

**Journal of Andrology Peer Review Process and Policy**  
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**Editors in Chief: Arthur Burnett, Sally Perreault and Jay Sandlow**

Objective and scientifically rigorous peer review procedures are used to insure the high quality and integrity of science published in the *Journal of Andrology*. Our peer review process is intended to be “author-friendly” by being respectful at all times, and by providing collegial support and constructive criticism to authors.

**Roles of Editors-in-Chief in the Peer Review Process**

The *Journal of Andrology* currently has three Editors-in-Chief (EIC) who share the roles described here. Authors submit manuscripts via the online manuscript processing system. The editorial assistant in Jansen Editorial Services (JES) assigns an EIC to handle each paper based on the subject matter. The EIC can reassign the paper to another EIC if he/she has a conflict of interest or considers another EIC more qualified based on specific expertise. The EIC then selects at least 3 reviewers to be solicited via the online system, typically including at least one editorial board (EB) member. The goal is to obtain at least two but preferably three solid reviews per paper. Upon studying the review reports, the EIC may solicit additional reviewers to insure that decisions are based, according to his/her judgment, on at least two solid reviews that concur. Additional reviews may be needed to resolve discrepant reviews, or to provide additional expertise (e.g. statistical review). As soon as the peer review reports are received, the EIC reviews them for completeness, considers the judgements of the reviewers, and makes a decision on the disposition of the paper according to the criteria listed below and noted on the peer review form.

**Anonymity of the Peer Review Process**

It is the policy of *Journal of Andrology* to protect strict anonymity/confidentiality throughout the review process. The names of reviewers are not revealed to the authors; nor are the topics, content or authors of the submitted papers revealed to anyone except the EIC, editorial assistants and peer reviewers.

**Policy Regarding Conflict of Interest: Acceptance of an editorial or review assignment constitutes implicit agreement with this policy.**

**For EIC:** EIC follow standard conflict of interest procedures; i.e., they do not handle papers submitted from investigators in their own research group or closely affiliated groups, or anyone with whom they collaborate or have a financial arrangement (in the last three years). Papers authored or co-authored by any EIC are handled by an Associate Editor and not one of the three EIC. Papers authored by scientists at the same institution as an EIC are not handled by that EIC; such papers may be handled by another EIC with the appropriate expertise or by an Associate Editor.

**For Reviewers (Referees):** It is expected that invited referees will recuse themselves (decline solicitation) if they have a conflict of interest. In general this means that they have a personal interest in the outcome of the review and publication of the paper. Examples: The author is a current or recent (e.g. within ~ the last three years) trainee or close professional associate; an ongoing scientific or personal relationship with the author(s) would be likely to bias the reviewer, either favourably or unfavourably; the reviewer has a financial relationship with the author(s) and stands to benefit or suffer in a tangible manner if the paper is published. .  
Note: If upon reading the paper, the reviewer realizes he/she has reviewed essentially the same paper for another journal, the reviewer should in most cases decline the assignment. This is to provide authors with completely unbiased reviewers. An exception may be when the paper was

previously rejected from a very prestigious journal based on its likely significance/impact in the field rather than its scientific merits.

### **Referee Selection**

Referees are selected on the basis of their expertise pertinent to the manuscript in question. Authors are encouraged to recommend qualified referees and to identify individuals who would be unsuited to serve in this capacity due to conflicts of interest or perceived bias. Referees who are unavailable are encouraged to suggest other qualified scientists.

### **Expectations for Reviewers/Referees:**

Reviewers provide expert judgment on the quality and relevance of the papers. They are not expected to correct grammar or re-write sections of the paper. They are expected to submit their reports in a timely fashion, usually within two weeks of accepting the assignment.

Reviewers are asked to:

- Judge the relevance of the studies to the field of Andrology.
- Evaluate the soundness and quality of the paper from a scientific standpoint. Determine whether results are communicated clearly by figure, table and text, and are evaluated with appropriately rigorous statistical analysis. Judge whether the results are convincing and conclusions are based solidly upon the data presented. Recommend changes, additional experiments, and alternative presentation or analysis of the data to correct deficiencies or improve clarity.
- Comment on whether and how the paper makes a significant advance in an experimental method, clinical practice, or fundamental scientific knowledge.
- Judge the originality of the research findings. Papers that repeat previously published results or repeat an experiment in an alternative species without showing why it is important to do so, generally do not meet criteria for publication in the *Journal of Andrology*.
- Identify any ethical concerns based on the use of animals in research and/or adequate protection of human subjects.

### **Criteria for rejection:**

- **REJECTION WITHOUT PEER REVIEW:** The EIC (and/or editorial assistant) pre-screens each paper for appropriateness of the subject matter for the *Journal of Andrology*, adequacy of English usage for peer review purposes, compliance with ethical standards for animal use or human subjects protections, and compliance with instructions to authors. Papers may be returned to the author without peer review if they fail any of these preliminary checks. Typically the three EIC concur on these decisions before action is taken. Questionable or controversial breeches of publication or scientific ethics are discussed with the Publication Committee chair and may be referred to COPE for additional input.
- **REJECTION WITH ABBREVIATED PEER REVIEW:** If the EIC judges a paper to be sub-standard with respect to the soundness or originality of the hypothesis tested or experiments conducted, limited scope of the approach and methods, or a serious flaw in the experimental design, he/she may assign the paper to him/herself and one other EIC or member of the EB with the recommendation to reject. If there is consensus, the paper may be rejected without more extensive or detailed peer review.

- **REJECTION BASED ON PEER REVIEW:** When one or more reviewers recommend rejection based on scientific soundness and the EIC agrees, the paper may be rejected. Typically, if the experiments are flawed or very preliminary in nature, and the deficiencies could not be corrected or results made convincing without significant new experimentation, then the paper is rejected.
- **RESUBMISSION:** Rejected papers may not be resubmitted without written permission from the Editors-in-Chief. Rejection decisions must be appealed in writing. The revised and resubmitted paper will be assigned as described above, and may or may not be sent to the same reviewers as those who conducted the original review.

**Revision policies:**

If the paper has potential to become acceptable with additional data or modification of the data presentation, analysis and/or interpretation, and the topic is sufficiently novel and/or important as to meet publication criteria, then the EIC may judge it to be unacceptable in present form. In this case the EIC provides general guidance in the response letter regarding the nature and extent of revisions needed and directs the author to address all the reviewers' points in his/her response. The corresponding author is expected to submit a revised version in a timely manner as directed in the decision letter, and to provide a written response to the editors in which he/she explains how they have or why they have not addressed each item in the critiques. The policy of the *Journal of Andrology* is to allow only one revision. Second revisions may be permitted when:

- The peer reviewers have further questions arising from the first revision that need to be addressed, particularly if new data were added. In this case, a second re-review may be indicated. .
- Minor clarifications or changes in substance or format are needed (including minor upgrading of English usage) for the paper to meet *Journal of Andrology* standards