

EDITORIAL

Recognizing the reviewer's contribution. How can we improve? ☆



En reconocimiento a la labor de los revisores. ¿Cómo podemos mejorar?

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Endocrinología, Diabetes y Nutrición is a journal that has evolved in recent years, as will be demonstrated by two special articles soon to appear in commemoration of its 65-year long trajectory. And we should be proud of this, since there has been ascending growth in all senses. One of the major milestones has been the indexing of *Endocrinología, Diabetes y Nutrición* in Journal Citation Reports (JCR) in 2015, which afforded recognition and, above all, visibility. Since then there has been a progressive increase in the number of manuscripts received. In 2017, the figure exceeded 300, and in 2019 we exceeded 360, representing an average of one article a day. This increase also represents a change in the way in which the contributions to the journal are managed. Since a parallel increase in the number of pages of each issue of the journal is not possible, we necessarily increase the percentage of rejections. From a positive perspective, the reception of so many manuscripts offers a broad range for selection, with a consequent improvement in the quality of the articles published. However, the greater number of submissions also implies delays in response and publication timelines. Undoubtedly, getting things done as quickly as possible represents an efficacy criterion of the journal. Both authors and readers deserve not only quality but also articles that are of clear current interest and relevance.

In this changing context conditioned by modern times, the role of the reviewer becomes even more important than

in the past. Indeed, reviewers have become a cornerstone in defining both the quality and the speed with which a journal publishes its articles. However, despite the importance of this role, it has received little recognition to date. Reviewer contribution is disinterested and involves non-remunerated dedication to the evaluation of manuscripts. In most cases, the time required for such dedication comes at the expense of less time for personal, family and leisure purposes.

There is no doubt that the improvement in publication times and in international projection, and the increase in scientific quality parameters we hope to achieve are not possible without the direct involvement of the reviewers.

Accordingly, those of us at *Endocrinología, Diabetes y Nutrición* would like to reconsider the contribution of the reviewers with some initiatives we will be adopting in the coming months. On the one hand, we would like to publicly acknowledge the work of the reviewers, and on the other to involve them even more (if possible) in the long term project of the journal. The first initiative we have undertaken this year, as many of the reviewers in 2019 will have observed, has been to issue a reviewer certificate to all interested parties. This is intended to recognise professional dedication to this particular task. Moreover, in collaboration with the boards of both the Spanish Society of Diabetes (*Sociedad Española de Diabetes* [SED]) and the Spanish Society of Endocrinology and Nutrition (*Sociedad Española de Endocrinología y Nutrición* [SEEN]) and with their active support, a "reviewer of the year" award will be created. This award will be presented on the occasion of each of the respective congresses, and will have a financial endowment under their direct sponsorship. The evaluation criteria behind this award will be made public shortly. Lastly, the inner cover page of the journal will be redesigned to include a space for reviewer recognition purposes.

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We are fully aware that these measures are not sufficient to compensate for the work involved in the critical review of manuscripts, but we do wish them to serve to give their work a higher profile.

The second group of actions focuses on strengthening the relationship between the journal and its reviewers, thereby also maximizing the work involved in critically reviewing a manuscript. Over the last few months, and in the context of the evaluation process, the reviewers have been invited to rate the possibility that an evaluated article may merit (due to its originality, clinical relevance, etc.) an editorial comment. If affirmative, the reviewer is offered the possibility of proposing and/or drafting the mentioned editorial comment. Following a preliminary test period, the proposal has been found to be most acceptable, and some editorials that will be published in 2020 have come as a result of this initiative. Similarly, we want to encourage them to propose reviews, editorials or, simply, new ideas seeking to improve the quality of the journal.

And lastly, a request. We would like to underline the time delays in the editorial process from reception of a manuscript to its eventual publication. Part of this time is

taken up by reviewer assessment of the paper. It should be taken into account that our peer review system requires an important candidate base. With the current figures we need more than a thousand reviewers each year. We are aware that workloads sometimes make it necessary to reject reviewer work, even unwillingly. If this proves to be the case, we would appreciate rejection to be made known as quickly as possible in order for us to be able to assign the work to another reviewer. In the case of acceptance, we would appreciate adherence to the timelines for submitting reviewer opinion.

The editorial board of *Endocrinología, Diabetes y Nutrición* hopes that this recognition and the initiatives discussed herein will encourage those who already participate in these tasks to continue to do so, and to encourage those who have not yet served as reviewers to become involved, reminding them that they can contact the journal to become registered as reviewers. We should always bear in mind that "author" and "reviewer" are two sides of the same coin.