Jeffrey L. Jackson, MD MPH¹, Carol K. Bates, MD², and Steven M. Asch, MD MPH³

¹Zablocki VA, Milwaukee, WI, USA; ²Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA; ³VA Center for Innovation to Implementation, Stanford Division of Primary Care and Population Health, Stanford, CA, USA.

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These are challenging and surreal times in which we live. This past year has served as a reminder of how fundamental health is to all aspects of our lives. As the world economy ground to a halt and over a million people worldwide died, we have faced a trial unlike any of us have seen in our lifetime. There has been no similarly globally devastating illness since the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918. The health profession has responded to this crisis with unparalleled courage and dedication, to date over 600 have paid with their lives. JGIM would like to thank the many talented people who have volunteered their time to serve as peer reviewers for our journal in the past year (1 July 2019 through 30 June 2020) despite their myriad other responsibilities. Peer review is a cornerstone of scientific publication, and JGIM is indebted to their hard (and voluntary) work.

There are many to thank and there is much work to appreciate. In 2019–2020, 1159 reviewers provided a total of 1870 reviews with a mean quality score of 4.6 on a scale of 1–6 (as judged by our JGIM associate editors). Of these, 379 provided at least two reviews, and 158 provided three or more. We are indebted to all for their service.

Our reviewers came from 31 countries. While the majority of reviews were from the USA, 10 or more were contributed by reviewers from Australia ($n = 33$), Brazil ($n = 12$), Britain ($n = 48$), Canada ($n = 116$), China (70), France ($n = 13$), Germany ($n = 30$), Israel ($n = 17$), Italy ($n = 10$), Japan ($n = 26$), the Netherlands ($n = 28$), Singapore ($n = 10$), Spain ($n = 11$), Switzerland ($n = 27$), and Turkey ($n = 11$). The international pool of reviewers reflects submissions to JGIM. In 2019, submissions came from 57 different countries. While most ($n = 1747$) were from the USA, 285 came from China, 70 from Canada, 50 from Japan; 19 countries submitted 15 or more manuscripts.

Among our peer reviewers, there is a group that stands out. These top peer reviewers performed at least two reviews in 2019, returned all reviews within 21 days, and received a quality score average of five or greater (out of a maximum score of six). An asterisk identifies the 162 reviewers who

meet these criteria. We congratulate them on their service to the academic community and thank them for their efforts on behalf of our journal.

JGIM has had a significant increase in submissions in the last few years, increasing from 1624 in 2017 to 2477 in 2019. The pace of submissions has increased dramatically this year as the COVID epidemic created more content, we are on pace to manage over 4000 submissions this year. This has caused considerable stress for our reviewer pool, as we have asked them to review a greater number of articles. We could not have handled this dramatic increase without the dedicated work of our staff as well as our pool of associate editors and reviewers; we are very grateful for their hard work and professionalism.

JGIM transitioned to a new online manuscript management system in 2019. Since June of 2019, reviewers completed their reviews an average of 15.3 days, this compares with nearly 26 days under our old system. In 2019, 150 reviews were completed in less than a week, 104 in 3 days or less. This has resulted in a decrease in the time from submission to first decision from 42.1 to 28.8 days. The improvement in our turnaround reflects the efforts in timeliness by all members of the editorial team, including the JGIM staff, the editors in chief, the deputy editors, and our reviewers.

The basic flow of our process has not changed. The editors in chief continue to reject approximately 40% of all submissions without review. We continue to depend upon an extraordinary group of dedicated associate editors who take a closer look at the remaining manuscripts and either reject or manage the peer review process for the majority of our submissions.

While imperfect, peer review has been shown to improve the quality of manuscripts.^{1–4} Our authors appear generally grateful and most report that the process has improved their publications. We ask peer reviewers to identify scientific strengths and weakness, and assess the likely impact on the field of general internal medicine. A poorly written article may dissuade the team from sending manuscripts for peer review even when scientifically sound. While we ask reviewers to make recommendations regarding acceptance, we often see a range of opinions from accept to reject on the same paper. We use reviewer recommendations as only one element in what is ultimately an editorial decision. We are grateful to authors who continue to submit to the journal, understanding that we are striving to get it right.

If you are not already registered as a peer reviewer, please consider signing up. If you are publishing in JGIM, you are

benefiting from the service of your colleagues through this process. If each article is reviewed by 3 people, that means that you should pay it forward by reviewing 3 times as many papers as you submit! We look forward to working with all of our reviewers to deliver relevant, rigorous content for our readers in the years to come.

JGIM operates a single-blind model of peer review, and as such referees are not routinely asked to give consent to having their names shared. The previously published list of peer reviewers' names has been removed in line with data protection regulations (November 2021).

Corresponding Author: Jeffrey L. Jackson, MD MPH; Zablocki VA, Milwaukee, WI, USA (e-mail: jjackson@mcw.edu).

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