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Jennifer O'Brien and Brent Thoma

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Reused Reviews: the CMEJ announces a new policy to recycle peer reviews

Manuscrits réutilisés: la RCME annonce une nouvelle politique de recyclage des manuscrits révisés par les pairs

Jennifer M O'Brien^{1,2} Brent Thoma^{1,3}

¹Canadian Medical Education Journal; ²Department of Anesthesiology, Perioperative Medicine and Pain Management, College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan, Canada; ³Department of Emergency Medicine, College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan, Canada

Correspondence to: Dr. Jennifer M. O'Brien, Deputy Editor, Canadian Medical Education Journal, Saskatoon, SK, Canada, Jennifer.O'Brien@usask.ca.

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The scholarly peer review process is essential to publishing good evidence, but it is also resource intensive. The CMEJ devotes substantial effort to ensuring that our review processes are robust. Editors, reviewers, and authors contribute to the community of practice that assesses the importance and novelty of the study, strengths and weaknesses of the methods, interpretation of results, and the presentation of each paper.

Historically, articles submitted to the CMEJ have undergone two stages of review. In the first stage, our editors decide to send a manuscript out for peer review or reject it without review. Manuscripts that our editors reject receive preliminary comments from two editors. In the second stage, editors request reviews from numerous reviewers with the goal of obtaining 2-4 reviews per paper.¹ With peer reviewers spending about three hours on each review,¹⁻³ this process is a substantial investment of time and intellectual capital.

Given the importance and cost of peer review, we are always seeking initiatives that could improve our peer review process for authors, reviewers, and editors. Our most recent initiatives include the encouragement of team reviews and a study of the reviewer experience.⁴ We are particularly interested in initiatives that preserve resources without adversely impacting the quality and efficiency of the process. With these goals in mind, we were intrigued to learn of initiatives undertaken at other health science

education journals to fast-track submissions that have already undergone peer review.^{5,6}

Building on this work, the CMEJ is pleased to announce a new initiative to address these challenges: *Reused Reviews*. The purpose of *Reused Reviews* is to *reduce* the burden on authors, reviewers, and editors in our medical education community of practice, *reuse* high quality reviews that have been prepared for the submission's authors, *recycle* the scholarly peer review comments, and *repurpose* the authors' and reviewers' work in a new forum. Moving forward, authors will have the option to submit qualifying papers to the CMEJ through this expedited review process.

To submit a manuscript under the CMEJ *Reused Reviews* policy, authors must include:

- A clean version of a manuscript that fits within the scope and focus of the CMEJ⁷ and the appropriate section policy⁸ which is formatted according to CMEJ Submission Guidelines.⁹
- A second version of the manuscript as it was submitted to the previous journal. This version should use 1) the comment function to provide and respond to each of the reviewers' statements in the margins of the referenced section of the manuscript and 2) the tracked changes function to demonstrate the modifications that were made to address the reviewer comments.

- A cover letter/note to the editor(s) expressing a desire for expedited review under the *Reused Reviews* policy that lists the journal that reviewed and rejected the manuscript and the date that this occurred.
- A PDF version of the decision letter from the previous journal containing the entire content of the email with peer reviews.

The CMEJ editors will then consider the manuscript for publication in keeping with our own publication standards. In making a decision regarding the manuscript, editors will be instructed to consider the quality of the submitted reviews, how well the reviewer comments were addressed by the authors, and other factors that traditionally result in desk rejections (e.g. a lack of fit with the journal's mission, an inadequate rationale for the work, poor study design, data collection or analysis processes, poor presentation of results, or a weak discussion or conclusions¹⁰). At their discretion, the editors may decide to accept the manuscript for publication with minor changes, decline without additional review, or seek additional peer review.

We anticipate that this initiative will preserve the resources of our reviewers and editors, maintain our high publication standards, and provide authors with the opportunity to showcase their work after it has been improved through the peer review process. We hope that you will consider submitting your valuable but previously rejected scholarly work to the CMEJ under the *Reused Reviews* policy.

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