

Guidelines for WebmedCentral *plus* Specialty Editors

1. WebmedCentral *plus* has a number of “Specialty Editors” for each specialty. The Specialty Editors act as the handling Editor for manuscripts and are typically scientists of considerable standing in their field. They would usually have published over 20 articles in good journals, and been invited to speak at national and international conferences.
2. The Specialty Editor makes the initial evaluation of the submitted manuscript, and sends suitable manuscript to two Editorial Board members (or expert scientists outside the Editorial Board or author recommended reviewers if suitable) for review. Once the reviews are returned, the Specialty Editor evaluates these, and makes an initial recommendation (reject, accept, request minor revisions, request major revisions). The manuscript, with reviewer comments, and the decision from the Specialty Editor is then sent back to the author. If revision is required, the Specialty Editor receives the revised manuscript, and either makes the final decision immediately, or sends it back to the original reviewers for re-review. After re-review (if requested), the Specialty Editor assesses the comments, and makes a final decision on the manuscript.

Broadly our criteria for publication are as follows.

- Article should be a piece of scientific importance.
 - The manuscript must be scientifically and technically robust.
 - Authors must have supplied all necessary data and information and described methods in sufficient detail. Results must be interpreted appropriately and support the conclusions deduced.
 - The manuscript is appropriately written and includes appropriate references.
 - Authors maintain high standards of research integrity. Appropriate consent forms, ethics committee/institutional review board clearances etc. have been obtained.
 - Authors must disclose competing interests, sources of funding and contribution made by each author.
 - The manuscript follows appropriate guidelines for that type of study.
3. Unless under exceptional circumstances, we will not allocate more than two manuscripts to a specialty editor per month. The number of Specialty Editors in any specialty will reflect the number of submissions in that specialty, and can be adjusted to fit workloads. It is the responsibility of Specialty Editor in Chief to ensure their specialties have an adequate number of specialty editors and editorial board members.

4. Specialty Editors would typically solicit reviews from two Editorial Board members for each manuscript. However, at their sole discretion, they can choose to invite reviewers suggested by authors or from our reviewers' database or any other scientists they think will be able to provide a good quality review on the manuscript. It is important for reviewers to understand that *plus* operates an open peer review system, and therefore their reviews (and names) will usually be published alongside the article.
5. From their user admin panel, Specialty Editors can see how many reviews each editorial board member has posted in the last year and also the ratings on those reviews (punctuality, depth of review etc.). Specialty Editors will have to consider not overburdening Editorial Board Members (We recommend no more than 6 manuscripts per editorial board member per year). Specialty editors can invite any two editorial board members for review. They can also invite author suggested reviewers or reviewers from our database.
6. Specialty Editors can invite/approve suitable candidates to the editorial board of their specialty.
7. We expect Specialty Editors to provide a first decision on a manuscript within 28 days of submission.
8. Reviews as well as Specialty editor comments are usually published along with the manuscript in accordance with our policy of "open peer review."