

# Indian Journal of Health, Sexuality and Culture (IJHSC)

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## Reviewer Guidelines

### About peer review

IJHSC is the official scientific publication of Indian Institute of Sexology Bhubaneswar. It adheres to a double-blind peer-review process that is rapid, fair, and ensures publication of high-quality articles. The double-blind peer review process ensures that both the reviewer and the author are anonymous to each other. The editorial board of IJHSC is appreciative of their peer-reviewers. It is only by collaboration with our reviewers that editors can ensure that the manuscripts we publish are among the most important in their respective disciplines. We appreciate the time that reviewers devote in assessing the manuscripts we send to them. We don't want to burden our reviewers with voluminous manuscripts; hence, we encourage articles of moderate size (the word limits of the articles have been mentioned in the authors guidelines).

### Our peer reviewer

Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and we base our choice on many factors including expertise, reputation, specific recommendations and our own previous experience of a reviewer's characteristics. For instance, we select reviewers who are quick, careful and provide reasoning for their views, whether robustly critical or forgiving. We strive toward a diverse demographic representation within our reviewer database. Anyone who want to be a reviewer for IJHSC can directly write to the Editor-in-Chief expressing the willingness. The CVs are critically evaluated by a core team of editors looking at different parameters. IJHSC initially collaborate with reviewers for a term of 2 years. Performance review is done annually and the team of reviewers restructured accordingly. Please note that reviewer position is honorary and IJHSC don't pay for reviewing articles. We don't hesitate to offer editorial board member position to active and enthusiastic reviewers after long association.

### Review process

1. Each journal has its own characteristics and so procedures and policies vary from title to title. If you are unable to find the answer to your question, our editorial team will be on hand to offer assistance throughout the peer review process. Questions about a specific manuscript should be only directed to the editor who is handling the manuscript. For any general questions and comments about the peer-review process, reviewers are encouraged to write to the Editor-in-Chief of IJHSC.
2. The IJHSC employ a rigorous peer review and editing process to evaluate all manuscripts for scientific accuracy, novelty, and importance. This painstaking publication process has been tested over many years and is a major reason for the journal's reputation as the world's leading interdisciplinary Health and Sexuality Studies journal. Reviewers' opinions of manuscripts are invaluable in helping the Editor-in-Chief and the editors in making their decisions. Reviewing a manuscript written by a fellow scientist is a privilege. However, it is a time-consuming responsibility. IJHSC usually take help of reviewers who can provide insightful and helpful comments on submitted manuscripts with a turnaround time of about 2 to 3 weeks.

3. IJHSC is committed to rapid editorial decisions and timely publication. We therefore, ask reviewers to respond promptly within the number of days agreed. If reviewers anticipate a longer delay than previously expected, we ask them to let us know so that we can find alternatives.
4. We check with potential reviewers before sending them the manuscripts to review. If, as a reviewer, you believe that you are not qualified to evaluate a component of the research, you should inform the editor as soon as possible. Reviewers can suggest alternative reviewers in case they cannot review the manuscript for any reasons, but must not pass on the assigned manuscript to another reviewer on their own. If you feel that any particular part of the manuscript, data, or analyses is outside the scope of your expertise, or that you were unable to assess fully, commissioning editor will help you in this matter.
5. Please declare to the editor about any potential conflicts of interest with respect to the authors or the content of a manuscript. You must also report possible research misconducts. Inform the editor if you find the assigned manuscript is under consideration in any other publication.
6. Reviews should be objective evaluations of the research. If you cannot judge a paper impartially, you should not accept it for review. If you have any professional or financial affiliations that may be perceived as a conflict of interest in reviewing the manuscript, or a history of personal differences with the author(s), you should notify the editor as soon as possible.
7. The Editor-in-Chief (if appropriate the other editors) evaluate the manuscript for scope, fit, quality, originality, interest for the readership etc. Many papers are turned away on the basis of this in-house assessment alone. These decisions are communicated quickly. Research papers that receive positive in-house remark are sent to at least 2 peer reviewers for further review.
8. Sometimes articles are sent to more than two reviewers if special advice is needed (for example on statistics or a particular technique). Authors are also welcome to suggest suitable independent reviewers. The journal sympathetically considers such requests and usually honours them, but the editor's decision on the choice of reviewers is final.
9. The following types of contribution to IJHSC are peer-reviewed: Original articles, Letters, Technical reports, Analysis, Resources, Review articles, Perspectives and Insight articles. Correspondence and all forms of published correction may also be peer-reviewed at the discretion of the editors. Other contributed articles are not usually peer-reviewed. Nevertheless, articles published in these sections, particularly if they present technical information, may be peer-reviewed at the discretion of the editors. Occasional contributions (e.g., Invited Commentaries and Brief Immediate Communications) are accepted without peer review (only editorial level review is done).
10. The editors make a decision based on the reviewers' advice, from among several possibilities:
  - a. Publish without any corrections
  - b. Publish with minor corrections (Minor and Major copy editing)
  - c. Minor Revisions & Re-Submit
  - d. Major Revisions & Re-Submit
  - e. Rejection typically on grounds of specialist interest, lack of novelty, insufficient conceptual advance or major technical and/or interpretational problems
11. Reviewers should check for the following while reviewing a manuscript

