Peer Review Week Is Past: Let’s Give Thanks for Peer Reviewers!

This year, Peer Review Week was September 10-15. The theme was Diversity in Peer Review. That seems a good thing—however, the timing seems wrong to me. It really should be in November, when we give thanks for many other things in our lives. But because the week is a global event and not every area of the globe celebrates Thanksgiving (or at least in our timing), I accepted the timing of the week and decided to repeat the week privately by declaring November 19-23 my Peer Review Week!

Not every author welcomes feedback from reviewers. Yet, it is that feedback that often takes a good manuscript and makes it great. If you have been to a Broadway production, you likely were impressed with whatever you saw. Yet, the people behind the scenes—those backstage staff who make something on stage look great or effortless or impressive—are equally important to the production. That is how it is with manuscripts, too.

Relatively few manuscripts are accepted as they are submitted. The changes that occur are based on the thoughtfulness and completeness of our peer reviewers, who try to give feedback that is relevant and is designed to make a manuscript a better document. The diversity of thinking in our reviewers reflects the complexity of our field. In addition, while reviewers come to each new manuscript with their individual expertise, they also often make comments related to how readers will respond. The goal of achieving publication is not to be published—it is to have important information disseminated. Reviewers make certain that the dissemination puts forth best efforts.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, a time to reflect about what we have to be grateful for, I hope you will join me in thanking our reviewers. They volunteer their time to help authors improve their work and to make our understanding clearer.

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