

Let's talk about Reviewer Rewards

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Editorial

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Assessment of science, whether it be in the form of grants or manuscripts, relies heavily on evaluation by expert peer reviewers. This system is unique in that it depends almost entirely on scientists who volunteer their time to provide critical assessments of the scientific work. The incentive for reviewers to participate is two-fold: (a) reviewers are a standard bearer for their field, ensuring that acceptable experimental design and practices are followed, and (b) reviewers themselves rely on this same system when their own work needs to be evaluated; thus, this community service is an expected duty. Because the system relies on the goodwill of individuals, anonymously in most cases, participation varies wildly, and the benefits of reviewing are more philosophical in nature than concrete.

At the *JCI* and *JCI Insight*, we have been asking ourselves if we can do more to recognize the contribution of our reviewers, whose assessment of the many manuscripts we receive is a foundation of the journals' work. With that in mind, we are introducing the Reviewer Rewards program. The concept is simple: reviewers who complete 3 or more reviews within the last 18 months will be eligible to designate one of their own submissions, as corresponding author, for guaranteed external review. We are placing trust in our reviewer community to send us their highest-quality manuscripts that they feel are suitable for publication in the journals. In

turn, these manuscripts will be subject to the same rigorous assessment as any other paper submitted to the journals. The program is not a guarantee of ultimate publication, but we will ensure that the manuscript is evaluated by expert colleagues in the field and will not be editorially rejected. We feel that given the extensive time and effort that our reviewers have invested in assessing other manuscripts, it is only right to express our gratitude by affording their papers the same consideration.

The Reviewer Rewards program comes with a few rules. First, the three reviews must be completed at the same journal to which the manuscript is submitted (i.e., 3 reviews at *JCI* earns a Reviewer Reward at the *JCI*, and 3 reviews at *JCI Insight* earns a Reviewer Reward at *JCI Insight*). Second, reviewers may only earn 1 Reviewer Reward per calendar year, and it must be redeemed during that year. Third, members of the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI) may not earn Reviewer Rewards in addition to the ASCI guaranteed review benefit. We have a separate program in place that allows ASCI members to designate 1 paper per year at the *JCI* or 3 papers per year at *JCI Insight* for guaranteed external review, and this program will continue without change. We trust that our ASCI members will continue to review for us as usual in the spirit of scientific goodwill. Fourth, for book-keeping purposes, only reviews of unique submissions will count. Thus, while we

still need your help assessing revised manuscripts, you must review three entirely different submissions to qualify for the program. Lastly, reviewers must complete their reviews on time in order to count the review for the Reviewer Rewards program. We appreciate that it can be difficult to carve out time to review papers, but we feel that timely review of papers is important to our authors, just as it is to our reviewers when they are authors themselves.

In announcing this program, we are immediately making this benefit available to individuals who completed reviews meeting these criteria from July 2017 through December 2018. Qualifying individuals will be notified directly by email. Going forward, we will send out notifications for Reviewer Rewards annually in January, and as authors you may elect to use the reward at any point during the calendar year. We sincerely hope that this new program makes clear to our reviewers how important their work is to us.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the contribution of David Virshup, an ASCI member, a *JCI* consulting editor, and a former *JCI* associate editor, who was instrumental to the creation of this program. He developed the basic framework of the Reviewer Rewards concept, which resonated with the editorial teams of both journals. We are pleased to implement his suggestion and turn the theoretical concept into reality.

To our reviewers, we are grateful, as always, for your enormous contribution. We value your input and hope you will enjoy the benefits of the Reviewer Rewards program. We look forward to seeing your best work.

Sarah Jackson
Executive Editor

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