

Mentorship program for student journal reviewers

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Date submitted: 23-September-2025

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Citation: Nguyen P. Mentorship program for student journal reviewers. *Educ Health* 2025;38:457

Online access: www.educationforhealthjournal.org

DOI: 10.62694/efh.2025.472

Published by The Network: Towards Unity for Health

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Dear Editor,

We read with great interest the article by Clithero-Eridon and colleagues: “Medical students as journal reviewers: a project concept to consider them peers.”¹ The authors highlight an important and timely issue: the shortage of peer reviewers and the need to expand the reviewer pool while maintaining quality. Their international apprenticeship model provides a creative strategy to prepare medical students for scholarly contribution.

The paper underscores that students, when mentored appropriately, are capable of producing useful and rigorous reviews. This aligns with earlier findings that student reviewers can be as stringent as faculty peers.² This recent study demonstrated how embedding authentic peer review experiences into medical education not only develops critical appraisal skills but also helps address the reviewer deficit.³ Taken together, the evidence supports the authors’ central premise that medical students can serve as credible and valuable reviewers.

At the same time, several considerations merit further discussion. First, the paper focuses on mentorship structures but less on long-term outcomes. It remains unclear whether participation as a student reviewer translates into continued engagement once graduates enter clinical practice. Second, while expanding reviewer pools may help

journals manage increasing submission volumes, integration must ensure that review quality is not diluted and that students’ perspectives are complemented by expert judgment. Third, the diversity introduced by including medical students from varied backgrounds can enrich the peer review process. However, ensuring consistency and fairness across such a heterogeneous pool requires clear guidance and standardized training.

Looking ahead, we see opportunities to build on the authors’ work. Journals might adopt hybrid models in which students review alongside faculty experts, balancing rigor with learning. Medical schools could also integrate structured peer review into medical training. Embedding this practice into coursework or journal clubs would train students in critical appraisal, scholarly writing, and professional communication while simultaneously strengthening the reviewer pipeline. Finally, systematic evaluation will be essential to understand feasibility, scalability, and impact on both student learning and efficiency.

In summary, Clithero-Eridon and colleagues have advanced an important conversation on the role of medical students in peer review. Their project highlights how mentorship can cultivate new reviewers, and this invites further innovation to ensure that student participation enhances both education and the integrity of scholarly publishing.¹

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