

THE JOURNAL

The Red Journal Outstanding Reviewer Awards for 2021



Sue S. Yom, MD, PhD, FASTRO

Editor-in-Chief, University of California, San Francisco, California

Formal peer review is about 300 years old. In the 18th century, scholarly societies began to circulate manuscripts to select referees when making decisions on what to publish. Then, as now, evaluation was a sensitive matter. As late as 1936, Albert Einstein was so “extremely offended” that a manuscript of his was sent out for review that he withdrew it from the *Physical Review* (subsequent scholarship has shown that the peer reviewer had pointed out an error whose recognition would have saved Einstein months of work).^{1,2} It was only after World War II that an increase in scientific research, growing specialization of the sciences, and true competition for publication necessitated scalable systems of standard evaluation. In the 1960s and 1970s, peer review spread as the major metric by which scientific journals were evaluating submissions.²

The Red Journal has evolved its peer review system in keeping with recent history. We, like many other journals, have a complex infrastructure focused on maintaining the integrity of peer review as one of the linchpins of our system. Without referees to help us gauge the validity and impact of our submissions, the journal would be adrift. We have carefully adjusted our operations as the needs of authors, reviewers, and the journal have changed. Double-anonymization of authors and referees was introduced in 2011, with the major aim of reducing bias and encouraging objectivity. Subsequently, this practice was evaluated and showed high acceptance.³ Starting in the late 2010s, anonymization of large cooperative group trials was not required, due to the fact that these studies were well known and easily identifiable. This year, to enhance the educational and scientific value of the journal, we began to require submission of randomized phase 2 and 3 clinical trial protocols along with their parent manuscripts, with anonymization made voluntary. This evolution

was based on the reality that these studies are typically well known to reviewers, but the specifics of their implementation are what require further understanding.⁴

It is certain that our peer review process will continue to evolve. For instance, some journals have tried “opening” parts of the peer review process, publishing reviewers’ identities, reviewers’ submitted reports, or pre-review manuscript versions. At the far reaches of experimentation, a few journals have altered processes to include crowdsourced online review, forums for direct communications between authors and reviewers or among reviewers, or annotations or commentaries on published final-version articles (we actually do have a version of this last feature, allowing comments on articles to be posted directly on our website). There is no consensus on clear benefits to these approaches, and most major journals remain uncommitted at present. We will need to evaluate these options thoughtfully as the electronic interactivity of our journal expands and new channels of scholarly influence are carved out.

In the meantime, along with our terrific deputy and section editors, associate section editors, and journal staff, I congratulate the following individuals for receiving the Outstanding Reviewer Award for 2021. These persons have provided prompt, respectful, detailed, constructive, and insightful comments, giving service to this journal and our profession. We express special congratulations to our outstanding reviewers drawn from the Resident Peer Reviewer Training (RePRT) program,⁵ now in its fourth year,⁶ and for current trainee-participants in RePRT, winners received a certificate and a letter announcing the award was sent to a supervisor designated by the honoree. As a form of large-scale thanks to all of our reviewers, we have initiated a Reviewer Recognition Program for which any reviewer is

Corresponding author: Sue S. Yom, MD, PhD, FASTRO; E-mail: sue.yom@ucsf.edu

Disclosures: Grants: Merck, EMD Serono, Genentech, Bristol-Myers Squibb, BioMimetix; Royalties: UpToDate, Springer.

Handled by Lisa Braverman due to COI.

eligible; if you have not, please take some time to read about the details of this new program.^{7,8}

Our editors are not eligible for these Outstanding Reviewer Awards, but I should note that many of them would have been on this list if they were. It is yet more confirmation of our editors' dedication and talent.

We always welcome new reviewers to join our ranks; if you are interested in becoming a regular or preferred reviewer, please contact us at redjournal@astro.org.

The Red Journal Outstanding Reviewer Awards for 2021 (in alphabetical order)

Leslie Ballas, MD, University of Southern California

Jose Bazan, MD, Ohio State University

*Xuguang Chen, MD, PhD, Johns Hopkins University

Steven Chmura, MD, PhD, University of Chicago

*Amit Chowdhry, MD, PhD, University of Rochester

Pippa Cospers, MD, PhD, University of Wisconsin

Bree Eaton, MD, Emory University

Naamit Gerber, MD, New York University

Wilma Heemsbergen, PhD, Erasmus University Medical Center

Krishan Jethwa, MD, Yale University

**Brianna Jones, MD, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

David Kirsch, MD, PhD, Duke University

Raymond Mailhot, MD, MPH, University of Florida

Elizabeth Nichols, MD, University of Maryland

**Georgios Ntentas, DPhil, University of Oxford

Nitin Ohri, MD, MS, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Kristoffer Petersson, PhD, University of Oxford

Erqi Pollom, MD, Stanford University

*Leonid Reshko, MD, University of Louisville

Alessandro Scaggion, PhD, Istituto Oncologico Veneto

Alberto Traverso, PhD, Maastricht Clinic

Yolanda Tseng, MD, University of Washington

Stephanie Weiss, MD, Fox Chase Cancer Center

Victoria Yu, PhD, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

*Sondos Zayed, MD, London Health Sciences Centre

*RePRT graduate, **RePRT participant

References

1. Kenefick D. Einstein versus the physical review. *Physics Today* 2005;58:43.
2. Baldwin M. Credibility, peer review, and nature, 1945-1990. *Notes Rec R Soc Lond* 2015;69:337-352.
3. Jagsi R, Bennett KE, Griffith KA, et al. Attitudes toward blinding of peer review and perceptions of efficacy within a small biomedical specialty. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys* 2014;89:940-946.
4. Yom SS, Deville C, Boerma M, et al. Evaluating the generalizability and reproducibility of scientific research. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys*, in press.
5. IJROBP resident peer reviewer training (RePRT) program. Available at: <https://www.redjournal.org/content/review>. Accessed February 4, 2022.
6. ASTRO. Red Journal welcomes the inaugural batch of reviewer trainees. Available at: <https://astroblog.weebly.com/blog/red-journal-welcomes-the-inaugural-batch-of-reviewer-trainees>. Accessed February 4, 2022.
7. Yom SS. The reviewer recognition program: Giving back from the ASTRO journals. Available at: <https://www.astro.org/Blog/January-2022/The-Reviewer-Recognition-Program-Giving-back-from>. Accessed February 4, 2022.
8. ASTRO. Reviewer involvement and recognition. Available at: <https://www.astro.org/News-and-Publications/Journals/News/Reviewers>. Accessed February 4, 2022.