



PEERE International Conference on Peer Review, 7-9 March 2018  
CNR (National Research Council) Rome, Piazzale Aldo Moro 7, Italy

# Identification of Motivations for Peer Reviewers to Perform Pre-publication Review of Manuscripts: A Systematic Review

Mersiha Mahmić-Kaknjo<sup>1\*</sup>, Mario Malički<sup>2</sup>, Ana Utrobičić<sup>3</sup>, Dario Sambunjak<sup>4</sup>, Ana Marušić<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Zenica, School of Medicine, Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

<sup>2</sup> Cochrane Croatia and Department of Research in Biomedicine and Health, University of Split, School of Medicine, Split, Croatia

<sup>3</sup> Cochrane Croatia and Central Medical Library, University of Split School of Medicine, Split, Croatia

<sup>4</sup> Catholic University of Croatia, Department of Nursing, Center for Evidence-Based Medicine and Health Care, Zagreb, Croatia

PEERE “New Frontiers of Peer Review”

[www.peere.org](http://www.peere.org)

[peereinfo@peere.org](mailto:peereinfo@peere.org)





- **Objective:** To identify and synthesize studies regarding motivation for pre-publication peer review of manuscripts.
- **Design:** Systematic review of studies indexed in MEDLINE, Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus.



- Literature search performed in February 2016 with no language or time limitations.
- 3,585 records remained after deduplication.
- Initial screening of titles and abstracts was conducted by two independent reviewers.
- For all records without indexed abstracts, full text was obtained.



- 3,585 records
- 315 related to peer review
- 14 explored motivations for pre-publication peer review of manuscripts
- 4 agent-based models (simulations) dealing with peer review incentives
- 4 qualitative studies of reviewers or editors (total 94 participants)
- 3 surveys (total 2,308 respondents, participation rates 62%, 63% and NA)
- 3 theoretical papers on new indices or incentives that would improve the motivation of reviewers and quality of their reviews

**PEERE “New Frontiers of Peer Review”**

[www.peere.org](http://www.peere.org)

[peereinfo@peere.org](mailto:peereinfo@peere.org)

 **cost**  
EUROPEAN COOPERATION  
IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



1st author	Year	Title of the manuscript	No of respondents	Response rate	Respondents	Country	Methodology
Emden	1998	Manuscript reviewing: What reviewers have to say	15	50%	nurses, reviewers	Australia	53% (8) post, 27% (4) mail, 20% (3) telephone interview
Kearney	2008	Experience, time investment, and motivators of nursing journal peer reviewers	1,439	35%	nurses, reviewers, doctorally prepared academics involved in research	44 countries (74% US)	69-question anonymous online survey (fixed-option and open-ended questions) mail
Tite	2007	Why do peer reviewers decline to review? A survey	551	62%	reviewers of 5 biomedical journals BMJ Publishing group	---	questionnaire 5 point Likert scales
Savulescu	2004	What makes the best medical ethics journal? A North American perspective	82	63%	medical ethicists	USA, Canada	online survey

PEERE “New Frontiers of Peer Review”

[www.peere.org](http://www.peere.org)

[peereinfo@peere.org](mailto:peereinfo@peere.org)



# Internal motivations

Emden	Kearney	Tite	%	Savulescu	1-5
keeping abreast of developments	keeping up to date	desire to keep-up-to-date on current research	44	keep up date on current research	3.9
improved critiquing and writing skills	gaining skills	opportunity to learn something new	27		
recognition of skills and expertise by peers and editors	recognition		2		
career advantages	career advancement	academic reward (career advancement)	7	academic reward (career enhancement, letter of acknowledgement)	3.9
	enjoyment or satisfaction		20		

PEERE “New Frontiers of Peer Review”

[www.peere.org](http://www.peere.org)

[peereinfo@peere.org](mailto:peereinfo@peere.org)



# External motivations

Emden	Kearney	Tite	%	Savulescu	1-5
extension of academic role	contributing to science	contribution of the paper to the subject area	36	opportunity to contribute to field/profession	4.2
considered as a duty	contributing to the profession	sense of professional duty	25		
		reputation of the journal	67	reputation of the journal	4.0
	helping others publish		10	high impact of the journal	4.0
		reputation of the authors of the paper	18		
		being able to use online review system	39	online system for manuscript retrieval and review submission	3.9
		monetary payment	2	financial incentive	3.9

PEERE “New Frontiers of Peer Review”

[www.peere.org](http://www.peere.org)

[peereinfo@peere.org](mailto:peereinfo@peere.org)



# Barriers

Emden	Kearney	Tite	Savulescu
lack of time, preparation or mentors	none or insufficient reward (n=20, 1.5)	tight deadline for completing review (n=139, 54%)	time constraints due to academic commitments (4.4)
reviewers felt isolated and request more communication with editors		conflicts with other workload (n=220, 85%)	time constraints due to other editorial commitments (reviewing) (3.5)
guidelines for reviewers not clear		insufficient interest in the paper (n=107, 42%)	poor reputation of journal (3.6)
poor editorial management of the manuscript		lack of formal recognition of reviewer contribution (n=22, 8%)	poor quality of work previously published in journal (3.4)
not given sufficient recognition			poor quality of manuscript sent to review (3.4)
lack of feedback from editors		dislike of the open review system (n=6, 10%)	review comments to author not taken into account in previous reviews (journal not enforcing referee's recommendations) (3.3)
reviewers asked to conduct reviews outside their area of expertise			concerns that future requests to review may become burdensome (2.7)
narrow fields - high conflict of interest			lack of formal recognition (annual listing of reviewers in journal) (2)
transparency			
selection of the reviewers not good			





Thank you 😊

- Mersiha Mahmić-Kaknjo – [mmahmickaknjo@gmail.com](mailto:mmahmickaknjo@gmail.com)

PEERE “New Frontiers of Peer Review”

[www.peere.org](http://www.peere.org)

[peereinfo@peere.org](mailto:peereinfo@peere.org)

 **cost**  
EUROPEAN COOPERATION  
IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

