

### **Questions to guide the reviewer regarding decisions on scientific manuscripts**

1. Does the manuscript provide new information that is not already available in published form?  
If **yes**, please provide a description of what you believe is new.  
If **no**, then unless the manuscript has something else extremely important to offer, the manuscript likely should be rejected.
2. Do the authors provide a sound rationale for performing this study?  
If **no**, then the manuscript likely should be rejected.
3. Has the data been properly analyzed?  
If **no**, then the manuscript likely should be rejected or major revisions should be requested.
4. Have the results been clearly presented?  
If **no**, then a major revision should likely be requested.

**Please list major comments that need to be addressed in a revision (i.e., the manuscript cannot be accepted unless these comments are adequately addressed)**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Please list other comments that you request to be addressed in a revision**

- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

**Other items to be considered when composing your review (please structure your review using the headings listed below)**

#### **The Abstract**

- Does the Abstract appropriately summarize the manuscript?
- Do any discrepancies exist between the Abstract and the remainder of the manuscript?
- Can the abstract be understood without reading the manuscript?

#### **The Introduction**

- Is the Introduction concise?
- Is the purpose of the study clearly defined?
- Do the authors provide a rationale for performing the study based on a review of the medical literature.
- Do the authors define terms used in the remainder of the manuscript?
- Is there is a well-defined hypothesis?

## **Methods**

- Could another investigator could reproduce the study using the Methods as outlined?
- Do the authors justify any choices available to them in their study design (e.g., choices of imaging techniques, analytic tools, or statistical methods)?
- Have the authors designed methods that could reasonably allow their hypothesis to be tested

## **Results**

- Are the Results are clearly explained?
- Is the order of presentation of the Results parallels the order of presentation of the Methods?
- Are the Results are reasonable and expected?
- Are any Results introduced that are not preceded by an appropriate discussion in the Methods?

## **Discussion**

- Is the Discussion concise?
- Do the authors state whether the hypothesis was verified or falsified?
- Are the author's conclusions justified by the results found in the study?
- Do the authors adequately account for unexpected results?
- Do the authors note limitations of the study?

## **Figures and Graphs**

- Are the figures and graphs correct and are they appropriately labeled?
- Do the figures and graphs adequately show the important results?
- Do arrows need to be added to depict important or subtle findings?
- Do the figure legends provide a clear explanation that allows the figures and graphs to be understood without making reference to the remainder of the manuscript?

## **Tables**

- Do the tables appropriately describe the Results?

## **References**

- Does the reference list follow the format for the journal?
- Does the reference list contains errors?
- Do any important references need to be added?

