

# Reviewers of the Year 2019. *Fertility and Sterility* celebrates excellence in our world class reviewers



**Eric Forman, M.D., H.C.L.D.**  
New York, New York



**Jason Franasiak, M.D., H.C.L.D./A.L.D.**  
Basking Ridge, New Jersey



**Mary Ellen Pavone, M.D., M.S.C.I.**  
Chicago, Illinois

**Due to the outstanding dedication and commitment as reviewers for *Fertility and Sterility*, we have named 3 reviewers of the year 2019!**

## **ERIC FORMAN, M.D., H.C.L.D.** How does peer reviewing for the *Journal* benefit your career?

**E.F.:** Reviewing for *Fertility & Sterility* has provided a significant benefit for my career. While I am actively involved in clinical care and research, I enjoy learning about the type of research being conducted around the world. Each review provides an opportunity to delve into a topic and stay fresh with the literature in our field.

## **Have any of the articles you reviewed changed your daily practice?**

**E.F.:** The overall process of critically evaluating articles and analyzing the study design has informed my clinical practice. This process inspires me to think critically about

everything we do during our clinical management and to look for areas of improvement that can be studied systematically.

## **Do you see your role as a peer reviewer as educational for the author as well as yourself?**

**E.F.:** To some extent yes for both. By suggesting different ways to analyze their data or additional references to include, I believe the peer-review process can make the final paper stronger and can be educational for the authors. I also learn new things and continue to think critically about study design. When given an opportunity to write a reflections essay, there is further opportunity to learn more about a new topic.

## **What types of trends do you see developing as you review papers in the *Journal*?**

**E.F.:** I think more focus will be on improved genetics and other methods in the laboratory such as automation and artificial intelligence. I look forward to reviewing papers on these exciting topics. Of course, we will likely start to see more studies on COVID-19 and reproduction as well pandemic and disaster preparedness in the clinic and laboratory.

I can envision and increasing role of technology as we go to a more digital world. Most readers are interacting with the journal online, rather than the hard copy. This provides a great opportunity for increased use of technology such as videos, animations, and enhanced graphical representation of data.

## **What do you look for in an ideal paper?**

**E.F.:** I look for a clear hypothesis and a study design well suited to answer the

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question. The background should be concise and focused on the hypothesis. The methods should be clear and reproducible. The results should clearly describe what was found without any editorializing. I often find that important information that was collected is omitted from the results, which is unfortunate.

### **JASON FRANASIAK, M.D., H.C.L.D./A.L.D.**

#### **How does peer reviewing for the *Journal* benefit your career?**

**J.F.:** As a clinician and a researcher, serving as a peer reviewer helps me to remain up to date on current research as well as continue to hone my skills as an investigator. It helps me ask relevant questions in ways that are well thought out with the goal of impacting the way we take care of patients. Looking at manuscripts from the other side as a peer reviewer also helps me as an author think about questions reviewers might raise and thus helps me design better research projects and produce better manuscripts.

#### **Have any of the articles you reviewed changed your daily practice?**

**J.F.:** Yes, they have. There have been a number of articles on the reproductive tract microbiome and its potential impact on reproductive outcomes. While there are limited intervention trials as of yet, I believe they are coming and may have a remarkable impact on the chance of success for our patients. With improvement in simulation, embryo culture, and embryo selection, I feel that the endometrial environment is one of the final frontiers when it comes to achieving maximum success in assisted reproductive technology (ART).

#### **Do you see your role as a peer reviewer as educational for the author as well as yourself?**

**J.F.:** That is certainly the goal. As a peer reviewer you hope to thoughtfully raise points in the study designs

### **MARY ELLEN PAVONE, M.D., M.S.C.I.**

#### **How does peer reviewing for the *Journal* benefit your career?**

**M.E.P.:** Being a reviewer is something of which I am very proud, and I have listed it prominently on my CV. I feel that *F&S* is one of the preeminent journals in our field, so being a reviewer and a member of the editorial board is an honor. My association with *F&S* is something that I specifically pointed out when seeking promotion to associate professor.

#### **Have any of the articles you reviewed changed your daily practice?**

**M.E.P.:** Absolutely! Studies that I have reviewed have altered the way I counsel patients about certain procedures/conditions. I also feel that protocols we use in our

tunate. Tables and figures can be very useful and should be very easy to read and well labeled. Finally, the discussion should not overstate the findings but also is an ideal place to suggest future studies that can expand on or generalize the findings within.

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as well as the presentation and discussion of the results. The goal is to improve the presentation of the data and ensure adequate discussion of the limitations of the research. Ultimately, the hope is to improve the current product and provide feedback which may inform future studies.

#### **What types of trends do you see developing as you review papers in the *Journal*?**

**J.F.:** I see an increasing focus on the safety of outcomes in ART in addition to simply striving to improve pregnancy rates. Multiple pregnancy rates have lessened in the past decade, but still remain at an unacceptably high level. I think there is a focus on the health of maternal and neonatal outcomes above and beyond the simple bottom line in terms of pregnant or not pregnant.

#### **What do you look for in an ideal paper?**

**J.F.:** First and foremost, I look for a novel question whose answer has a tangible impact on patient care - this can be a positive or negative study. Secondly, the design of the study is important. Have they thought about and controlled to the best of their ability confounders? Lastly, the discussion plays a key role. Although it isn't part of the study design or results, it is important for the authors to be thoughtful about the impact of their results and provide possible hypotheses which explain them.

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practice have been influenced by papers that I have reviewed.

#### **Do you see your role as a peer reviewer as educational for the author as well as yourself?**

**M.E.P.:** Yes, I hope so! I try to give both general and specific comments about the paper and hope that the authors find my comments useful.

#### **What types of trends do you see developing as you review papers in the *Journal*?**

**M.E.P.:** In general, papers are much more scientifically sound than they have been in the past. There are more complex statistical methods being used. I am reviewing more randomized clinical trials as well.

**What do you look for in an ideal paper?**

**M.E.P.:** The first thing that I look at is a clear hypothesis: why did the authors choose to study this topic, and what do the authors believe the outcome of the study will be? Authors should build a good story in the introduction leading up to the hypothesis. I also look for a sound scientific method, including the use of proper statistics and power analyses if applicable. Results should be clear and concise, with proper reference

to figures and tables. The results section itself can refer to tables and figures, and point out the most important aspects, but not necessarily repeat everything that is presented in the tables and figures. For the discussion, I like to see a clear review of the most important pertinent findings, review of other important studies on the topic, why the present study differs/what makes this study unique, strengths and limitations of the study, and future direction.