

## EDITORIAL - Double-blind peer review: the best we have

One of the main concerns in scientific publication addresses the peer-review procedure of papers. The question is: how can we offer all papers a just and unbiased peer-review process? Based solely on the quality of the paper, and impartial with regard to the authors' nationality, institution, sex, age, religion and pedigree? Thus, we first need to know what and how many peer-review procedures there are. Basically there are three peer-review procedure types: i) Open peer review (OPR); ii) Single-blind peer review (SBPR) and; iii) Double-blind peer review (DBPR).

In OPR, the identities of both the authors and reviewers are known and revealed. Although this process is a good strategy to prevent unfair rejections, it has no safeguard against unfair acceptance of papers. Reviewers and newcomers may feel pressured into accepting a mediocre paper from a famous laboratory in fear of reprisals [Mainguy et al. in Plos Biology 3(9): e326]. In SBPR, the reviewers know the identity of the authors but not vice versa. This process is recognized to be biased against new ideas, women, young scientists, and authors from less prestigious institutions and/or from developing countries. Finally, in DBPR both reviewers and authors remain unknown to each other. This process allows reviewers to focus on the scientific quality of paper. According to McNutt et al. (JAMA 263: 1371-6, 1990) and, Laband and Piette (JAMA 272: 147-9, 1994), papers published in DBPR journals are cited significantly more than those published in non-DBPR journals. Thus the effect of blinding is strong enough to warrant the quality of peer review.

Since its creation the CBAB journal has been working with DBPR. With the adoption of the Electronical Article Management System (EAMS) the DBPR procedure of CBAB was improved. Apart from speeding up publications, EAMS is a good system to prevent hints in the papers that could unmask the authors. The CBAB Editorial Board understands that the DBPR procedure is not perfect but is the best available, besides being a consensus peer review process across the international scientific community.

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