



Addendum to published articles with concerns for a short peer review process

Ralph J. Mobbs^{1,2,3}

¹NeuroSpine Surgery Research Group (NSURG), Sydney, Australia; ²Neurospine Clinic, Prince of Wales Private Hospital, Randwick, Australia;

³Faculty of Medicine, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Correspondence to: Ralph J. Mobbs. NeuroSpine Surgery Research Group (NSURG), Sydney, Australia; Neurospine Clinic, Prince of Wales Private Hospital, Randwick, Australia; Faculty of Medicine, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Email: ralphmobbs@hotmail.com.

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Recently, we received an email regarding the integrity of the review process for three papers (1-3) published in *Journal of Spine Surgery* (JSS). The papers in question were submitted by editors and accepted extremely quickly (in some cases, in the space of a day). The writer of the email voiced concerns that the conflicts of interest policy, despite being exemplary, is not consistently followed.

As the chief editor of the journal, I acknowledge the need for a clearer statements and policies at an earlier stage to avoid these concerns. While we have made progress in promoting a transparent review process (4), we feel it is imperative to provide this document as an Addendum to the concerned articles as means of reaffirming our commitment to the transparency and consistency of the journal's established policies.

The articles (1-3) were submitted to JSS as revised versions, along with the incisive peer review comments, after rejection from other esteemed journals. A quick review was facilitated by using the detailed reviewer's comments from prior journals.

This practice is not unusual in the academic publishing arena and can be categorized under the rapid communication pathway process, which is offered to articles that have undergone peer review by an esteemed peer review journal prior to submission to JSS (5). Currently, articles approved for the Rapid Communication Pathway should include a corresponding "Provenance and Peer Review" statement in the footnote of the articles for identification. For an example, please refer to this published article (6).

Moreover, the below policies have now been implemented in JSS for transparency:

(I) Starting from March 16, 2020, all authors are asked to complete the ICMJE's unified disclosure form (<http://www.icmje.org/conflicts-of-interest/>), which will be published alongside the article should it be accepted for publication. Each author should submit a separate form and is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the submitted information. The corresponding author should use the information in the form completed by each author to create the COI statement for the manuscript.

Articles authored by any editorial team member will include a related disclosure. For avoidance of doubt, all articles authored by an editorial board member are subjected to the standard peer review process. In order to assure impartial decision-making and avoid potential conflict of interest, author with a position in the journal's editorial team will be excluded from any editorial handling of his/her own manuscript.

(II) Starting from March 30, 2020, a statement of provenance and peer review will be added to the footnote of manuscripts, based on the following scenarios:

- (i) Commissioned articles or articles that undergo Rapid Communication Pathway will be published with a description of their provenance (i.e., commission or reasons for Rapid Communication Pathway) and how the review was organized (i.e., with or without external peer review).
- (ii) Articles published without external peer review

(usually non-research articles, e.g., editorials, interviews, or other editorial materials). Note: the reviews for this kind of article are completed directly by the editors.

- (iii) Articles commissioned for a focused issue/series/supplement will include related disclosure.

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Footnote

Provenance and Peer Review: This article was commissioned by the editorial office, *Journal of Spine Surgery* and did not undergo external peer review.

Conflicts of Interest: The author has completed the ICMJE uniform disclosure form (available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/jss-2020-02>). RJM serves as an unpaid Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Spine Surgery* from Sep 2015 to Sep 2025.

Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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