

Dear Shawn,

Thank you for your letter and your careful thought to issues related to peer review.

First, I would like to encourage you to continue to use your fatal flaw criterion when you review for Nursing Research. I think it is a good benchmark for a reviewer. Continuing to write a robust narrative noting the strengths and weaknesses on each section of the manuscript is invaluable to me and the author. The process of making decisions becomes more complicated when the flow of submitted manuscripts to a journal is strong, as is the case for Nursing Research.

It is necessary for me to make distinctions between excellent manuscripts that have received peer reviews with many strengths and few weaknesses. Making decisions on manuscripts is similar to the process of ranking many other things - it is easy to identify the best and the worst, but the ones in the middle require more judgment. After identifying the best and those that have fatal flaws, I usually have a handful of excellent manuscripts with similarly good reviews. I must not accept all of them because the number of print page is restricted by the publisher based on budgetary considerations. Thus, many authors receive do-not-accept letters on excellent manuscripts. Making the decision to accept or not on a set of excellent manuscripts is one of the most difficult tasks that I have as an editor.

As a rule I am guided by the peer reviews, although there have been exceptions. I am grateful for peer reviewers, like yourself, who are scholars and understand research and the publication process. Without peer reviewers publication of a quality research journal today would not be possible. However, if I was wholly guided by the peer reviews and asked for revisions on all manuscripts without fatal flaws we would have too many accepted manuscripts, which in a few months would affect the length of time from acceptance to publication. Authors, more than the readers, object to having a long time between acceptance and publication, and the publisher has a standard related to this also. I am not aware of an alternative to my making decisions based on the set of manuscripts under review, which changes regularly.

We do not allow for a manuscript that has received a do-not-accept letter to be resubmitted because we respect the time our reviewers have spent with the manuscript and do not want to ask them to repeatedly review a manuscript that was not among the best. We work with our reviewers to encourage them to write reviews that will help authors improve their manuscripts. We think that many of these manuscripts are revised and ultimately published in other journals. Many authors who submit to Nursing Research are novices, but in

all cases, we want to encourage scholarly writing and endeavor to be as positive as possible in our communications while maintaining the quality of the journal.

I hope that this information is helpful to you. Thank you for your valuable contributions to the quality of Nursing Research as an author and a reviewer.

Please let me know if you have questions or would like further information.

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