Reviewer’s report

Title: Biomedical journal speed and efficiency: a cross-sectional pilot survey of author experiences

Version: 0 Date: 28 Sep 2017

Reviewer: David Moher

Reviewer’s report:

The authors report on an electronic survey of corresponding authors of recently published articles indexed in Medline. The 8-item survey was developed and administered to ascertain corresponding authors views on publication time and efficiency of the publication process. Approximately 20% of corresponding authors completed the survey.

My major concern with this survey is the differences between the responders and non-respondents and whether these differences confound the results. My interpretation is that the two groups differ from one another in more ways than they are similar. It's unclear whether multivariable analysis might have helped tease out some of these issues?

While the authors may have achieved some degree of diversity in terms of respondents, the respondents seem like early career researchers given the number of publications and h-index. As such, I'm not sure there is sufficient response diversity to make strong meaningful conclusions.

Page 3, lines 15-16. The authors state "The publication of a scientific manuscript is considered the final stage of the scientific process…..". I don't think implementation scientists would agree. Indeed, there is a good argument that the publication of an article to be an early part of the dissemination and uptake process. I'd recommend the authors revise this sentence accordingly.

Page 4 between Study sample and design and data extraction. I would recommend moving the first paragraph on page 6, beginning "In January 2017,...." and inserting it between the study sample and design and data extraction sections. I think it flows better and is an easier read. Can the authors comment on the estimated time to complete the survey, likely brief but I'm fastidious about methods.

Page 4, Data Extraction

Can the authors include a box with appropriate definitions or guidance used to classify the study types. For example, as a clinical epidemiologist I can imagine an observational study might be a case control, cross section or cohort but would benefit from knowing precisely how the authors operationalized this. Similarly, there is not always agreement as to what a systematic review is (Liberati et al. The PRISMA statement for reporting systematic reviews and meta-analyses of studies that evaluate health care interventions: explanation and elaboration. PLoS Med. 2009 Jul 21;6(7):e1000100). Such information will facilitate the replication of the authors methods. I was unsure what the design architecture category "other" study deign meant.
Page 6, line 56. Some readers (from countries whose first language is not English) may not understand what is meant by “failed”. Some clarity would be useful, such as the email bounced back.

Page 6, line 56-57. The authors report a survey response completion rate. What was the response rate (different from the completion rate - I'm interpreting the authors meaning of this to be those respondents who answered all 8 questions). Did some respondents start the survey and not complete all 8 questions - response rate?

Page 8, lines 9-11. I'm not sue I understand these results - there was 1 peer review and 3 peer reviews, on average (median) to achieve manuscript acceptance. I'm sure I'm misinterpreting this - some peer reviewers provided no peer reviews?

Page 10, Limitations section. I think it is important to note that the respondents differed from the non-respondents.

**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?
If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal