



Journal of Arthroplasty

Reviewer Guidelines

(fall 2020)

Submission & review site: <https://www.editorialmanager.com/JOA>

Journal contact: journalofarthroplasty@gmail.com

Thank you for reviewing the *the Journal of Arthroplasty*!

General Considerations

1. A reviewer's job is to evaluate a submitted article, not (necessarily) to criticize it and certainly not to demean the topic or authors. The JOA editors are seeking your advice about whether or not to publish the paper in the journal, so you should point out both strengths and weaknesses of the paper and come to some balanced conclusion. The critical issue is whether the paper under review advances knowledge on the issue under consideration enough to be published. You offer advice to the editor, and the editor decides on the "publishability" of the paper.
2. Be timely. We would like reviews to be returned within two weeks or less.
3. Say positive things in your review, even if you are recommending that the paper not be published for one reason or another, try to include some kind words. If you are overly critical or hostile, the author may not submit another article to JOA in the future.
4. Keep it brief. The JOA editors want your opinion, but not a record of every thought you had while reading the manuscript.
5. Develop a good reviewing style. There is no universally agreed-upon reviewing style, so you must develop one that is comfortable for you. The JOA editors have provided some guidelines (below) which may be of value.
6. DO NOT recommend further experimentation. If you think further research should be done because it is imperative for publication of the paper, then you should reject the article. Comment that the study leaves too many unanswered questions and does not answer the research question proposed. Define and list the deficiencies constructively and let the author(s) come to the conclusion that more work needs to be done.

Reading the Manuscript

Questions to contemplate as you read the manuscript:

1. Does the research make a valuable contribution to the literature overall?
2. Level of evidence (I-V)?

3. Is the topic appropriate for the Journal of Arthroplasty?
4. Is the literature review complete, up to date, and accurately reported?
5. Are the theory and hypotheses clear and appropriate?
6. How sound were the research methods?
7. Are the statistical analyses appropriate and correct? Was a power analysis done? Is any statistical information missing?
8. Are the results reported clearly?
9. Do the Figures and Tables effectively support and bring clarity to the manuscript? Are they present and appropriately referenced in the manuscript?
10. Are appropriate conclusions drawn based on the data?
11. Are there any alternative explanations for the findings?
12. Did the authors adequately acknowledge the limitations of their work?
13. Are there any important conflicts of interest? Who sponsored the research?

Writing your Review - A Guideline

When you write your review, it is important to be extremely careful with your use of language at all times. Make sure that you write in a way that is professional and polite. Do not belittle or berate the author(s) under any circumstances. There are no hard-and-fast rules for your review structure, but consider the following as a guide:

1. Intro = Brief recap of the work.

- A sentence or two summarizing the paper's approach and major finding(s) as a means of showing that you read and understood it.
- Describe the positive features of the research (e.g., the novelty of the research methods/questions, diversity of the sample, etc.). Highlighting the positives is just as important as documenting your critiques. The editors will also weigh the value of the work against the critiques.
- After discussing the positive aspects, provide a concise overview of your major concerns and reservations about the work.

2. Body of the Review

- The remainder of your review should highlight point-by-point what you perceive as the major issues that make the paper unsuitable for publication in this journal, or that need to be addressed in order to make it publishable. Very few papers are actually publishable without changes when initially submitted.

- If the paper is not publishable due to a fatal flaw (e.g., a confounding variable makes it impossible to know what was driving the effect), your review should be very short and focused primarily on that issue. There is no need to go on and on about other problems if something fundamental cannot be fixed.
- If you believe the paper is potentially publishable, you need to lay out each of your concerns and you may provide an example of how they could be addressed. If you feel strongly that an issue should be dealt with in a certain way, don't leave ambiguity in your comments. As you describe your concerns, group them so that common issues are addressed together (e.g., literature review omissions, statistical concerns, etc.). These comments will guide manuscript revisions. When the issues to be addressed are organized and written clearly, the revision will be better and easier to re-review for all involved in the editorial process.
- If you believe the paper is publishable in its submitted form, you need to explain in detail why the paper is that exceptional. List all the positives, and comment on how well the authors designed the study, used the data to support their hypothesis, synthesized their outstanding discussion, and came to their irrefutable conclusion. The JOA editors do not look favorably on a review "accept without revisions" that is not backed-up with sound reasoning.
- Restrict your comments only to the merits of the research, not the writing. The only caveat to this is that if the manuscript was so poorly written as to impede clarity or if things were reported inaccurately, then by all means, mention those kinds of writing problems because those are indeed major issues.

3. Conclusion / Decision

- Make a recommendation about the paper - the JOA editors want to know what your bottom line is.
- Make sure your recommendation is consistent with your review, and you have written enough to support your evaluation and position on the manuscript for JOA.

Length of the Review

Most reviews can easily be contained on just one single-spaced page or less. You only need to say as much as is necessary to get your point across.

Time spent on a Review

The JOA editors value your input tremendously. Writing a good review is challenging and can be quite time consuming. There is no set time to spend on a review because it depends upon the length of the paper and the quality of the work. It also depends on the subject of the paper, and how familiar you are with the topic. But, do spend the right amount of time. There are far too many reviews where it was clear that the reviewer rushed through the paper and misread or misinterpreted the findings. This is incredibly frustrating for authors and editors because it may completely invalidate a review and waste everyone's time.