

Letter to the Editor

To the editor:

Kudos to Susan Henly and Molly Dougherty¹ for taking on the important topic of reviews. As someone who has been reviewed, served as a reviewer, and now is an Associate Editor for the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, I felt their research validates some of my own experiences.²

As the authors note, editors—not only reviewers—hold responsibility for the review process. The assessment of quality entails eliciting, evaluating, and then communicating reviews. The editorial role goes beyond simply passing along reviews, which sometimes (but not always, to be sure) seems to be the case. Any clerk can pass along reviews to an author.

My own introduction to editorship entailed the mentorship of Nancy Felipe Russo, PhD, editor of *American Jour-*

nal of Orthopsychiatry. This mentorship included a vision of editor as a guardian for the quality of the work, as well as nurturer of the future of the field. She encouraged an attitude that the editor role represents a trust entailing responsibility and challenge, as well as an extraordinary amount of effort, particularly if there is a strong commitment to nurturing young authors.

With such a vision in mind, she encouraged me to provide my own review, in addition to the external reviewers. Pearls of wisdom by Dr. Russo included: (1) not passing along unhelpful (or overly harsh/biased) reviews, (2) guiding the author(s) by suggesting a hierarchy of revisions and suggestions, from most important to least, (3) proposing ways of negotiating conflicting reviews, and (4) suggesting other venues for author(s) whose work was deemed not to fit the mission of the journal.

While Henly and Dougherty correctly observe that editors cannot be familiar with the quality of reviewers on a review panel, they can also have an impact on the quality and helpfulness of the evaluation process post hoc.

I'm not sure if there are editor's handbooks for nursing journals or what those might say, but I think the next step after a study of the quality of reviews in the discipline might be a study of the information given to the editors in the form of handbooks, as well as in the construction of reviewer guidelines. Making recommendations for improvement in the "curriculum" of editor and reviewer training would be a step for solving some of the problems noted by Henly and Dougherty.

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REFERENCES

1. Henly SJ, Dougherty MC. Quality of manuscript reviews in nursing research. *Nurs Outlook* 2009;57:18-26.
2. Mohr WK. A commentary on comments. *Nurs Outlook* 2001;49:119-120.