Reviewer’s report

Title: Core Competencies for Scientific Editors of Biomedical Journals: Consensus Statement

Version: 0 Date: 24 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Sonia Vasconcelos

Reviewer’s report:

The authors propose core competencies for scientific editors of biomedical journals. The rationale for the proposal was previously described in a published scoping review by some of the authors of the manuscript. In the scoping review, the authors found a gap in existing recommendations, indicating that they were not research based. In this manuscript, they thus developed a three-step process for the development of core editorial competencies, which resulted from perceptions of a diversity of scientific editing stakeholders. The process adopted, with a crucial post-publication action for implementation and dissemination, is well described in the manuscript. The first step included an assessment survey of editors’ perceptions and training needs, which collected insights of scientific editors from different parts of the world. The survey was followed by a modified Delphi process, which I found particularly relevant and appropriate for this type of approach. I missed details on the survey process, including more on sampling and validation, but the authors mention that the report is under review.

Apart from this point, I have only minor issues.

This is a timely contribution that adds to efforts to improve not only the training of scientific editors, but also to increase the reliability of the scientific literature. The rationale for the work however seems to be mostly focused on the need to fill the training gap of scientific editors of biomedical journals, with their central role in the publication system. The authors have shown evidence of the importance of this competency issue and of the need of addressing this situation to improve the quality of the research record. However, as evidence is mounting that publication practices and the way the system itself has been organized can seriously affect the health of the literature, the training of scientific editors would be only partially responsible for possible changes. I thus missed, at least in the discussion section, some thoughtful consideration of this broader context.

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