What is better than a peer-review process?

Grzegorz Gajos¹, Anetta Undas²

¹ Vice Editor-in-Chief, Polish Archives of Internal Medicine
² Editor-in-Chief, Polish Archives of Internal Medicine

The current impact factor of 2.12 for the Polish Archives of Internal Medicine (Pol Arch Med Wewn), which was released in the Journal Citation Reports in June 2015, has strengthened the journal’s standing. Over the last year, we were pleased to observe a substantial increase in unsolicited submissions to the journal. We continue to be a leader in a timely publication of research related to internal medicine among Polish medical journals. Our journal guarantees a fast peer review process within approximately 1 month since submission. Given a significant impact that the quality of the reviews has on the position of a journal, we decided to comment on this issue.

The selection of papers for publication in a medical journal is the responsibility of editors who consider not only the novelty and accuracy of the work, but also the potential impact of the results on clinical practice. In the Pol Arch Med Wewn, we rigorously rely on a properly conducted peer-review when accepting papers for publication. We are aware that the success of our journal lies in the hands of our reviewers. A good manuscript review requires time, effort, and often some background research. The opportunity to review manuscripts should be regarded as a contribution to academic knowledge. Despite this, the reviews we receive vary from exhaustive and detailed to those written in haste and with a minimum effort.

The value of a review is not limited to advice on the final decision on the manuscript, but also contains comments on how to improve the manuscript before the final publication. Therefore, we hope that our reviewers will be as reliable in their peer-review task as in preparing their own manuscripts. We have selected those reviewers whose critiques are consistently excellent and presented their names and short biographical notes in Appendix 1. The manuscripts submitted by those scientists to our journal will always receive our particular attention and priority in the peer-review process. To acknowledge the efforts of our other top reviewers in 2015, we listed their names in Appendix 2. Finally, we listed the names of all our reviewers who evaluated our manuscripts in 2015 (Appendix 3).

We are fully aware that the peer-review process is imperfect, and we frequently encounter controversies that require editorial judgment. The most common one is when reviewers disagree in their assessment of the work and the recommendation for publication. It was shown previously in other journals that in nearly 40% of cases the opinions of the reviewers might be discordant.¹ In the Pol Arch Med Wewn, it is not that common but such situations always require a case-by-case assessment by editors, so as not to miss an important paper or publish flawed research. Our policy is to respect our reliable reviewers, and whenever there is a well-founded recommendation to reject the paper, we try not to override it.

There are divergent opinions as to whether the reviewers should be blinded to the origin of the paper. We believe that our objective reviewers have the right to know what the research track of the authors is. Moreover, it was shown that blinding had no significant influence on the review quality, reviewers’ recommendations, or time taken to review the paper.² The editors of the British Medical Journal demonstrated this clearly in a trial of 527 consecutive manuscripts submitted to the journal and randomized to a blinded or unmasked review.³

The same authors studied also the quality of the submitted reviews in order to find out what makes a good reviewer. The only significant factor associated with a better review was the reviewer’s experience in epidemiology and statistics.³ Interestingly, younger reviewers performed better than the more experienced ones, and the members of the editorial board had lower ratings on their reviews. Such results are also in accordance with our experience in the Pol Arch Med Wewn, except the fact that we select our members of the Scientific Board based on previous experience with them as reviewers. Therefore, the quality of the reviews of our Scientific Board is exceptional. Interestingly, the authors also showed that there was an association between the time spent on the review and

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Correspondence to:
Prof. Anetta Undas, MD, PhD,
Institut Kardiologii, Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Collegium Medicum,
ul. Prądnicka 80, 31-202 Kraków,
Poland, phone: +48 12 614 30 04,
e-mail: mmundas@cyf-krakow.pl

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its quality up to 3 hours, but not beyond. Therefore, we think that it could be a good recommendation for our reviewers.3

Our challenge is to continue to work hard to even further improve the standing of the Pol Arch Med Wewn. Without the involvement of our authors, reviewers, readers, and supporters, this will not be possible. At the beginning of 2016, we wish you all success in your research and look forward to your continued contribution to the Pol Arch Med Wewn both as reviewers and as authors in the coming year.

