

Guidelines for Reviewers

All the manuscripts received at Gaceta Sanitaria undergo review by experts. Such revision by experts is fundamental in the process of scientific publication; Gaceta Sanitaria is grateful for the efforts of all the reviewers who collaborate with the journal, and recognises this work by publishing their names annually in the journal website. External manuscript review is a voluntary process. Accepting the review petition implies accepting the journal guidelines listed below:

Journal guidelines

- It is essential to comply with the deadlines established for the review, generally 3 weeks from the reception of the document.
- Motives for declining the invitation to evaluate a manuscript are the impossibility of dedicating the time needed to complete the review in the scheduled time period, lack of familiarity or experience in the subject of the manuscript, or conflicts of interests that might compromise the impartiality and rigour required for the review process.
- Manuscript confidentiality must be maintained until potential publication. The only contacts authorised for consultation on any matter related to the review process are the Gaceta Sanitaria management and the editorial committee.
- The review process at Gaceta Sanitaria is anonymous. That is, the women or men evaluating the work (the reviewers) do not know that identity of manuscript authors or where they work. Manuscript reviewers can decide to remain anonymous as well or, if they wish to, they can sign their comments.
- Reviewers must consult the Guidelines for Authors, especially the regulations for the type of article being reviewed. Some of the policies that must be known in order to carry out a proper review are those referring to the sections that manuscripts should include, and the limits for words, tables, figures and references, among others.
- Justifying each and every issue raised is very important. When necessary, references that reinforce the points brought up in the evaluation should be cited. The authors have to clearly identify the part to which each reviewer comment refers, indicating the section, paragraph, page or line.
- A respectful, constructive style must always be used in the comments. As often as possible, the reviewer should indicate how a problem can be corrected, not just point out that there is a problem.
- The perspective of sex/gender in scientific publication should be taken into consideration, as set out in the Gaceta Sanitaria policy to promote gender equality¹ in scientific publication.

Performing the review

There are three documents the reviewer must prepare in order to properly complete the Gaceta Sanitaria external review process :

- a) A quantitative review sheet on relevant aspects of the manuscript, such as a clearly defined objective, appropriate study design, etc. This sheet is for the internal use of the Gaceta Sanitaria editorial committee only.

¹ <http://gacetasanitaria.org/contenidos/pdf/politica-genero.pdf>, accessed 01/01/2019.

b) Comments for the editorial committee. Just as with the review sheet, this document is not shared with the authors; it may contain comments that the reviewers wish to make to the editorial committee but not communicate to the author(s). For example, it would be more correct to include recommendations as to the suitability or not of publishing a manuscript exclusively here in these comments.

c) Comments for the authors. This is the only document that is sent to the author(s). It is a good idea to begin the report by briefly summarising the work in one or two sentences.

Among the matters that must be considered in the review are the following:

- Appropriateness for the audience of *Gaceta Sanitaria*. If applicable, present and justify other more suitable journals or audiences for the article.
- Originality of the work in its field, assessing its contribution to the area of study.
- Title. The title must not be imprecise or too long. If the study focuses on a specific population (the elderly or immigrants, for example) or region, this must be mentioned in the title.
- Abstract. Check the coherence between the data in the Abstract and those in the text and tables; or whether essential parts of the Abstract are missing (such as the Study Objective or relevant numerical data).
- Introduction. A summary of the framework or the foundation, based on current, relevant references, that has given rise to performing the study must be presented. The Introduction must describe the existing evidence, paying special attention to systematic reviews. Study objectives must be stated at the end of the Introduction.
- Methods. The reviewers must consider the following questions: Does the study design make it possible to achieve the Objectives posed? Are the setting, population and sample considered in the study described well enough? Is the way in which the sex of the participants was considered in the study design explained? Are the information gathering tools sufficiently described? Is the statistical analysis appropriate? Is the perspective of sex/gender taken into account?
- Results. Check to see whether the information needed to respond to the research question(a) is presented, without superfluous or unnecessary data. When applicable, the results must be presented stratified by sex, or the interactions making it possible to establish differences by gender or sex must be analysed.
- Discussion. Verify that relevant innovative areas of the work, and their strengths, are emphasised. Study results must be compared with those obtained by other pertinent studies in the area, preferably systematic reviews. Study limitations and their possible effect on result interpretation must be indicated. Suggestions for future research in the area could be given.
- Formal matters. Check to see whether the text follows the commonly used structure; for example, in the case of an original article, that the content of the Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion are properly ordered. The manuscript must be easy to read and must use non-sexist language. The tables and figures must be understandable without having to read the text, and they must complement text information, not repeat it. Assess manuscript length as well; if it is too long, suggestions can be given as to where unnecessary text can be eliminated.
- Ethical matters. Confirm that the authors have considered ethical considerations of the research itself (such as study subject privacy, informed consent or other ethical principles of medical research involving human beings). Verify that there are no problems with

matters referring to research publishing (for example, related to repeated publication or potential conflicts of interests) and those that are pertinent from the perspective of public health ethics (equity, proportionality, reciprocity, accountability, transparency and so on).