An open science peer review oath

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One of the foundations of the scientific method is to be able to reproduce experiments and corroborate the results of research that has been done before. However, with the increasing complexities of new technologies and techniques, coupled with the specialisation of experiments, reproducing research findings has become a growing challenge. Clearly, scientific methods must be conveyed succinctly, and with clarity and rigour, in order for research to be reproducible. Here, we propose steps to help increase the transparency of the scientific method and the reproducibility of research results: specifically, we introduce a peer-review oath and accompanying manifesto. These have been designed to offer guidelines to enable reviewers (with the minimum friction or bias) to follow and apply open science principles, and support the ideas of transparency, reproducibility and ultimately greater societal impact. Introducing the oath and manifesto at the stage of peer review will help to check that the research being published includes everything that other researchers would need to successfully repeat the work. Peer review is the lynchpin of the publishing system: encouraging the community to consciously (and conscientiously) uphold these principles should help to improve published papers, increase confidence in the reproducibility of the work and, ultimately, provide strategic benefits to authors and their institutions.

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