Peer-review Information and Acknowledgments for ACC-RAC 2009

This is the sixteenth year of the contributed, peer-reviewed presentation section of the Association of Chiropractic Colleges Educational Conference—Research Agenda Conference (ACC-RAC). The following is a brief review of the peer-review process for the scientific, contributed sessions for the ACC-RAC 2009 conference. The "contributed" presentations go through a peer-reviewed selection process, thus they are not invited presentations such as the workshop or plenary sessions. The ACC Peer-review Committee provides unbiased, double-blinded, peer-review process for submissions to this conference.

This year our peer review process was completed entirely online, which helped to facilitate the processing of comments and rating of submissions. Authors followed the instructions to prepare the submission and submitted their works through the ACC RAC peer review website. Each submission was matched to a minimum of 5 different ACC Peer-review Committee members from a different institution and based upon topic, range of experience, and affiliation. Some reviewers were asked to review manuscripts that covered only a portion of their content area, since not all reviewers are experts in all topic areas. For example, one reviewer may be an expert on systematic reviews, another a specialist in spinal injuries, and another an expert on spinal adjusting technique, but each may have been assigned to review a systematic review of adjusting patients with spinal injuries. All submissions were reviewed in the same unbiased manner through the process of blinded peer-review. Submissions were evaluated on their quality and did not receive preferential treatment, nor were submissions singled out for rejection, for reasons such as author name, degrees, or affiliation.

The peer-reviewers evaluated the submissions using a form, and submitted their ratings and comments to the website. Any problems with ethical or scientific issues that were not originally identified on initial screening were brought before the Peer-review Board for further discussion and decision. Any paper that did not comply with basic ethical or scientific standards, regardless of high rating scores, was not accepted for presentation. Both rating numbers and comments from reviewers were used to determine if a submission should or should not be presented as a either a poster or platform presentation. The reviewers' ratings and comments gave authors constructive feedback so that they could use these comments to improve their work prior to presentation and publication.

Any procedure that involves humans, such as the process of peer review, is not perfect. Reviewers may contradict one another and authors or reviewers may disagree with some of the decisions made by the review committee. As well, some submissions may only receive a "fair" rating, however by the time of the conference the author has incorporated the constructive criticisms from the peer reviewers and the presentation is far better than the one originally submitted. This would make it appear to an outsider as if the review process was flawed, whereas in reality the process was a success due to the improvements made by the author. It is important to note that not all flaws in submissions were identified and not all exceptional items were praised due to the space and time limitations. However, the overall peer review process, using a combination of

blinded reviewers, has produced an excellent conference over the past 16 years.

Some conference attendees may notice that some platform sessions have a mixture of paper topics or sometimes papers in one set of presentations seem to be unrelated. This is because of the wide variety of topics that are submitted to the conference; therefore, the range of topics of accepted papers is also varied. As stated before, these presentations are not invited; they are submitted and undergo peer review. Because the Peer-review Committee focuses on quality and not quotas, sometimes a paper is accepted for presentation but may stand alone as a topic and must be placed somewhere in the program. The Peer-review Committee is more interested with the presentation of a quality paper instead of if it fits neatly into a topic area. This is why there is a wide variety of topics and the number of platform and poster presentations will vary from year to year. The platform schedule for contributed papers is limited; therefore, we are only allowed select a finite number of platform presentations.

The long range goals of the ACC Peer-review Committee include: 1. Maintain the scholarship of the presentations and integrity of the conference; 2. Increase quality of conference presentations; 3. Increase number of published papers as a result of the conference; 4. Increase number of experienced peer-reviewers; 5. Provide scholarship opportunities for new peer-reviewers; 6. Provide mentorship and feedback to peer-reviewers and authors. Each year we strive to continue to improve our processes.

The ACC 2009 Peer-Review Committee succeeded in doing an excellent job. The committee is commended for their contribution to the continued improvement of scholarship of this conference. We would like to thank the following people who provided peer-review for the 2009 conference:

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If you are interested in becoming a peer-reviewer for this conference, please consider joining us for the 2010 conference. It would be wonderful to have you on the team.

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