

Peer review

Peer review alternatives and future

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Peer review alternatives and the
future, Pritpal S Tamber, BioMed
Central

What I am going to cover



- ⌘1: The problem
- ⌘2: Tinker with what we have
- ⌘3: Solutions from the online world?
- ⌘4: Starting from scratch?

The problems with peer review



- ⌘ Slow
- ⌘ Expensive
- ⌘ Subjective
- ⌘ Open to abuse
- ⌘ Poor at detecting faults, fraud or misconduct
- ⌘ So why do we bother?

Why do we bother?

⌘ Because there are some good things:

- ☑ *Might* be educational for author, reviewer and editor
- ☑ *Might* stop poor science being published
- ☑ *Might* improve articles
- ☑ *Might* help to select the better articles
- ☑ *Might* detect faults, fraud and misconduct
- ☑ Will get me a trip to India

⌘ **And it's all we've got!**

Tinkering with what we have



⌘ Treat reviewers better

- ☑ Keep them informed of decisions
- ☑ Pay them?

⌘ Create more checklists (CONSORT)

⌘ Train authors, reviewers and editors

⌘ Open review?

⌘ **Peer review: superficially, it's deep; but deep down, it's superficial**

Solutions from the online world?

⌘ E-print / pre-print servers? (arXiv.org)

- ☑ Post article
- ☑ Collect feedback
- ☑ Revise and send to journal
- ☑ *But who will do it?*

⌘ Pre-publication history?

- ☑ An extension of open peer review?

⌘ **But can peer review really “save” a piece of research?**

Starting from scratch?

⌘ If you were starting from scratch you'd consider:

☑ What do I review, the article or protocol?

☑ When do I review science, before it's started or after it's finished? "IM" before, "RAD" after?

☑ Who should be reviewing, trained or untrained reviewers? Methodologists first, specialists after?

☑ And who's monitoring the whole thing?

⌘ If you were starting from scratch you wouldn't design what we have ...

So how do we move on?

⌘ Change hurts

⌘ Need to recognise and reward skills:

☑ Train, appraise, and re-train reviewers

☑ Train, appraise, and re-train editors

☑ Everyone should be accountable

⌘ Reward both with academic kudos

⌘ Improving peer review: who's responsible? *BMJ* 2004, 328: 657-658

What I have covered



- ⌘1: Reiterated the problem
- ⌘2: Suggested some possible tinkering
- ⌘3: Suggested some online solutions
- ⌘4: How we could start from scratch

Thank you for listening

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