REFERENCES

Appendix 1

Biographical sketches of top 5 reviewers in 2015

Artur Dziewierz, MD, PhD

Artur Dziewierz, MD, PhD, is a specialist in internal diseases and invasive cardiology. He works at the 2nd Department of Cardiology and Cardiovascular Interventions at the University Hospital in Kraków. He is an author of more than 100 scientific peer-reviewed papers, numerous conference proceedings, as well as book chapters on invasive cardiology and acute coronary syndromes. He was awarded by the Polish Society of Cardiology in 2003, by the Division of Medical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 2009, and by the Royal Capital City of Kraków for achievements in science and technology in 2010. Since 2014, he has been a member of the National Scientific Board of the Polish Archives of Internal Medicine, and since 2015—the Vice Editor-in-Chief of Advances in Interventional Cardiology.

Daniel P. Potaczek, MD, PhD

Having completed his studies at Jagiellonian University Medical College (1996–2002) and a postgraduate residency at the University Hospital (2002–2003), Daniel P. Potaczek entered a PhD program at the Department of Medicine at Jagiellonian University Medical College (2003–2007) in Kraków, Poland. He received his PhD degree for the work on the genetic variability of the high-affinity IgE receptor. Soon after, in 2007, he moved to the Atopy (Allergy) Research Center of the Juntendo University School of Medicine in Tokyo, Japan, where he worked until 2010. Between 2010 and 2012, he continued his work on the genetics and genomics of IgE receptors and its effects on serum IgE regulation at the Department of Pediatric Pneumology, Allergy and Neonatology at the Hannover Medical School in Hannover, Germany. His research in Hannover was also focused on the role of ORMDL genes in the development of childhood asthma. Subsequently, he moved to the John Paul II Hospital in Kraków, Poland, where between 2012 and 2013, he was involved in studies on the role of interleukin-6 pathway genetic polymorphisms in aortic stenosis and on hemostatic or cardiovascular monogenetic disorders. Since 2013, he has been an employee of the Institute of Laboratory Medicine, Philipp University of Marburg, Germany, where he works on the development of novel antisense approach-based therapeutics as well as on the role of respiratory viruses, epigenetic modifications, and other mechanisms contributing to the susceptibility to allergy and related disorders.
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Prof. Tomasz Stompór, MD, PhD

Professor Tomasz Stompór graduated from the Medical Academy in Kraków. He is a specialist in internal medicine, nephrology, hypertension, and clinical transplantology. In 1992–2009, he was an associate professor at the Department of Nephrology of Jagiellonian University Medical College in Kraków, and since 2009, he has been the chair of the Department of Nephrology, Hypertension, and Internal Diseases at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland. He received the title of full professor in 2014. He is currently a vice-dean for science (2012–2016) at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn.

He is an author or coauthor of more than 130 papers in peer-review journals, such as Nephron, American Journal of Kidney Diseases, Nephrology Dialysis and Transplantation, Peritoneal Dialysis International, British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology, Clinical Nephrology, Polish Archives of Internal Medicine, Journal of Human Hypertension, and Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine. He is also an author of more than 120 conference proceedings and almost 60 book chapters on internal diseases, nephrology, and hypertension.

He received two team awards from the Minister of National Education as well as an individual award from the Minister of Health for outstanding scientific achievements. He was appointed the Board Member of the Polish Society of Nephrology twice: in the years 2010–2013 and 2013–2016. He is a member of the National Scientific Board of the Polish Archives of Internal Medicine. He is also a member of the Polish Society of Nephrology, Polish Society of Transplantology, and the European Dialysis and Transplant Association – European Renal Association.

His main scientific interests include cardiac nephrology, pathological calcification in uremia, peritoneal dialysis, and renal complications of multiple myeloma.

He is married and has two children. His hobby is long-distance running and history. He plays violin and guitar, and sings in the doctors’ blues-rock band “The Painkillers.”

Prof. Jolanta Małyszko, MD, PhD

Professor Jolanta Małyszko received the title of full professor in 2002, and since 2013, she has been the chair of the 2nd Department on Nephrology, Medical University of Białystok, Białystok, Poland. She did her clinical training in the intensive care unit and Department of Nephrology, CHU Rouen, France; Department of Nephrology, Heinrich-Heine University, Dusseldorf, Germany (ERA-EDTA clinical scholarship); McKennon Hospital, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, United States (invasive cardiology); Kings’ College of London, United Kingdom; and Sourasky Hospital, Israel. During the Japanese Ministry of Education scholarship at the Hamamatsu University School of Medicine, she defended her PhD thesis on the role of FK 506 in transplantation (1995). She established a PD program and Hypertension Outpatient Unit at the University of Białystok and served for many years as a nephrology consultant at the University Teaching Hospital. Her major interests are iron metabolism and anemia as well as cardiovascular complications in kidney diseases. In her research, she collaborates with cardiology and invasive cardiology departments as well as vascular and transplantation units affiliated with universities in Poland and abroad.

