Earlier this year, the editorial staff of Athletic Training & Sports Health Care transitioned to a different online editorial management system. As with any change, growing pains ensued, but following an initial orientation to the process and several months of trial and error, I’m finally gaining an understanding and moving forward. One significant change I’ve noticed with our new editorial system is the ease with which our peer reviewers can access the necessary documents, upload their comments, and move the review process along in a timely manner. In this day and age of instant everything, the peer review process has also had to adjust so that authors can receive feedback in a timely and efficient manner, while simultaneously preserving the integrity and quality of the journal and its contents.

The peer review process has always interested me. Being traced back to the first English-language journal titled Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, the task of peer reviewing was carried out by the Council of the Royal Society. With origins dating to 1660, the Council of the Royal Society is an independent scientific academy of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, dedicated to promoting excellence in science. The Foreword from the book Peer Review and Manuscript Management in Scientific Journals reads that . . . despite the challenges to many aspects of journal publication, and despite criticisms of peer review and experiments with alternative approaches, survey after survey shows that authors and readers still place great value on filtering and improvement provided by the peer review process, and wish to preserve it regardless of what else may change.

This is a fitting statement written 10 years ago that still applies today and I hope carries on into the future.

As an author myself, I’ve experienced the highs and lows of the peer review process; I’ve felt the excitement over a manuscript accepted with few revisions on its first submission and the disappointment of the rejection of a manuscript following two or three rounds of revisions based on reviewer feedback. There are indeed times in the peer review process when authors do not necessarily see eye to eye with the reviewer comments, although I firmly believe that most are meant to strengthen the message of the manuscript and are without prejudice or ill intention. In my tenure as editor of Athletic Training & Sports Health Care, I have been
fortunate to have been surrounded by an editorial board that is passionate about the peer review process, works diligently to preserve the integrity of the journal mission, and most importantly advances the science of sports health care for societal benefit. Over the years, we have also been able to develop a large database of peer reviewers whereby, without their time, effort, and careful insight, we would not have been able to advance with quality evidence and information to our readership on a bimonthly basis year in and year out. In fact, these peer reviewers are the backbone of our entire editorial enterprise.

Although some might argue that the peer review process is a waste of time and talent, I contend that it is a necessary evil in advancing the science and improving our understanding of the art and science of athletic training and sports health care. Regarding the peer review process, noted astronomer Carl Sagan once wrote:

Why do we put up with it? Do we like to be criticized? No, no scientist enjoys it. Every scientist feels a proprietary affection for his or her ideas and findings. Even so, you don’t reply to critics, wait a minute; this is a really good idea; I’m very fond of it; it’s done you no harm; please leave it alone. Instead, the hard but just rule is that if the ideas don’t work, you must throw them away. (p. 37)

REFERENCES

The author has no financial or proprietary interest in the materials presented herein.
doi:10.3928/19425864-20170619-01