

Frequently asked questions about Global Spine Journal

What is GSJ's review process?

GSJ employs a double-blinded peer-review process. When a manuscript is submitted, it first goes to a Deputy Editor for pre-screening. It is carefully checked and read by the Deputy Editor before going to review. Some manuscripts do not make it to review and are rejected by the Deputy Editor at that time. Those that are approved, go through to review, and then on to a technical check and plagiarism check to see if there are any technical elements that need to be fixed. If there are technical elements that need to be fixed, the manuscript is returned so the author can fix them. Once the manuscript passes technical check it is sent to two reviewers. Once those reviews are finished it goes to a Deputy Editor and then an Editor-in-Chief and then it is sent back to the author with the decision.

How long does the review process take?

This can depend on the paper and the topic of the paper. Generally, it takes 5-7 days for a paper to go through pre-screening and technical check. If it goes into review, it can take 1-2 months for review (sometimes takes longer if reviewers are not available). If the manuscript needs revisions, then the length of time could be longer or shorter depending on the extent of revisions needed and how responsive the authors are. Some manuscripts only need one round of revisions, and others need three, so this will also impact how long the process takes.

The average number of days from Submission to First Decision is 45 days. And 67 days until final decision, but this is an average and it may not be the case for your paper.

Why was my manuscript rejected so quickly and without any comments from reviewers?

GSJ's manuscript submissions have drastically increased ever since we received an impact factor, and they are coming in at an enormously high rate. Due to this huge surge in submissions, we have had to make some changes. One of these changes is desk rejecting/pre-screening articles. Desk rejecting articles is a standard practice that is employed by most, if not all scientific journals. This means that the article is pre-screened by a Deputy Editor before going to formal review, and the article is either sent on to review or desk rejected and returned to the author.

A desk rejection is not a judgement on the quality of your work, but rather it is a comparison of your article to the other submissions we receive. It does not mean that the science is poor, but it could be for a few other reasons, for example that we already received a similar article to yours, but the other study included more patients or had a longer follow-up, it could also be that there is already too much in the existing literature, the sample size is too small, etc. A desk rejection is not a personal attack on your article. This is also done so as not to waste your time, so once it is sent back to you, you are free to send the manuscript to another journal, and we try to get it back to you with a decision within a week.

How long does it take for my article to be published after acceptance? What happens after acceptance?

On average it takes around 30 days from acceptance to online publication. However, this also depends on how quickly you respond to the production queries and send them back. If you are unresponsive or take a while to respond to production queries, then this will cause a delay in publication. After an article is accepted, it gets sent to the production team for proofing and formatting. Once this is finished, then they send it to the author with queries about edits that need to be made. The author then sends back their queries and then once that process is finished, the article is published online.

How long does it take for my article to be indexed in PubMedCentral?

GSJ OnlineFirst articles are all indexed in PMC and we don't have to wait until they are published in an issue. It usually takes PMC 30-45 days to index the articles after they are published- but these are their timelines not ours. If it takes longer than this for your article to be indexed in PMC it means they are experiencing delays and/or a backlog.

Does GSJ print issues?

GSJ no longer prints issues. GSJ is an Open Access journal so all articles are available online right after they are published, and anyone can read them, anytime, from anywhere.

Was my manuscript rejected because of the region I am from? Is GSJ only accepting manuscripts from certain regions?

GSJ accepts manuscripts from all regions and all countries. GSJ has a very diverse and international editorial board, with Editors representing every region. Since GSJ employs a rigorous double-blinded peer-review process this means the author information is blinded. Throughout the entire peer-review process, the authors' information is not known to anyone involved. This is done to preserve the journal's ethics and to make sure the articles are only judged based on merit, quality, and the topic of the paper. The blind process ensures that it is simply impossible to accept or reject a manuscript based on a certain country, region, or institution.

Why did my manuscript get good reviews from the reviewers but was rejected by the Deputy Editor and the Editor-in-Chief?

We have a huge number of article submissions coming in and since we only have room for a defined number of manuscripts per year and per issue, the "bar for acceptance" has gone up accordingly and the rejection rate along with it. This increase in the number of rejected manuscripts has taken place at the Deputy Editor & the Editor-in-Chief level. We have not altered our review process; we have not informed our reviewers to make any changes to their evaluations. Rather we have asked the Deputy Editors to be more stringent. So, the reviewers may recommend "acceptance" or "revision", but the Deputy Editors are looking at the papers more critically and are also looking at the GSJ article index as a whole, which the reviewers are not doing.

Does my AO Spine Membership/Involvement/Position on a Council or Commission Guarantee Acceptance into GSJ?

While GSJ is the official scientific publication of AO Spine, we cannot guarantee acceptance on any paper, regardless of the author list as this would greatly compromise the journal's ethics, invalidate the entire process, and could damage the journal's reputation and standing in the academic community. Even articles written by our own Editors-in-Chief and Deputy Editors get rejected.

The entire review process must be fair and objective. However, we do offer a member benefit to AO Spine members. If at least one author on the paper is an AO Spine member, then the Article Processing Charge of \$2,650 is waived. We also offer a discounted special issue price for AO Spine sponsored special issues.

My abstract was published in the GSC abstracts program book in GSJ. Does this mean that the full article will automatically be published in GSJ?

Unfortunately, we can't guarantee acceptance of the full manuscript into GSJ. There are hundreds of abstracts for the GSC program, and we would not be able to accommodate all of them. The GSC abstracts program is a separate special issue that is not a part of GSJ's regular issues even though it is published on GSJ's website, as GSJ is AO Spine's journal. If you would like to submit the full article, you may do so, and it will go through the same peer-review process as any other article. But again, we cannot guarantee acceptance.

My manuscript needs a language overhaul, why Can't the Copy Editors Re-Write the Manuscript?

The job of the copy editors is to proofread the papers and find minimal grammatical errors and fix them. They cannot completely re-write the articles for you, that is outside the scope of their work, and they are dealing with hundreds of manuscripts from multiple journals every day. The publisher does offer author services to a fee to help re-write the articles. You can find more information about these services here: <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/sage-author-services>.

Can I add or remove authors from my manuscript after acceptance?

The publisher does not permit changes to the author byline after a manuscript has been editorially accepted due to concerns around conflicts of interest and author contributions that are taken into account by the Editor and reviewers at the time of peer-review. Authors are notified of this at the time of manuscript submission and this policy is available to view at Authorship Change Form, along with guidance for authors on changes between manuscript submission and acceptance. For more information on this policy, please click here: <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/authorship-change-form>.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Managing Editor Danielle Lieberman-Kieval at daniellel@seattle-science-foundation.org.