

# HOW TO RECOGNISE POTENTIAL MANIPULATION OF THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Peer reviewers may be suggested by:

- the Editor handling the manuscript.
- authors on submission of their manuscript to a journal.
- another reviewer who is unable to peer review the manuscript.

While there is an expectation that everyone involved in the process acts with integrity <sup>(Ref 1)</sup>, the peer review process can be susceptible to manipulation <sup>(Ref 2-4)</sup> as discussed at **COPE's 2016 North American Seminar**. <sup>(Ref 5)</sup>

The features or patterns of activity shown opposite are suggested to help Editors recognise potential signs of peer review manipulation. Often it is the occurrence of these features in combination that may indicate a potential issue, and they may only become apparent at later stages in the peer review or publishing process.

## Relevant COPE Cases:

**Case 11-27: Author Creates Bogus Email Accounts for Proposed Reviewers**  
<http://bit.ly/2eT0mVm>

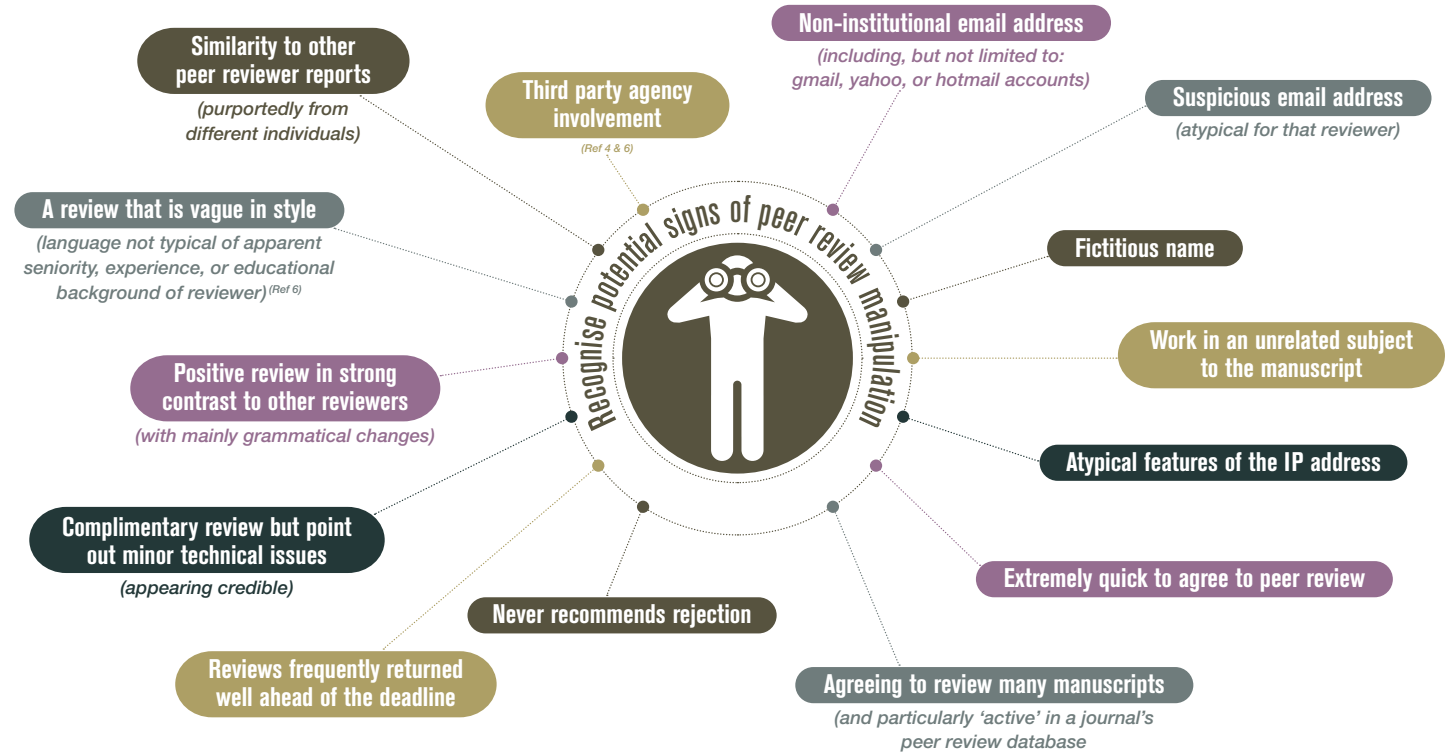
**Case 12-12: Compromised Peer Review in Published Papers**  
<http://bit.ly/2wVLkKU>

**Case 12-16: Compromised Peer Review (Unpublished)**  
<http://bit.ly/2y2O4nv>

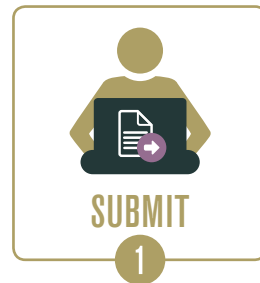
## References:

1. **COPE Ethical Guidelines to Peer Review.**  
<http://bit.ly/2xZcZrk>
2. **COPE Statement on Inappropriate Manipulation of Peer Review Processes.**  
<http://bit.ly/2f2NRMw>
3. **Who Reviews the Reviewers? Jigisha Patel**  
<http://bit.ly/1AgfKDc>
4. **Inappropriate Manipulation of Peer Review. Elizabeth Moylan**  
<http://bit.ly/2w64bTN>
5. **Can You Spot a Fake? The Trend of Fake Peer Reviews. Alison McCook**  
**Who Reviews the Reviewers? Kristen Overstreet**  
**Peer Review Manipulation. New Challenges and New Solutions. Jigisha Patel**  
<http://bit.ly/2vSjZoY>
6. **Organised Crime Against the Academic Peer Review System. Adam Cohen et al**  
<http://bit.ly/1UmlIH7Y>

## Recognised Features or Patterns of Reviewer Activity



## Best Practice to Minimise Peer Review Manipulation



Require that authors submit manuscripts to the journal themselves.



Try to use institutional emails or institutionally verified ORCIDs when inviting peer reviewers.



Always check that suggested peer reviewers are qualified to review the manuscript and their email address is accurate.



Check for unusual patterns of behaviour which in combination may suggest peer review manipulation is occurring.