

Interpreting manuscript rejections

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When submitting a manuscript, authors hope to see the results of his scientific production recognized by their peers and add something relevant to scientific knowledge. However, it is not uncommon for a manuscript to be rejected, leading to the authors' frustration and outrage.

There are several reasons why a manuscript is rejected¹. Firstly, it may be rejected due to the lack of quality of the data, which includes the lack of compliance with legal requirements (indication of authorial responsibility, informed consent, privacy, or plagiarism), the lack of originality, and the lack of quality of the data presented, namely the statistical analysis (when applicable) and the inferences drawn from it (discussion and conclusions).

The editorial board's rejection of manuscripts can have some positive aspects for authors, as it allows them to correct and improve the manuscript for subsequent submission to the same or another journal.

On the other hand, a journal's rejection rate can provide important information to readers and the scientific community about the journal itself. Therefore, journals with the highest rejection rates will be the most demanding as they scrutinize manuscripts more rigorously. At the same time, they have the highest number of submissions, which allows them to select the best ones.

Thus, like most scientific journals, at Portuguese Journal of Pediatrics (PJP), manuscripts can be rejected at various stages of the process: immediately after

submission, if they do not comply with the instructions for authors, after preliminary analysis by the editors (first-line rejection), or after analysis by reviewers. Since this editorial team began working in January 2022, 443 manuscripts have been analyzed, of which around 43% were rejected. By comparison, rejection rates can reach 78% in JAMA, or 39% in Parasites & Vectors^{2,3}. These numbers honor the PJP because of the number of submissions and because the rejection rate can reflect the rigor that we want to imprint on the scientific journal of the Portuguese Society of Pediatrics.

To facilitate the work of authors, editors, and reviewers, the PJP made it mandatory for each manuscript to indicate "What is added." In response, the author(s) must state what is innovative about the manuscript, even if it is a detail.

I want to express my gratitude to the authors who chose PJP to publish their research and to the associated editors and reviewers who, pro bono, collaborate assiduously and committedly with PJP.

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