

## Working with your methodology/statistical reviewers at *Annals of Emergency Medicine*

1. Harnessing meth/stats
  - a. We follow an “opt-in” strategy; that is, meth/stats is no longer automatically assigned to original research (OR), brief research (BR) or systematic review/meta-analysis (SRMA) papers. If you:
    - i. Anticipate that the paper will likely go forward, then email *Annals* staff (Lindsay Peters, [lpeters@acep.org](mailto:lpeters@acep.org)) to request meth/stats at the same time as the content reviews.
    - ii. Are unsure whether the paper will make it to revision or acceptance you can get content reviews and, if they are good, request the meth/stats review.
  - b. If you make a revision decision on an initial submission of an OR, BR, or SRMA but did NOT request meth/stats, staff will assign a meth/stats reviewer. These article types will not proceed without a meth/stats review.
2. What to do with meth/stats reviews
  - a. Recognize the following things about methodology/statistical reviews:
    - i. This effort is imperfect and necessarily subjective
    - ii. There is an unavoidable conflict between the journal being author-friendly and the journal maintaining high standards. Everyone involved in this process acknowledges this conflict and recognizes the need to achieve balance.
    - iii. Therefore, all is negotiable but needs to be negotiated. Do not be intimidated by the meth/stats reviewers. You are the DE and your opinion matters even if you do not feel that you can weigh in equally about technical matters. For example, you might ask meth/stats, “I know that you didn’t like the way that these investigators measured outcomes but I think this paper is really important. Is there anything that they could do that would make the paper publishable in *Annals*?” A discussion would follow.
    - iv. The importance of having a running dialogue with your meth/stats reviewer cannot be overemphasized. Ideally such dialogue should occur before the first decision. That way we avoid multiple revisions or fruitless revisions, two things that annoy our author pool.
    - v. If you want to request a revision on a paper that meth/stats has flagged as having fatal/near fatal flaws you should first discuss that paper with your deputy editor.
3. Protecting your meth/stats reviewers
  - a. The methodology reviewers are a scarce and valuable resource.

- b. Do not abuse meth/stats! Abuse takes the following forms:
  - i. Asking for a review of a resubmission before carefully determining what questions you have of the meth/stats reviewer. “Can you take a look at this” is not helpful; “I am concerned that they have not adequately addressed your comments 4-6, would you have a look” is great.
  - ii. When reading a revision/revision letter, ignoring major (“must fix”) points of the methodology review that are not successfully addressed by authors without a discussion with the methodology reviewer and/or you deputy editor. This can lead to big problems when an accepted paper hits final review and the problems the meth/stats reviewer saw are recognized again and have to be addressed so late in the game.