

Reviewer Instructions

MEAMS – Middle Eastern Annals for Medical Sciences Saint Joseph University of Beirut

1. Purpose of the peer review

MEAMS relies on peer review to ensure that submitted manuscripts are scientifically sound, ethically conducted, clearly presented, and relevant to the medical and health sciences. Reviewers are asked to provide an objective, constructive, and timely assessment that helps the editors reach a fair decision and helps authors improve their work. Reviewers should evaluate the manuscript according to its scientific merit, methodological rigor, ethical integrity, clarity, originality, and relevance to the scope of MEAMS.

2. Scope and general expectations

MEAMS welcomes work in medical, health and life sciences, including clinical medicine, public health, biomedical sciences, health policy, translational research, and related interdisciplinary fields. Reviewers should assess whether the manuscript contributes meaningfully to its field and whether it is relevant to regional and/or international readership. Reviews must be submitted in English.

3. Before accepting the review

Please accept the invitation only if you:

- Have the appropriate expertise to evaluate the manuscript.
- Can submit the review within the requested timeframe of four weeks.
- Have no conflict of interest that could compromise your objectivity.
- Can maintain strict confidentiality.

Please decline the review if:

- The manuscript is outside your area of expertise.
- You cannot complete the review on time.
- You have a financial, professional, institutional, personal, or academic conflict of interest.
- You have recently collaborated with the authors or have a relationship that could influence your judgment.

If you decline, you may suggest alternative qualified reviewers, provided they have no obvious conflict of interest.

4. Confidentiality

The manuscript and all related materials are confidential. Reviewers must not share, discuss, copy, distribute, or use the manuscript content for personal advantage or for the advantage of others.

Reviewers should not involve colleagues, residents, students, or trainees in the review without prior permission from the editorial office. If permission is granted, all contributors must be named and must respect the same confidentiality obligations.

Reviewers must not upload the manuscript or unpublished data to artificial intelligence tools, external software, translation platforms, or third-party services unless confidentiality is guaranteed and the journal has explicitly allowed such use. ICMJE specifically notes that reviewers should request journal permission before using AI technologies to facilitate a review when confidentiality cannot be assured.

5. Conflicts of interest

Reviewers must disclose any potential conflict of interest, including but not limited to:

- Recent or current collaboration with the authors.
- Employment or institutional affiliation that may bias the review.
- Financial interests related to the manuscript topic.
- Academic competition or personal disagreement.
- Prior knowledge of the submitted work that could compromise anonymity or objectivity.

Declaring a potential conflict does not automatically disqualify a reviewer; the editor will decide whether the review can proceed.

6. Ethical considerations

Reviewers should alert the editor, confidentially, if they identify or suspect:

- Plagiarism or duplicate publication.
- Fabrication, falsification, or image manipulation.
- Undisclosed conflicts of interest.
- Ethical concerns regarding human or animal research.
- Lack of ethics committee approval where required.
- Inadequate informed consent.

- Trial registration problems, where applicable.
- Inappropriate authorship or undisclosed writing assistance.
- Serious statistical or methodological flaws.

Such concerns should be reported in the confidential comments to the editor, not only in the comments to the authors.

7. Tone and structure of the review

Reviews should be respectful, professional, specific, and constructive. Personal criticism of authors is inappropriate.

A useful review should:

- Begin with a brief summary of the manuscript.
- Identify the main strengths.
- Identify major concerns that affect validity, interpretation, or publishability.
- Identify minor issues that can improve clarity, formatting, or presentation.
- Provide clear, actionable recommendations.
- Distinguish between essential revisions and optional suggestions.

Avoid vague statements such as “the methods are weak” without explaining what is weak and how it could be improved.

8. Elements to evaluate

Reviewers are asked to consider the following:

A. Relevance and originality

- Is the topic relevant to MEAMS?
- Does the manuscript address an important clinical, biomedical, public health, or policy question?
- Is the work original?
- Does it add value to existing literature?

B. Title and abstract

- Is the title accurate and informative?
- Does the abstract reflect the study design, methods, results, and conclusions?
- Are the main findings clearly presented?

C. Introduction

- Is the rationale clear?
- Is the research question or objective well defined?
- Is the literature review adequate and up to date?

D. Methods

- Is the study design appropriate?
- Are the setting, participants, inclusion/exclusion criteria, variables, and procedures clearly described?
- Are the outcomes defined?
- Are statistical methods appropriate?
- Is the sample size justified, when applicable?
- Are ethical approval and informed consent clearly stated, when required?

E. Results

- Are the results clearly and logically presented?
- Are tables and figures necessary, accurate, and non-duplicative?
- Are statistical findings reported appropriately?
- Are missing data, exclusions, and participant flow adequately addressed?

F. Discussion

- Are the findings interpreted appropriately?

- Are conclusions supported by the data?
- Are limitations acknowledged?
- Are the implications for practice, research, public health, or policy discussed?
- Are claims balanced and not overstated?

G. References

- Are references relevant, current, and sufficient?
- Are important studies missing?
- Are citations used appropriately?

H. Language and presentation

- Is the manuscript clear and well-organized?
- Are there problems with grammar, terminology, or scientific style?
- Does the manuscript require language editing?

9. Recommendation categories

At the end of the review, reviewers should recommend one of the following:

1. **Accept**
The manuscript is suitable for publication with no or only very minor changes.
2. **Minor revision**
The manuscript is generally suitable, but limited changes are needed.
3. **Major revision**
The manuscript may be suitable after substantial revision. The authors should address important methodological, analytical, interpretive, or structural issues.
4. **Reject and encourage resubmission**
The current manuscript is not suitable, but a substantially reworked version may be considered as a new submission.
5. **Reject**
The manuscript has serious flaws, lacks originality or relevance, or is not suitable for MEAMS.