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Editorial

The privilege of becoming a scientific peer reviewer

Peer review is a method that helps validate academic work. It allows authors to have feedback that improves their papers and expands their possibilities within research areas.

Primary, it is important to explore the past of this validation method from its origin. Peer review, in all its variants, has been the most preferred and accepted system for research validation. As far as known, the first approach to the peer review process description was performed in the book called "Ethics of the Physician" in (Common Era 854–931). In that process, physicians had to write some notes explaining why their patient had been cured or had died. This book stated that a doctor should always write notes of the patient condition on each visit to be considered by a local council of medical doctors. They arbitrated as to whether the physician had accomplished according to the medical criteria that preponderated at that moment.

Later, the English philosopher Francis Bacon introduced a universal method for the generation and the assessment of new science in his book Novum Organum published in 1620. It gave the foundation to discuss and debate their different viewpoints and ideas on science.

in 1665, Henry Oldenburg, the Royal Society's first Secretary, was the first publisher and editor of Philosophical Transactions, the first ever known scientific journal which is still running. In the beginning, the editor published mainly what he and those who help him considered relevant.

In 1752, the Royal Society took control of the Philosophical Transactions journal. Since then, the manuscripts submitted to the Society for publication were subject to examination by a selected group of experts in such topics, and whose sent the final opinion to the editor about the manuscript. This is the official beginning of the review process and the birth of the scientific peer reviewer.

It has some benefits that usually are not explicit for scientists. Now, a brief list of some relevant aspects is introduced:

Undadoubly, the peer reviewers must be selected from a list of experts. The primary criterion for the election is their expertise and scientific recognition in their community. Respected journals usually choose their reviewers based on their publications and participation in scientific events. It is never a lucky strike.

Additionally, at first hand, it gives the opportunity to know what the trending topics are in a specific knowledge area. Therefore, it helps the researchers to plan their future work and allow them to apprehend the approach other colleges are using to solve a problem.

Once the peer review process comes to an end, the list of evaluators is added in the scientific journal, obviously respecting the privacy and the blind review criteria, as applied. This recognition is an honor since the reviewer's name will be listed and acknowledged. Usually, the journal's editors send a certificate of participation to the reviewers so that they can add to their curriculum vitae.

Furthermore, the best way to learn how to write an excellent paper is firstly to read as many manuscripts as possible. Peer reviews have the change to read some well-written articles; it offers them the opportunity to take the best from masters, and to dismiss the recurrent mistakes. This encourages researchers to reflect critically about what makes paper outstanding. Even though reading papers on your own as part of one's research helps improve comprehension skills in a topic, the peer review process forces evaluators to focus in some aspects researchers usually do not pay attention explicitly such presentation, writing style an explanation clarity.

The process of finding an expert reviewer is not a simple task. Usually, scientist are immersed in their own work and research that is surely time demanding. Additionally, there are hundreds of journals that value and need their support to validate a manuscript. This hinders dramatically the process of finding an available proper evaluator.

On the other hand, in Latin-America, most journals do not have funding to pay the peer review process to evaluators. Usually, journals are open access and do not have Article Processing Charges. Furthermore, they are hosted by public Institutions of Superior Education such as universities and research centers. Unfortunately, this discourages some reviewers who consider it should be rewarded with money.

Last, but not least, the pleasure of giving a little of one's experience is worth it. All scientists have the academic responsibility of sharing their knowledge with others. It is an academic responsibility of reciprocity as an ethical academic person. Despite all those drawbacks, there are still many altruistic peer reviewers who value this process as part of their everyday contribution to science.

Referencias

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