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New England Journal of Medicine

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Publication Process

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The *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) employs a rigorous peer review and editing process to evaluate all manuscripts for scientific accuracy, novelty, and importance. This painstaking publication process has been tested over many decades and is a major reason for the *Journal's* reputation as the world's leading medical journal.

NEJM receives over 4,500 original research submissions each year — more than a dozen each business day — with over half coming from outside the U.S.

At least five experts review and edit each Original Article or Special Article manuscript published by NEJM. Of thousands of research reports submitted each year, about 5% are eventually published by NEJM.

The peer review process works to improve research reports while preventing overstated results from reaching physicians and the public. Each published NEJM manuscript benefits from hundreds of hours of work by editors, statistical experts, manuscript editors, illustrators, proofreaders, and production personnel, who work

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to ensure that every paper meets exacting standards.

About the Editors

The NEJM core editorial team comprises nine physician editors and one Ph.D. geneticist.

Drs. Eric J. Rubin (Editor-in-Chief), Edward W. Campion (Executive and Online Editor), and Mary Beth Hamel (Executive Deputy Editor) lead and direct the work of seven deputy editors, nine associate editors, and the Perspective editor.

Deputy Editors

NEJM deputy editors — most of whom also spend some portion of their time in patient care, medical research, or teaching — manage non-research content appearing in NEJM. They also serve key roles in the research review process, ensuring that no manuscript under review by NEJM can be declined without the agreement of at least two NEJM editors.

Associate Editors

Nine NEJM associate editors are chosen for their expertise in major areas of medicine. Associate editors play central roles in managing the peer review process and in decisions to accept or decline manuscripts for publication in NEJM. In addition to their work for NEJM, they also hold full-time positions at academic medical centers.

The Path of a Research Manuscript

NEJM Executive Deputy Editor Mary Beth Hamel, M.D., M.P.H., reviews each research manuscript submission and determines whether it meets essential NEJM criteria to warrant further consideration and peer review. About 10% of submitted papers are declined at this stage without further editorial consideration.

A paper passing Dr. Hamel's initial review moves to an appropriate associate editor, who

determines whether it meets fundamental criteria for:

- Quality
- Novelty
- Potential clinical impact

If so, the associate editor sends the manuscript to at least two peer reviewers.

Should an associate editor wish to decline a paper without peer review, it goes first to a deputy editor for a second opinion; if the deputy editor disagrees with the associate editor, the paper will be sent on for peer review.

Peer Review

NEJM maintains a database of more than 30,000 peer reviewers worldwide in all areas of medicine. In almost all cases, two peer reviewers evaluate each submission within one to two weeks and submit written reports to the NEJM editors.

During peer review, all manuscripts are considered privileged communications. Without prior approval from the NEJM editorial office, peer reviewers are expressly prohibited from:

- Copying manuscripts
- Sharing with others
- Discussing their personal evaluations or recommendations

NEJM also instructs peer reviewers to:

- Report immediately any possible personal, professional, or financial conflicts of interest with authors or related to a paper's topic; where conflicts arise, NEJM editors find substitute reviewers.
- Destroy manuscript copies once reviews are complete.

Full Editorial Team Review and Statistical Review

Using peer reviews and their own judgments, NEJM associate editors then decide whether to decline a manuscript (a decision which must be seconded by a deputy editor) or to bring it to a weekly editorial meeting attended by all NEJM deputy editors, associate editors, and statistical consultants for discussion and

debate.

Following discussion at a weekly editorial meeting, a paper will be assigned one of three statuses:

- **Rejection:** Publication is declined; reviewers' comments are provided to authors.
- **Provisional Rejection:** The manuscript is not suitable for publication unless the authors conduct further research or collect additional data.
- **Revision:** NEJM has interest in the paper, but the manuscript is not acceptable in its current form and must be revised before further consideration for publication. If a manuscript is moved to Revision status, the paper will be sent on for statistical review — an additional, rigorous review step. Most research manuscripts published by NEJM undergo at least one statistical review by one of five statistical consultants prior to acceptance.

More on the Revision Process

The associate editor communicates a paper's status to its authors in a letter detailing questions raised in the review process and, where applicable, recommending revisions needed to meet NEJM standards for publication. Authors respond to the associate editor with a revised manuscript and letter detailing their changes.

When authors resubmit a revised manuscript, the associate editor again reviews it and decides whether further peer or statistical review is needed and often brings the paper back to a weekly editorial meeting for further discussion.

If additional outside review is not needed, the manuscript will be sent to a deputy editor for additional editing and revisions in collaboration with the associate editor and its authors.

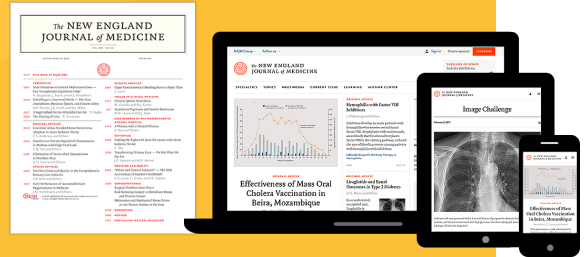
Final Review & Acceptance for Publication

The NEJM Editor-in-Chief reviews all final (revised) submissions and may raise further questions. The Editor-in-Chief is the only person who can officially accept a paper for publication. Following Dr. Rubin's formal acceptance for publication, a paper will then move through rigorous processes for manuscript editing, production, illustration, design, and publication.

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