Policies, practices and opinions about transparency in the peer review process

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Survey Respondents
- Editors of 1500 journals surveyed.
- 252 responses (June - Aug 2019).
- 93% of responses by lead editor.
- Median (IQR) 2017 impact factor of 2.3 (1.4-3.8).

Before Review - General
- 49% screen every manuscript for plagiarism.
- 13% offer results-blind review.
- 74% allow authors to recommend for/against specific reviewers.

During Review - Blinding

During Review - Who interacts?
- Authors & Peer Reviewers: 16 journals
- Fellow Peer Reviewers: 5 journals
- Peer Reviewers & Handling editor: 189 journals
- None of the above: 57 journals

After Review - Sharing reports
- 1% publish reviewers’ reports.
- 65% share reports with all reviewers.

Sharing Research Outputs

Editors’ Opinions
215 editors provided comments on the following topics:

Direct replication studies
44% - Think they are important or have value
37% - Support them or have published them
24% - Think they are uncommon in their field
10% - Discourage submissions to their journal

Reviewers requesting access to data
73% - Would support and mediate requests
10% - Would need a compelling reason
9% - Have never received a request
6% - Have mediated requests in the past

Co-reviewing
51% - Allow or encourage co-reviewing
27% - Think it’s a positive learning experience
32% - Require co-reviewing be disclosed
11% - Do not allow or encourage

Reviewers recommending citations
66% - It must be relevant and address gaps
16% - It’s to be expected given their expertise
14% - Think requests must be made sparingly
8% - Refer to authors whether to cite or not

Editors publishing in their own journals
42% - Require processes to avoid COIs
41% - Think it should be done rarely
17% - Think it is never appropriate
13% - Think editors should not be restricted

Changing their journal’s peer review system
27% - Are satisfied with their current system
11% - Want to improve how they find reviewers
8% - Would like to reward reviewers
6% - Would like to publish reviewer reports

Keywords: Academic publishing, peer review, journal policies, editor opinions

All data, materials and code for this project will be available at https://coal.research