

- 1. Accept
- 2. Minor revision
- 3. Major revision
- 4. Reject

Recognition for peer reviewer

Peer reviewers are normally not paid for their work. They are, instead, rewarded non-financially by means of acknowledgment in our journal, positions on editorial boards, free journal access, discounts on author fees (if any), etc. Serving as a peer reviewer looks good on your CV as it shows that your expertise is recognized by other scientists. You will get to read some of the latest science in your field well before it is in the public domain. The critical thinking skills needed during peer review will help you in your own research and writing.

Different options can also be considered including ORCID Reviewer Recognition, Publons Reviewer Recognition, etc. can be considered

Checklist for Reviewers

Peer review comments for the author

Sr. No	Items	Response	Comments/suggestions
1.	In general, how do you rate the degree to which the paper is easy to follow and its logical flow?	1. Fair 2. Good 3. Excellent	
2.	Do the title and abstract cover the main aspects of the work?	1. Yes 2. No	

Sr. No	Items	Response	Comments/suggestions
3.	If relevant are the results novels? Does the study provide an advance in the field?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA	
4.	Did the study gain ethical approval appropriate to the country in which the research was performed if human or animal subjects, human cell lines or human tissues were involved and is it stated in the manuscript?	1. Yes 2. No	
5.	Does the paper raise any ethical concerns?	1. Yes 2. No	
6.	If relevant, are the methods clear and replicable?	1. Yes 2. No	
7.	If relevant, do all the results presented match the methods described?	1. Yes 2. No	
8.	If relevant, is the statistical analysis appropriate to the research question and study design?	1. Yes 2. No	
9.	If relevant, is the selection of the controls appropriate for the study design? Have attempts been made to address potential bias through analytic methods, e.g., sensitivity analysis	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA	
10.	How do you rate how clearly and appropriately the data are presented	1. Yes 2. No	
11.	If relevant, did the authors, make the underlying data available to the readers?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA	
12.	Do the conclusions correlate to the results	1. Yes 2. No	

Sr. No	Items	Response	Comments/suggestions
	found?		
13.	Are the figures and tables clear and legible?	1. Yes 2. No	
14.	Are images clear and free from unnecessary modification?	1. Yes 2. No	
15.	I have serious concerns about the validity of this manuscript	1. Yes 2. No	
16.	Does the paper use appropriate references in the correct style to promote understanding of the content?	1. Yes 2. No	
17.	If relevant, do any of the authors competing interests raise concerns about the validity of the study i.e., have the authors' competing interests created a bias in the reporting of the results and conclusions?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA	
18.	Do you think the manuscript requires English editing to correct the grammar or flow?	1. Yes 2. No	

Reviewer Comments/Suggestions to Author(s)

General comments

Specific comment

Title

Abstract

Background

Methods

Results

Discussion

Citation and referencing

Tables, Figures, and Illustrations

Format for Reviewer Confidential Comments to Editor

It is used to provide advice regarding acceptance, major revision, revisions minor, or rejection.

Information Sheet to Editor

Sr. No	Items	Response
1.	Is the article within the scope of the journal?	1. Yes 2. No
2.	Will the article add enough to existing knowledge?	1. Yes 2. No
3.	Does the title well describe the contents of the article?	1. Yes 2. No
4.	Organization and the extent to which the abstract reflects the aspects of the study (background, methods, results, conclusion, and keywords)	1. Clear and very well 2. Medium 3. Poor
5.	Clarity of the description of the literature review, study rationale, and objective in the background	1. Clear and very well 2. Medium 3. Poor
6.	Appropriateness of the study design	1. Clear and very well 2. Medium 3. Poor
7.	Are sample size and/or power adequate?	1. Yes 2. No
8.	Is the sampling technique appropriate and the finding generalizable?	1. Yes 2. No
9.	Description of the methods and instruments of data collection	1. Clear and very well 2. Medium 3. Poor

Sr. No	Items	Response
10.	Appropriateness of the methods of data analysis	1. Clear and very well 2. Medium 3. Poor
11.	The logical presentation and appropriate displays and explanations of the findings	1. Clear and very well 2. Medium 3. Poor
12.	Articulation of key findings and their implication	1. Clear and very well 2. Medium 3. Poor
13.	Justification of the conclusion by the results	1. Clear and very well 2. Medium 3. Poor
14.	Relevance and appropriateness of the references	1. Clear and very well 2. Medium 3. Poor
15.	Appropriate presentation of tables and figures	1. Clear and very well 2. Medium 3. Poor
16.	Recommendation	1. Accept 2. Major revision 3. Minor revision 4. Reject