

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

New manuscripts submitted for consideration to The Heart Surgery Forum[®] (the HSF) will be reviewed for quality and scientific methods by the Editorial Board. Acceptance is based on a majority vote according to the guidelines discussed below.

Structure

The HSF Editorial Board consists of a diverse mix of cardiothoracic specialists from around the world. This distinguished international panel of experienced reviewers will be responsible for unbiased assessment of new submissions. Positions on the Board are voluntary, with candidates chosen by recommendation or invitation. Representation from both academic and non-academic centers is encouraged, with emphasis on individuals familiar with current cardiothoracic journals, scientific methods, and peer review.

Each prospective Board member must be able to:

1. Demonstrate sufficient command of written English to function as a reviewer without the need for translation of manuscripts into their native language.
2. Maintain an email and Web capable Internet connection.
3. Check their email at least once a week for announcements of new manuscripts.
4. Provide timely review of the Web version of new submissions for scientific quality, accuracy, medical content, and relevancy.
5. Complete and return (by email) within 15 days an evaluation form included with the announcement of each new submission.
6. Commit to fulfill an uninterrupted 2 year term of service, with a minimum of 3 papers reviewed per year.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the HSF Editorial Board, please send your request and qualifications by email to: <moderator@hsforum.com>.

The Review Process

After receipt by the HSF staff, each manuscript is assigned a unique identifying number. All correspondence with the journal staff must include the identifying number.

New manuscripts are converted to a Web page and placed in a protected area of the HSF Internet server. The Editorial Board is then notified of the manuscript Web address (URL). After reviewing the Web version of the submission, the reviewer is asked to complete an evaluation form and submit his/her opinions via email. Reviewers are encouraged to request clarification of data, methods, or results from the author(s). These comments are emailed to the author(s) and the responses to each question are shared in return with the Board. In some cases, the results of this discussion between the reviewers and author(s) will be captured and printed in the Review and Commentary section of the final published article.

Decision Making

Reviewers are not required to comment on every paper. The Editorial Board is a diverse group with varying levels of experience and expertise within the profession. Individuals with a specialty interest in the subject matter are encouraged to comment on the paper and reply with specific questions to the author(s).

The HSF Editorial Board members can vote for 1) acceptance, 2) acceptance with modifications, or 3) rejection (with recommendations to the author(s) for improvements). A minimum of three reviews will be needed for acceptance. Additional reviews are always encouraged and often obtained. Final decision is made by majority. If only three reviews are received by the deadline, then a two-thirds vote in favor of acceptance is required. If more than three reviews are received, then 51% or higher is sufficient for acceptance. In case of a dispute, the Editor-in-Chief will make a final determination. Missing data relevant to the author(s) stated purpose or conclusions may be requested before a final decision is made. Controversial manuscripts may be published with an invited analysis or commentary. Notification to the author(s) is expected within 30 days of submission and all correspondence with the author(s) is done by email.

Double Blind Review

To ensure scientific quality and freedom from bias, the peer review process of the HSF is double blinded. Neither the author(s) nor the Editorial Board members are revealed to each other at any time during review. After receipt of a new manuscript, the names and institutional references of the author(s) are removed. This version is the only document that is reviewed by the Editorial Board. This means that the decision for acceptance is based solely on the quality of the data, methods, and presentation. The reviewers are assigned a unique identifying tag. Commentary or questions generated by the reviewers are forwarded to the author(s) for their response. The names and emails of the individual reviewers are removed and substituted with their identifying tag in order to maintain their anonymity.

Miscellaneous

All papers must meet the minimum requirements specified in the Instructions to Authors document (in this issue or posted on the HSF web site at URL www.hsforum.com/heart-surgery/authors.hsf). Submissions that do not meet these minimum requirements will be returned to the author(s) with requests for changes, delaying the process of review and decision making.

Articles found to be in violation of the Author Agreement and Copyright Transfer Statement or the expressed policies of the HSF will be refused, or simply removed from the Web site and a notice of the violation sent to the author(s).