

Chapter 4

Single–Blind vs. Double–Blind vs. Open Peer Review

ABSTRACT

The current chapter discusses the preferences for blinding policies in journals among authors and reviewers. The findings indicate significant support for concealing author and reviewer identities during the review process. Additionally, the research suggests that double-blind peer review systems can contribute to fairness, reduced bias, and improved evaluation processes. The nuanced perspectives from different studies shed light on the potential impact of blinding policies on manuscript acceptance rates, review quality, and biases related to author prestige and gender representation. Overall, it is clear that both benefits and complexities are associated with double-blind peer review, emphasizing the need for further investigation and improvement in this area.

BACKGROUND

Glenn Regehr and Georges Bordage explore preferences for blinding policies in Medical Education among authors and reviewers. A web-based survey with eight questions was distributed to 2632 individuals who submitted or reviewed journal manuscripts between 2003 and 2004. Eight hundred thirty-eight responses were collected. The findings revealed that 68% of respondents favored concealing author names in the review process, while 72% preferred concealing reviewer identities. Notably, even highly experienced participants preferred author concealment, with

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54% in favor. The reasons for concealing identities included promoting fairness and honesty in reviews and mitigating personal conflicts or rivalries.

Conversely, revealing identities enhanced transparency and provided better insight into the context and credentials of authors and reviewers. Ultimately, respondents strongly advocated for continuing double-blinding procedures to maintain anonymity for authors and reviewers throughout the review process (Regehr & Bordage, 2006). BMC Pharmacology and Toxicology's peer-review system operates under a transparent peer-review system where reviewer reports are published alongside the article. The journal was created by merging two journals, BMC Pharmacology, and BMC Clinical Pharmacology. After the merger, the journal adopted a fully open peer review policy, which received mixed feedback from the Editorial Board Members, with an overall preference for a double-blind peer review system where authors and reviewers are not revealed to each other (Moylan et al., 2014). This chapter explores the implications of single-blind, double-blind, and open peer review models in fostering fairness, transparency, and accountability in scholarly publishing. By analyzing their respective impacts on bias, evaluation quality, and acceptance rates, this chapter underscores the significance of aligning peer review methodologies with ethical and practical standards in academia

LITERATURE

Article Acceptance Rate

The double-blind peer review process has an 18% lower manuscript acceptance rate than the single-blind process. However, due to significant variability among the studies analyzed, further research is needed to confirm these results and identify factors influencing acceptance rates in both review processes (Ucci et al., 2022). The impact of transitioning from single-blind to double-blind peer review in the Finnish Medical Journal was examined to assess its influence on reviewers' engagement, evaluations, and the caliber of their assessments. The analysis revealed that the acceptance rate for review requests remained steady between single-blind (67%) and double-blind (66%) models. However, reviewers in the double-blind format exhibited heightened scrutiny, opting for “accept as is” or “minor revision” less frequently (59% vs. 73%) and “major revision” or “reject” more often (41% vs. 27%).

Moreover, the quality of reviews improved under the double-blind system, yielding higher ratings of 4 and 5 (56% vs. 49%) and a superior mean quality score (3.38 vs. 3.22). These results indicate that double-blind peer review elevates the comprehensiveness and fairness of the review process without diminishing reviewers' willingness to take part (Parmanne et al., 2023). Maria K Kowalczyk et al. examine

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