- a. Novelty and Originality
  - b. Scientific reliability
  - c. A valuable contribution to the science and professional discipline
  - d. Adding new knowledge to the existing field of study
  - e. Structure of the article submitted and its relevance to authors' guidelines
  - f. Validity of the approach, quality of the data, appropriate use of the statistical methods and quality of presentation
  - g. Conclusions and data interpretation are robust, valid and reliable
  - h. References provided to substantiate the content
  - i. Grammar, punctuation and spelling
  - j. Adherence to Ethical Standards as per ICMJE
  - k. Scientific misconduct (if any)
  - l. Any other specific question asked by the editor via email
12. Reviewers are welcome to recommend a particular course of action, but they should bear in mind that the other reviewers of a particular paper may have different technical expertise and/or views, and the editors may have to make a decision based on conflicting advice. The most useful reports, therefore, provide the editors with the information on which a decision can be taken easily. Setting out the arguments for and against publication is often more helpful to the editors than a direct recommendation one way or the other. Editorial decisions are not a matter of counting votes. We try to evaluate the strength of the arguments raised by each reviewer and by the authors also.
13. We at IJHSC, welcome every research and/or experiential piece which contributes meaningfully to our knowledge and discipline no matter where it comes from. We are an inclusionary forum, and we encourage discourses among multiple stakeholders. Therefore, the submissions we receive are the most transdisciplinary in nature, and we want our peer reviewers to respect this academic and cultural tradition, and should not be blinded by a particular disciplinary orientation, ideology and/or theoretical paradigm.
14. If the decision is for revision, the authors will be given sufficient time to review comments and revise their manuscript. Usually, the turnaround time is 2 weeks. So, reviewers should expect revision submission within this time period. However, editors will not send a resubmitted paper back to the reviewers if it seems that the authors have not made a serious attempt to address the criticisms.
15. All reviewers are required to assess the manuscript in a prescribed format. The format will have A) reviewer notes for the author (s) and B) reviewer notes for the editor. The primary purpose of the review is to provide the editors with the information needed to reach a decision but the review should also instruct the authors on how they can strengthen their paper to the point where it may be acceptable. As far as possible, a negative review should explain to the authors the major weaknesses of their manuscript, so that rejected authors can understand the basis for the decision. After rejection of an article, there is no appealing procedure to reconsider the article for publication.
16. The review process is conducted anonymously. IJHSC never reveals the identity of the reviewers to the authors and vice versa. We ask the reviewers not to identify themselves to authors while the manuscript is under consideration. Similarly, we also deplore any attempt by the authors to confront the reviewers or determine their identities.

17. As a matter of policy, we do not suppress reviewers' reports; any comments that were intended for the authors are transmitted, regardless of what we may think of the content. On rare occasions, we may edit a report to remove offensive language or comments that reveal confidential information about other matters. We ask reviewers to avoid statements that may cause needless offence; conversely, we strongly encourage reviewers to state plainly their opinion of a paper. Reviews should be constructive, courteous and should respect the intellectual independence of the author. Authors should recognize that criticisms are not necessarily unfair simply because they are expressed in robust language.
18. IJHSC editors may seek advice from peer reviewers, not only on technical matters but also on any aspect of a paper that raises concerns. These may include, for example, ethical issues or issues of data or materials access. Very occasionally, concerns may also relate to the implications to society of publishing a paper, including threats to security. The ultimate decision of whether to publish an article is the responsibility of the editorial team.
19. The submitted manuscript is privileged communication and must be treated as a confidential document. Please destroy all copies of the manuscript after review regardless of whether a submitted manuscript is eventually published. Please do not share the manuscript with any colleagues without the explicit permission of the editor. If a reviewer wishes to seek advice from colleagues while assessing a manuscript, the reviewer must consult with the editor and should ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that the names of any such colleagues are provided to the journal with the final report. Reviewers should not make personal or professional use of the data or interpretations before or after publication without the authors' specific permission.
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