

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

(notes from a presentation at the 2006 *Annals of Emergency Medicine* Board meeting in New Orleans)

1. Recognize the following things about methodology/statistical reviews:
 - a. This effort is imperfect and necessarily subjective
 - b. There is a necessary 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.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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.

2. The methodology reviewers are overworked.
 - a. Do not abuse meth/stats! Abuse takes the following forms:
 - i. Asking for a review of a resubmission without providing a list of specific items to be addressed.
 - 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.
 - b. Spare meth/stats when you can
 - i. If you are sending out a paper for courtesy review (low likelihood of acceptance but you want to generate feedback for new or international authors) or confirmatory review (you want to reject but want some external confirmation of your opinion) you can ease the meth/stats burden by emailing Stephanie (swauson@acep.org) at the time you assign reviewers and explain not to assign meth/stats. You can always order a meth/stats review later if you become inclined to ask for a revision.