

Anxiety Disorder Research **Guide to Reviewers**

Robust peer review is essential to maintaining the quality and reputation of scholarly journals. It is also a vital means by which authors can strengthen their manuscripts. Anxiety Disorder Research is deeply grateful to reviewers for contributing their time, effort, and expertise to this important process. This guide provides reviewers with advice on preparing and submitting their reviews.

About the Journal

Anxiety Disorder Research is the official peer-reviewed, open-access scientific journal of the Japanese Society of Anxiety and Related Disorders (JSAD).

The purpose of this journal is to publish important, original, and innovative articles that advance understanding, assessment, treatment/intervention, and prevention of anxiety disorders and related conditions. Topics of interest include behavioral, cognitive, and biological assessments; diagnosis and classification; neuroscience and genetics; sociocultural factors; mechanisms and comorbidities; epidemiology; psychosocial and psychopharmacological treatments/interventions; prevention; implementation science; theoretical developments; and policy.

The journal provides an international platform for interdisciplinary scholarship and professional exchange, and also accepts manuscripts written in Japanese.

The journal uses a single-blind peer review process, in which the reviewers' identities are not disclosed to the author(s).

Conflict of Interest

A robust peer review process relies on reviewer feedback that is both fair and objective. If there are actual, perceived, or potential circumstances that could influence a reviewer's ability to act impartially, a conflict of interest exists.

The editor will try to avoid conflicts of interest when inviting reviewers to assess a manuscript. However, it can often be difficult or impossible to identify potential bias. If you have been invited to review a manuscript, please consider whether your ability to judge it fairly and objectively might be influenced by circumstances such as:

- having a personal relationship with any of the authors
- having worked or published with any of the authors in the past 3 years
- having a financial interest in the work or the outcome of the manuscript
- working on the same topic or in direct competition with any of the authors
- having seen or commented on drafts of the manuscript.

A conflict of interest may not be apparent until after you have accepted the invitation to review and have begun your assessment of the manuscript. If, at any time during the review process, you believe you may have a conflict of interest with a manuscript you are reviewing, please contact the Editorial Office immediately.

Timing

The journal aims to provide authors with efficient peer review and rapid editorial decisions. We ask reviewers to complete their reviews within 4 weeks. Please let the Editorial Office know as soon as possible if you expect your review to be delayed. This helps us to keep authors informed and to make alternative arrangements if necessary.

Confidentiality

Unpublished manuscripts

Reviewers should treat all manuscripts confidentially throughout the peer review process. The journal asks reviewers to follow these guidelines at all times:

- Do not disclose your role in reviewing the manuscript.
- Do not discuss the manuscript with anyone who is not directly involved in the peer review process.
- Do not use any information from an unpublished manuscript in your own research or publications.
- Do not cite any unpublished manuscripts or their contents.
- Do not reveal your identity to the authors during the peer review process without first obtaining the editor's approval.
- Do not share or upload the content of the manuscript with any artificial intelligence tool or public platform.
- Check with the editor before consulting colleagues (either within or outside your own research group) about the manuscript, to ensure that you do not inadvertently violate confidentiality or impartiality.

The journal recognizes that invited reviewers may, from an educational or training perspective, wish to involve early-career researchers (e.g., PhD students, post-doctoral researchers, early-career faculty) in the review process. To ensure that such involvement does not violate the confidentiality of the review process, the invited reviewer must provide these researchers with this guideline and notify the editor in advance of their full names and positions. Provided that these requirements are met, co-reviewing is permitted. The invited reviewer retains full responsibility for the quality and accuracy of the review.

Reviewer identity

The journal maintains the confidentiality of reviewers' identities at all times. A reviewer's name will be disclosed only if the reviewer specifically requests such disclosure and the Editorial Board approves the request.

Writing Your Review

A good review is concise yet comprehensive and well-structured. It serves two main purposes: to provide the editor with enough information to determine whether the manuscript should be published in the journal; and to give authors feedback on their manuscript and, if necessary, advice on how to improve it.

