

VALIDATING NEW KNOWLEDGE AND THE ROLE OF PEER REVIEW

When a study has been completed and written up, a researcher will want to have its findings **published** in the form of a **journal article**. A **journal** is a periodic scientific publication that acts as a permanent record of research. In Psychology, there are many hundreds of journals to which a study can be submitted. Which journal a researcher decides to send his article to will depend on what kind of research has been done. In Britain, research into schizophrenia might be submitted to the British Journal of Clinical Psychology. Research into conformity might be submitted to the British Journal of Social Psychology.

Some journals are willing to publish an article provided that the researcher is prepared to pay the publication costs. However, the vast majority of journals do not do this. Instead, they assess the quality of the article by submitting it to **peer review**. Peer review involves the **editor** of the journal sending a copy of the article to two or more **referees**. These referees are also academics (hence they are the researcher's peers), who have expertise in the area the article is about.

Usually, the researcher's name will be removed from the article so that the referees do not know who has written it. Likewise, the researcher will not be told who has refereed his/her article. The review process will lead to one of three outcomes:

- (1) Publish the article without amendments
- (2) Publish the article subject to amendments being made
- (3) Reject the article

It is generally agreed that articles published in peer reviewed journals are of much higher quality than those that are published without being peer reviewed.