Peer Review Editorial

Peer review is the evaluation of written work by subject matter experts in the same field. It is quality assurance for scientific, academic and professional work ensuring that it is relevant for the journal audience, significant to the discipline, and accurate to the best knowledge of the reviewers and editors. Peer review can come in many forms including open review, single blind, double blind and even triple blind.

Open review is a term that may be used to encompass several similar review styles in which the author and the reviewer are both known to each other. Some of the potential advantages to open peer review is that reviewers are acknowledged and may do more thorough work in ensuring the poor-quality articles are not published given the transparency and accountability that comes along with anyone being able to read their peer review. It may also encourage them to be more constructive and diplomatic in their comments. There is also more opportunity to identify potential or actual conflicts of interest. Concerns about open peer review include: the potential introduction of personal bias toward the author, this can be both positive and negative; increased workload, open review is more collaborative and may require multiple iterations to build consensus; and reviewers feeling constrained to offer fair criticism of eminent scholars or leaders in the field.

Single-blind peer review means that the names of the reviewers are hidden from the author. While this can support impartial decisions, as reviewers would not be swayed either for or against an author,

there are, however, concerns that unethical reviewers may appropriate information prior to publication for their own use, and that reviewers may feel greater freedom to be harsh in their criticism of an author's work. Notably the *Journal of Emergency Nursing* (American) is moving to a single-blind process for research articles and a double-blind process for non-research articles.
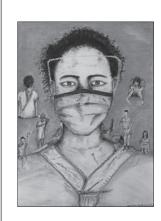
Double-blind review where neither the reviewer nor the author is identified is the most popular (at this time) form of peer review and has several marked advantages. Because this model is the norm for most journals, it is a system that most reviewers are familiar and comfortable with; Anonymity can limit bias, so articles are judged solely on their content and not treated differently based on the reputation, sex, or country of origin of the author. This does not stop unethical practices, as reviewers can occasionally identify authors based on content or writing style.

CJEN currently utilizes a double-blind process where the editors remove identifying information such as facility and location names from the article and select reviewers with subject matter expertise to review the article based on specific criteria. Neither the author nor the reviewers are identified to one another. This may change, as acknowledging the important role that peer reviewers play in the editorial process is important. This peer review process allows both authors and reviewers time to reflect on their work and how it can be improved.

The CJEN editorial team would like encourage NENA members to become involved in reviewing articles for the CJEN, ensuring that we have a rich journal with well-considered articles and information pertinent to our specialty practice. Peer review can be considered continuing professional development, as it requires currency in the subject matter being reviewed and provides a type of mentoring to authors. For nurses embarking on graduate studies this type of work helps to develop and refine scholarly research and writing practices and helps prepare graduate students for similar scrutiny of their own work. For reviewers working in an academic setting such professional service is often the foundation for tenure or promotion.

Peer review is the foundation for creating a journal that is robust with high-quality articles that are pertinent to our practice. While the peer review process is not a perfect mechanism, it helps build community and ensure the quality of our publication and improve the value that articles have for our readers. If you would like to join our network of subject matter experts and peer reviewers, please email **editor@nena.ca** and let us know your area of expertise.

Heather McLellan,
Editor, *Canadian Journal*
of Emergency Nursing

About the cover art

Anna Roth Trowbridge is an Emergency Nurse with an interest in harm reduction, mental health, psychedelic research, and community-based alternatives to policing in healthcare. She studied Cognitive Science and English Theatre at McGill University before completing her nursing degree at University of British Columbia. Anna is currently embarking on a new nursing position in the community in Vancouver, providing care to pregnant folks and their families on the Downtown Eastside.

The cover portrait is of Kyra Philbert, nursing colleague, friend and lovely inspiration for a drawing.