

Ethics and fairness during the review and publication process



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Peer review is key to the vetting of new scientific information, and we appreciate the hard work and dedication of all of those who perform reviews for the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*. This letter focuses on fairness and ethics during the review process.

Key points

- Reviewers have a duty to issue honest opinions without regard to competing interests
- Reviewer conflicts of interest should be disclosed and managed appropriately
- Reviewer confidentiality should be safeguarded to ensure candid review without fear of reprisal
- Reviewers must respect the confidentiality of the work being reviewed

The review process falls under the rubric of privileged communications. Authors place their trust in the editors and reviewers to safeguard the contents of intellectual property submitted for review, and this trust should be respected. Manuscripts represent significant work and creative effort, and publication may have a profound effect on career advancement and academic standing. Reviewers should never disclose or take unfair advantage of original material included in the manuscript, and should never manipulate the review process to their own advantage.

The editors must respect the confidentiality of both authors and reviewers and follow standard policies set by the Council of Science Editors, International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, the Committee on Publication Ethics, and the World Association of Medical Editors when dealing with questions of scientific integrity, dishonesty, or fraud. Confidential reviewer comments are never made public without the consent of the reviewer and author.

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