ABSTRACT

Three-quarters of 177 respondents had experience with pre-publication peer review, either single- or double-blinded. Many respondents had >11 years’ experience in their sector (59.8%, n=116/194). A variety of respondents considered that the current systems of peer review are not perfect, that certain elements could be improved, particularly speed of publication, and that different processes could be trialled. Other issues/suggestions for improving the process were the time of the review and the identity of reviewers.

INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVES

Background: Despite the undeniability of the value and advantages of pre-publication peer review, there appears to be a general lack of understanding of the extent to which such review exists more broadly, and specifically amongst peer reviewers.

Objectives: The present study aimed to: – Assess whether there is a desire to change the current peer-review processes. – Examine how current processes satisfy this need. – Provide a checklist for reviewers to ensure a minimum standard is achieved.

METHODS

Participants: A total of 1,947 respondents were invited or self-identified respondents to the survey. A total of 194 respondents provided a valid email address and consent to participate in the survey. A total of 177 respondents completed the survey, with data quality assessment indicating a response rate of 84.8%.

Research design and methods: The survey consisted of 26 key questions, plus additional comments on the definition of peer review and the need for change. Answers provided in the free-text boxes were grouped into themes. A total of 6,499 comments were provided.

Ethical considerations: The research committee for the conference approved the research design.

RESULTS

Demographics

The survey took place online between 10 and 31 August 2011.

Most respondents completed the survey via their own (66.1%, n=125) or their company’s (25.2%, n=49) computer. Data were downloaded from the server at the end of the survey.

For the purposes of the survey, peer review was defined as: “Increasing fairness, improving quality and reducing speed of publication.”

The survey took place online between 10 and 31 August 2011. All respondents were considered to have experience with at least one type of pre-publication peer review over the course of their career. The survey was distributed to respondents with experience in the following: - medical communications professionals (ISMPP and MedComms Networking) - pharmaceutical companies who conducted clinical trials - pharmaceutical publication professionals - universities - medical research professionals - pharma communications professionals - medical publishers - authors - peer reviewers - medical information professionals - journal editors - journal publishers - journal suppliers - professional associations

Conflicts of interest and payment

Many respondents considered that the current systems of peer review are not perfect, that certain elements could be improved, particularly speed of publication, and that different processes could be trialled. Other issues/suggestions for improving the process were the time of the review and the identity of reviewers.

Additional respondents’ comments, thoughts and feedback

Many respondents considered that the current systems of peer review are not perfect, that certain elements could be improved, particularly speed of publication, and that different processes could be trialled. Other issues/suggestions for improving the process were the time of the review and the identity of reviewers.

CONCLUSIONS

Peers review: what is the need for change?

References

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents by type of thought change: no change and no change revised to one of multiple answers, rating scales and text boxes.

Figure 2: Box plot of respondents’ thoughts about the nomination of peer reviewers or provision of names of peer reviewers who authors would not have involved in the current peer review process.

Figure 3: Box plot of respondents’ thoughts about the nomination of peer reviewers or provision of names of peer reviewers who authors would not have involved in the current peer review process.

Figure 4: Box plot of respondents’ thoughts about the nomination of peer reviewers or provision of names of peer reviewers who authors would not have involved in the current peer review process.

Table 1: Results and discussion of anonymous and open peer review.