She is a specialist in internal medicine, nephrology, transplantation, hypertension, and diabetology as well as a European specialist in clinical hypertension. She was granted the title of a fellow of ASN (FASN) and ERA-EDTA (FERA). She is a member of the Executive Council of ERA-EDTA (3rd woman in the history of ERA-EDTA) and Polish Society of Nephrology.
Jarosław Zalewski graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the Jagiellonian University Medical College. He is a specialist in internal medicine and cardiology and currently is employed as a senior lecturer and interventional cardiologist in the Department of Coronary Heart Disease at Jagiellonian University Medical College. In 2006, he defended his PhD thesis on hypoxia and reoxygenation of human endothelial cells and the expression of their selected genes in vitro. In 2008–2009, he was on the Kolumb scholarship of the Foundation for Polish Science in the Department of Cardiology, Catholic University Leuven, Belgium. The title of his habilitation completed in 2014 was: “New pro-thrombotic mechanisms accompanying impaired epicardial and tissue reperfusion during acute myocardial infarction as well as in-stent thrombosis”. In his research, he studies the mechanisms of ischemia/reperfusion injury during acute myocardial infarction; looks for early, clinically useful indicators of this damage (based on angiography, magnetic resonance imaging, and laboratory findings); evaluates the efficacy of different pharmaco-invasive methods (antiplatelet and antithrombotic drugs, aspiration thrombectomy, postconditioning, and cyclosporine) applied before and during mechanical reperfusion to improve short- and long-term clinical outcomes and left ventricular function; and investigates innovative therapeutic methods for mechanical complications of myocardial infarction.

Appendix 2

Top reviewers in 2015

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Artur Dziewierz, MD, PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tomasz Stompór, Prof.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Jolanta Małyszko, Prof.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Krzysztof Strojek, Prof.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Józef Drzewoski, Prof.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Daniel P. Potaczek, MD, PhD</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Jarosław Zalewski, MD, PhD</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Małgorzata M. Bala, MD, PhD</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Aleksander Prejbisz, MD, PhD</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Tomasz M. Rywik, MD, PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Grzegorz Kopec, MD, PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Piotr Lipiec, MD, PhD</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Tomasz Rakowski, MD, PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Agnieszka Kaplon-Cieślicka, MD, PhD</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Karol A. Kamiński, MD, PhD</td>
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Appendix 3

List of all reviewers in 2015 (in an alphabetical order, based on Editorial Manager*)

- Aleksandra Araszkiewicz, MD, PhD
- Erol Arslan, MD
- Magdalena Celinska-Lowenhoff, MD, PhD
- Krzysztof Celinski, MD, PhD
- Artur Czekierdowski, MD, PhD
- Hanna Bachorzewska-Gajewska, MD, PhD
- Małgorzata M. Bała, MD, PhD
- Nektarios Barabutis, MD, PhD
- Rafał Baranowski, MD, PhD
- Witold Bartnik, MD, PhD
- Przemysław Bąbel, PhD
- Jarosław Bednarczuk, MD, PhD
- Grażyna Bochenek, MD, PhD
- Tomasz Bochenek, MD, PhD
- Anna Bodzenta-Lukaszyk, MD, PhD
- Anna Broncel, MD, PhD
- Marlena Broncel, MD, PhD
- Tomasz Brzozowski, MD, PhD
- Andrzej Budaj, MD, PhD
- Ksenia Bykowska, MD, PhD
- Halina Cichoż-Lach, MD, PhD
- Jerzy Chudek, MD, PhD
- Katarzyna Cyganek, MD, PhD
- Katarzyna Cypryk, MD, PhD
- Stanisław Czekalski, MD, PhD
- Anna Czlonkowska, MD, PhD

