

## Peer Review process

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All articles submitted to the journal are peer-reviewed by the Editorial Board.

The acceptance of the article is conditioned by the opinion of the Scientific Committee and the Board of Reviewers, with corresponding written communication within one month of receipt (Law 633/1941, Art.39).

Scientific articles, such as original study, review, case report, perspective, are submitted after acceptance to a peer review process in single blind entrusted to the competent members of the Board of Reviewers. The Director and/or Editor-in-Chief of a request for modification, publication or rejection of the scientific article conclude this process within 6 months with the corresponding communication to the author. Please note that all accepted works are bound for 12 months. During this phase, some articles may be returned to authors at this stage if they are deemed more appropriate for another journal, if the article does not meet the submission requirements, or if it is deemed not to be of sufficient priority for further consideration.

The Journal of Military Medicine uses single blind peer review. Single blind peer review means that only the reviewers are anonymous. The reviewers know the names and backgrounds of the authors, but the authors do not know those of the reviewers.

All review reports are confidential.

To ensure that articles receive an impartial evaluation, it is the policy of the Journal that articles in which an editor of the journal is an author or contributor are assigned to a different editor (one who is not affiliated with the same institution). This editor will oversee the peer review and decision process. This policy also applies to articles in which an editor has declared any other conflict of interest.

Articles that are deemed to be of potential interest to our readers are sent for formal review, usually by one or two reviewers, but sometimes more if specific advice is required (e.g. on statistics or a particular technique). The editors then make a decision, based on the reviewers' advice, among several options:

- **Accept, with or without editorial revisions** (the editor will ask the authors to revise their article to address specific issues before making a final decision).
- **Reject**, but advise authors that further work may warrant resubmission.
- **Reject outright**, usually on grounds of special interest, lack of novelty, insufficient conceptual advance, or major technical and/or interpretive problems.

Individuals with conflicts of interest regarding peer review and decision-making are excluded from the process.

## Selection of peer reviewers

The selection of reviewers is central to the publication process and is made by the Director based on many factors, including competence, reputation and specific recommendations. Reviewers are generally selected from academia and outside the Ministry of Defence.

We screen potential reviewers before sending them articles for review. Reviewers must be aware that correspondence contains confidential information and must be treated as such.

## How the review is written

The main purpose of the review is to provide the editors with the information they need to make a decision, but the review should also provide the authors with guidance on how to strengthen their article to the point where it can be accepted. As far as possible, a negative review should explain to authors the main weaknesses of their article, so that rejected authors can understand the basis of the decision and see in general terms what needs to be done to improve the article for publication elsewhere.

We will ask reviewers questions on each element of the paper according to the attached format.

All claims should be justified and argued in detail, citing facts and supporting references, and commenting on all aspects that are relevant to the article and that the reviewers feel qualified to comment on. Not all of the above aspects will necessarily apply to all documents, due to discipline-specific standards. If in doubt about discipline-specific refereeing standards, the reviewer may contact the publisher for assistance.

It is our policy to remain neutral on jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations, as long as the nomenclature conforms to the editorial graphics. Referees should therefore not ask authors to make changes unless necessary.

## Timing of the editorial referencing process

The journal is committed to providing authors with adequate timelines for the editorial process, aiming for prompt editorial decisions and rapid publication. We believe that an efficient editorial process is a valuable service both for our authors and for the scientific community as a whole. The peer review process typically lasts approximately six months and begins once the author has received the letter of acceptance for peer review.

This procedure stipulates that, upon receipt of the official communication from the Review Board containing the requested revisions, the editorial office will await the submission of the revised manuscript for a maximum period of 60 days. If a second revision is deemed necessary following evaluation, the author is granted a maximum of 30 days to submit the further revised manuscript.

Failure to comply with these deadlines and/or the indicated procedures will result in the definitive rejection of the article, which will be communicated to the author via an official notification.

### **Protecting reviewer anonymity**

We do not reveal the identity of reviewers to authors or other reviewers, unless a reviewer voluntarily signs their comments to the authors. To increase the transparency of the review process, reviewers may sign their reports if they feel comfortable doing so. Before revealing their identity, reviewers should consider the following

- (1) Review reports, signed or unsigned, are later shared with other reviewers, and reviewers may be asked to comment on other reviewers' critiques and further reviews of the manuscript, and identified reviewers may find these discussions more challenging.
- (2) We ask reviewers not to identify themselves to authors during the submission process without the publisher's knowledge. If this is not possible, we ask authors to inform the editor as soon as a reviewer has revealed his or her identity to the author. We deplore any attempt by authors to confront the reviewer or to discover the reviewer's identity. It is our policy not to confirm or deny speculation about the identity of reviewers.

### **Appeals against the outcome of the peer review process**

If authors have reason to believe that the peer review process or the final decision was not fair or well informed, they may appeal. Appeals may be submitted within one month of the final decision on the manuscript. Appeals received after this date will not be considered. Only one appeal per manuscript will be considered. The appeal will be carefully considered by the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board.

Authors should submit the appeal in the form of a Word document and attach it to an email to [giornale.medmil@libero.it](mailto:giornale.medmil@libero.it). The request should include

- Names of all authors submitting the paper
- E-mail addresses and contact details of the authors or corresponding author
- Full title of the manuscript
- Identification of the manuscript by the Editor-in-Chief
- A detailed explanation of why the final decision was unfair or undeserved.

### Peer review ethics

Journal editors may seek advice not only from peer reviewers on submitted articles, but also on any aspect of an article that raises concerns. This may include, for example, ethical issues or problems with access to data or materials. Very occasionally, concerns may also relate to the societal implications of publishing a paper, including security threats. In such circumstances, advice is usually sought at the same time as the technical peer review process. As with all editorial decisions, the final decision to publish rests with the editor of the journal concerned.