Editors’ Note

Peer Reviewers for the *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine* in 2008

External peer reviewers are the unsung heroes of the *JABFM*. Here we acknowledge and thank all who so generously gave their time and expertise to build the evidence base of family medicine, as well as to advance the scholarship of their peers. We also take this opportunity to identify how our peer review processes are aligned with the recent National Institutes of Health (NIH) plans to enhance its peer-review system.

In September, 2008, the NIH Peer Review Oversight Committee announced plans to enhance NIH peer-review activity, stating, “The excellence of peer review is directly correlated to our ability to recruit and retain the most accomplished, broad-thinking, and creative scientists to serve on study sections” (available at [http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov](http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov)). Although the NIH peer review enhancements are specific to the federal grant review process, we found that those related to “engaging the best reviewers” are also pertinent to our efforts at the *JABFM*. These are excerpted below along with comments specifying how the *JABFM* addresses these best practices.

**NIH: “Recruit the Best Reviewers”**

*JABFM alignment:* We aim to secure a content specialist and family physician generalist for each reviewed manuscript to provide a broad and scholarly critique to assist authors in disseminating their work. In 2008, reviews were submitted from 43 states and 21 countries.

**NIH: “Improve Reviewer Retention”**

*JABFM alignment:* We recognize that reviewers are very busy, and we avoid overburdening our reviewers with many requests. To expand our peer reviewer database, we actively recruit new reviewers with most new submissions; authors are also invited to suggest reviewers.

**NIH: “Provide Benefits for Reviewers”**

*JABFM alignment:* Reviewers receive a copy of the editor’s decision letter that includes the reviews for the manuscripts they critiqued. In 2008, we instituted an annual letter to those reviewers who provide exceptional service to the *JABFM*. With this we intend to show our appreciation and strengthen relations with the family medicine research community. We also consider requests from excellent reviewers for letters of support for promotion or tenure.

**NIH: “Enhance Reviewer Training”**

*JABFM alignment:* We provide resources for peer reviewers, which are available in the “Peer Reviewers” area on the *Journal’s* home page ([www.jabfm.org](http://www.jabfm.org)). These include an article about how to review a manuscript,^1^ an article about the *JABFM* peer-review process,^2^ and an article about what we seek in reviewer critiques. The editors also provide occasional workshops on journal peer reviewing at national primary care. Reviewers should also be aware of the *JABFM* editorial statement regarding conflict of interest.^4^

**NIH: “Allow Flexibility”**

*JABFM alignment:* Reviewers are encouraged to enter into their Rapid Review reviewer profile dates in which they will be unavailable for requests for manuscript review. Reviewers who receive a request that they are unable to accept are encouraged to let us know of such circumstances; some reviewers take this opportunity to suggest alternative potential reviewers.

**NIH: “Streamline Applications”**

*JABFM alignment:* All manuscript submissions are assigned to an editor for internal review and a decision to send the paper out for external peer review. In 2008, 26% of unsolicited manuscripts were rejected after this internal review. The top reasons for rejection (internal review only and external review combined) were because it added little new information to topic (34%); it was faulty research (26%); or it was poorly written (18%).

Electronic Table of Contents Alerts

We invite our peer reviewers to submit their best work to the *JABFM*. We are an open-access journal
with a wide readership. At the end of 2008, 67,015 members of the primary care community received our electronic Table of Contents, which is sent when each issue posts online. These eTOCs have hyperlinks to each new article. Sign up for eTOCS at http://www.jabfm.org/subscriptions/etoc.shtml.

**Recruiting New Peer Reviewers**
New reviewers are welcome; researchers, faculty, and community-based physicians are invited to enlist as peer reviewers for the *JABFM* (see the peer reviewer registration form on the website at www.jabfm.org).

**2008 Reviewer Performance**
In 2008, 390 individuals submitted to the *JABFM* editors 455 peer reviews and advice regarding suitability for publication. Reviewers took an average of 24 days (median, 25) to submit a review. Thanks to the following reviewers for their outstanding responsiveness:

- Ya’aqov M. Abrams
- John Abramson
- David A. Acosta
- David C. Agerter
- Erin J. Aiello
- James E. Aikens
- Grace A. Alfonsi
- Deborah Allen
- William A. Alto
- Gail M. Amundson
- J. Ellen Anderson
- Ronald J. Angel
- Jack Ansell
- Christine Arenson
- Cheryl B. Aspy
- Liv Berit Augestad
- John Bachman
- Elisabeth L. Backer
- Eric W. Bakker
- Beth Barnet
- Kirsten Barrett
- Monina Bartoces
- Kay A. Bauman
- Max Bayard
- Elizabeth A. Bayliss
- Oralia V. Bazaldua
- Howard B. Beckman
- Marvin Moe Bell
- Franco Benazzi
- Michal Benderly
- Ian M. Bennett
- Alfred O. Berg
- Stephen Berman
- Frances E. Biagioli
- Dawn Bielawski
- Juliann Binienda
- Helen J. Binns
- B. Wayne Blount
- Alan Blum
- Thomas Bodenheimer
- Patrik Borg
- Hayden B. Bosworth
- Rachel Bramson
- Kent Bream
- Patrick Bridge
- Howard Brody
- Carlos Brotons
- David W. Brown
- Richard L. Brown
- Sharon A. Brown
- Cynthia M. Bulik
- Sandra K. Burge
- Lucinda M. Buys
- Suzanne M. Cadarette
- Peter J. Carek
- Nancy Carter
- Ashwin Chatwani
- Rajesh Chauhan
- Frederick M. Chen
- John A. Chiladakis
- Kaj S. Christensen
- Richard D. Clover
- Andreas Cohrssen
- Vilma Cokkinides
- Yeates Conwell
- Michael A. Crouch
- Rebecca Crowell
- Brian K. Crowner
- Richard W. Crummer
- Jennifer F. Culhane
- Larry Culpepper
- William Curry
- Craig W. Czarsty
- Timothy P. Daaleman
- Peter G. Danis III
- Robert J. Darios
- Martin G. Dawes
- Cheryl Dee
- M. Dianne Delva
- Raymond Y. Demers
- Cristina Demian-Popescu
- Richard A. Deyo
- Joel Dickerman
- L. Miriam Dickinson
References