She is an author and coauthor of over 400 original papers, over 100 review papers, and 30 book chapters, including chapters in French, and a chapter in the 4th Oxford Textbook of Clinical Nephrology. Her impact factor is 500 and h-index—29. Her papers were cited over 3000 times. Her hobby is travelling. In her journeys, she is accompanied by her husband, a nephrologist, and their 3 sons.
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Urszula Demkow, MD, PhD
Mirosław Dłużniewski, MD, PhD
Józef Drzewoski, MD, PhD
Jan Duława, MD, PhD
Jarosław Dziadek, PhD
Artur Dzierziew, MD, PhD
Piotr Eder, MD, PhD
Iwona Flisiak, MD, PhD
Zbigniew Gacioniq, MD, PhD
Andrzej Gackowski, MD, PhD
Grzegorz Gajos, MD, PhD
Stanisław Głuszek, MD, PhD
Piotr Głuszko, MD, PhD
Maciej Gnass, MD
Dominik Golicki, PhD
Tomasz Grodzicki, MD, PhD
Marcin Gruchała, MD, PhD
Alicja E. Grzegorzewska, MD, PhD
Janusz Gumprecht, MD, PhD
Paweł Gutaj, MD
Bartłomiej Guzik, MD, PhD
Maciej Haberka, MD, PhD
Robert G. Hart, MD, PhD
Grzegorz Helbig, MD, PhD
Andrzej R. Hellmann, MD, PhD
Michał Holecki, MD, PhD
Philip Hooper, MD, PhD
Alicja Hubalewska-Dydejczyk, MD, PhD
Andrzej Januszewicz, MD, PhD
Ewa Jasem, MD, PhD
Marek Jastrzębski, MD, PhD
Wiesław W. Jędrzejczak, MD, PhD
Achim Jörres, MD, PhD
Roman Junik, MD, PhD
Grzegorz Kamiński, MD, PhD
Karl A. Kamiński, MD, PhD
Annieksa Kaplon-Cieślicka, MD, PhD
Jacek Kasznicki, MD, PhD
Jarosław Kierkus, MD, PhD
Marek Kiliński, MD, PhD
Ewa Konduracka, MD, PhD
Grzegorz Kopec, MD, PhD
Krzysztof Pawlaczuky, MD, PhD
Andrzej Pawlik, MD, PhD
Vittorio Pengo, MD, PhD
Joanna Pera, MD, PhD
Tadeusz Plusa, MD, PhD
Maria Podolak-Dawidziak, MD, PhD
Daniel P. Potaczek, MD, PhD
Aleksander Prejbiš, MD, PhD
Piotr Przybyłowski, MD, PhD
Grzegorz Przybylski, MD, PhD
Elizer Rachmilewitz, MD, PhD
Piotr Radwan, MD, PhD
Elżbieta Radzikowska, MD, PhD
Tomasz Rakowski, MD, PhD
Witold Rużyłło, MD, PhD
Grażyna Rydzewska, MD, PhD
Tomasz M. Rywik, MD, PhD
Marek Sanak, MD, PhD
Fabian Sanchis-Gomar, MD, PhD
Krzysztof Sładek, MD, PhD
Marek Ślomczyński, MD, PhD
Bogdan Solnika, MD, PhD
Hui Song, PhD
Tomasz Stompór, MD, PhD
Marek Strojek, MD, PhD
Katarzyna Stolarz-Skrzypek, MD, PhD
Paweł Stróżycki, MD, PhD
Jan Styczynski, MD, PhD
Joanna Sułowicz, MD, PhD
Anetka Undas, MD, PhD
Alicja Wiercińska-Drapało, MD, PhD
Karina Wierzbowska-Drabik, MD, PhD
Andrzej Więcek, MD, PhD
Małgorzata Wisłowska, MD, PhD
Ewa Wypasek, PhD
Jarosław Zalewski, MD, PhD
Krystyna M. Zawilska, MD, PhD
Zbigniew Zdrojewski, MD, PhD
Tomasz Zieliński, MD, PhD
Dorota Zozulińska-Ziółkiewicz, MD, PhD
Małgorzata Zwolińska-Wcisło, MD, PhD
Dorota Zyśko, MD, PhD

*As we were unable to verify the credentials of each individual reviewer, please note that MD, PhD was used as an equivalent of the Polish title of dr n. med., dr hab. n med., or prof. dr hab. n. med.