Reviews are separated into three parts in the journal's online manuscript submission and peer review system: multiple-choice questions (recommendation for publication), comments to the author(s), and comments to the editor.

Please prepare reviewer comments in English for manuscripts written in English, and in Japanese for manuscripts written in Japanese.

Multiple-choice questions

These questions concern your overall impressions of the manuscript, such as your recommendation on its suitability for publication. The answers to these questions are shared only with the editor, not the author(s).

Comments to the author(s)

Ideally, your review should include:

- a short summary of the manuscript and its findings
- a general overview of the manuscript's strengths and weaknesses
- numbered comments that address specific criticisms about the manuscript.

When preparing your comments, consider the following aspects of the manuscript:

- Relevance: Does the work fit the journal's scope and readership?
- Originality and significance: Is the work new and important?
- Scientific quality: Are the approach, methods, design, and analysis all sound?
- Written quality: Is the manuscript clearly presented?

The following questions may help you to assess each part of the manuscript:

- Title
 - Does the Title accurately reflect the manuscript's main findings?
- Abstract
 - Does the Abstract adequately describe the background or context of the work, the objectives of the research project, the methods used, the main findings, and their relevance?
- Introduction
 - Does the Introduction provide adequate background and context for the work?
 - Have the authors presented their hypotheses clearly?
- Methods
 - Did the authors use appropriate methods and analyses?
 - Have the authors described the methods in enough detail to allow others to replicate them?
 - Have the authors clearly explained and/or mitigated any caveats or limitations in their approach?
 - In the case of human/animal experimentation, have the authors adhered to established codes of practice and ethics?
- Results
 - Have the authors explained their results clearly and adequately?
 - Is each table and figure necessary? Are any missing?
 - Are the tables and figures complete and easy to interpret?
- Discussion and Conclusions
 - Are the Discussion and Conclusions supported by the results?
 - Have the authors considered any alternative explanations for their results?
 - Have the authors made unsupported claims or inappropriate speculations?
- General
 - Are all cited references relevant and necessary? Has any relevant literature been omitted?

- Is the manuscript clearly written?
- Have the authors adhered to established codes of publication ethics, including the guidelines of [the Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#)?
- Are there any errors in fact, methodology, analyses, or interpretations?
- Has the manuscript been published previously, in part or in whole, in any language?

When writing critical comments, make sure they are constructive and are aimed at the research, not the researchers. If you make assertions of fact, provide supporting evidence.

You should avoid making a recommendation for publication or otherwise in your comments to the author(s), as the editor's decision may be based on conflicting reviews.

Comments to the editor

Helpful comments to the editor include:

- a summary of your comments and main points to the author(s), to help the editor quickly assess your review
- how important each point is, or highlight the important points
- your recommendation regarding publication in the journal. Setting out clear arguments for or against publication is more helpful than simply stating your recommendation to accept or reject the manuscript. If appropriate, you may also recommend that the manuscript be reclassified under a different article type.
- if it is not suitable for publication, any advice on how the manuscript could be improved to encourage resubmission in the future
- any concerns you may have about potential ethical violations in either the research or the manuscript.

Comments to the editor are kept confidential and are not shared with the author(s).

Submitting Your Review

Submit your review via the link to the journal's online manuscript submission and peer review system provided in the editor's invitation email. If you encounter any difficulties, please contact the Editorial Office.

Next Steps

Keep a copy of your review. If you recommend a revision, the editor may invite you to comment on the manuscript when it has been revised. In such cases, your primary role is to assess whether the authors have adequately addressed the comments raised in the previous review round. Please focus on the following points:

- whether the authors' responses and revisions satisfactorily resolve your earlier concerns
- whether any significant issues remain unaddressed
- avoiding the introduction of new major criticisms unless they concern serious methodological, ethical, or factual problems not previously apparent

When the editor makes a final decision on the manuscript, you will receive a copy of the decision letter along with all reviewers' comments to the authors. Reviewers' identities remain confidential unless a reviewer has signed their review.

Contact

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