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 (Ref 1), the peer review process can be susceptible to manipulation (Ref 2-4) as discussed at COPE’s 2016 North American Seminar. (Ref 5)

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/2eTOmVm
Case 12-12: Compromised Peer Review in Published Papers
Case 12-16: Compromised Peer Review (Unpublished)
http://bit.ly/2y2O4nv

References:
1. COPE Ethical Guidelines to Peer Review.
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
http://bit.ly/2v64bTN
6. Organised Crime Against the Academic Peer Review System. Adam Cohen et al
http://bit.ly/1UmH7Y

Best Practice to Minimise Peer Review Manipulation

1. **Submit**
   - Require that authors submit manuscripts to the journal themselves.

2. **Verify**
   - Try to use institutional emails or institutionally verified ORCIDs when inviting peer reviewers.

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

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