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## Peer Review Information and Acknowledgments for ACC-RAC 2012

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This is the 19th year of the scientific, peer-reviewed presentation section of the Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) Educational Conference, now a part of the ACC–Research Agenda Conference (ACC-RAC). The following is a brief review of the peer review process for the ACC-RAC 2012. The scientific presentations go through a peer-reviewed selection process, which means that they are not invited presentations as are the workshop and plenary sessions for this conference. The ACC Peer Review Committee’s mission is to provide an unbiased, double-blinded, peer review process for submissions to this conference. This year we received nearly 200 submissions, which is similar to recent years. Even though we received many submissions, we completed our tasks, submitted decisions to authors, and provided materials for continuing education by the declared deadlines.

The ACC-RAC submission and peer review process was completed online through the ACC-RAC peer review website, which helped to facilitate the processing of submissions for peer review. Authors followed the instructions in the Call for Submissions that was distributed online, through e-mail, and which was published in *The Journal of Chiropractic Education*. Each submission was matched to a minimum of five different ACC Peer Review Committee members, each from a different institution than the authors’ institution. The match was based on topic, range of experience, and institutional affiliation (eg, submissions from one institution were submitted for review to authors of other institutions). Some reviewers were asked to review manuscripts that covered only a portion of their content expertise area, since not all reviewers are

experts in all topic areas. For example, one reviewer may be an expert on systematic reviews, another a specialist in spinal injuries, and another an expert on spinal adjusting technique, but each may have been assigned to review a systematic review of adjusting patients with spinal injuries. As well, it is assumed that those who volunteered to be on the Peer Review Committee have the basic critical appraisal skills that would allow fundamental review of all submissions for quality. All submissions were reviewed in the same unbiased manner through the process of blinded peer review. Submissions were evaluated on their quality and did not receive preferential treatment nor were they singled out for rejection based on reasons such as author name, degrees, affiliation, or country of origin.

The peer reviewers evaluated the submissions using a structured form and submitted their ratings and comments through the website. Any potential problems with ethical or scientific issues that were not originally identified on initial screening were brought before the Peer Review Board for further investigation, discussion, and decision. These included, but were not limited to, concerns about content, ethical institutional review board compliance, and plagiarism. The peer review process is not able to, nor is it meant to, catch ethical and scientific misconduct-related issues. Any paper that did not comply with basic ethical or scientific standards, regardless of high rating scores, was not accepted for presentation.

Both rating numbers and comments from reviewers were used to determine if a submission should or should not be presented as either a poster or platform presentation. The reviewers’ ratings and

comments gave authors constructive feedback so that they could use these comments to improve their work before presentation and to assist them with developing their paper for publication. Any process that involves humans, such as peer review, is not perfect. Reviewers sometimes contradict one another and authors or reviewers may disagree with some of the decisions made by the review committee. As well, some submissions may only receive a “fair” rating at the time of preconference review; however, by the time of the conference the author has incorporated the constructive feedback from the peer reviewers and the presentation is far better than the one originally submitted. This would make it appear to an attendee as if the review process was flawed, whereas in reality the process was a success due to the improvements made by the author in time for the presentation at the conference based on the peer review comments. It is important to note that not all flaws in submissions can be identified. Peer review is not meant to act as a policing or fraud detection agency and we must respect the limitations of peer review. As well, not all exceptional items were praised due to the space and time limitations of the reviewers. However, the overall peer review process, using a combination of blinded reviewers, has produced an excellent conference over the past 19 years. Peer review has its limitations but still serves an important purpose of ensuring quality of presentations at this scientific conference and continuing to improve our collective knowledge base.

Conference attendees may notice that platform sessions have a mixture of paper topics and sometimes papers in one set of presentations seem to be unrelated. This is because of the wide variety of topics that are submitted to the conference; therefore, the range of topics of accepted papers is also varied. The presentations are not invited; they are submitted and undergo peer review. We do not select in advance what topics we may receive. Because the ACC Peer Review Committee focuses on quality and not quotas, sometimes a paper is accepted for presentation but may stand alone as a topic. Therefore, this paper must be placed somewhere in the program and may not fit neatly into a series of presentations. The Peer Review Committee is more interested with the presentation of a quality paper instead of if a paper fits neatly into a particular topic area. This is why the program has a wide variety of topics and the number of platform and poster presentations will vary from year to year. The platform schedule for contributed

papers is limited; therefore, we are only allowed to select a finite number of platform presentations.

The long-range goals of the ACC Peer Review Committee include the following: (1) maintain the scholarship of the presentations and integrity of the conference; (2) increase quality of conference presentations; (3) increase the number of published papers as a result of the conference; (4) increase the number of experienced peer reviewers; (5) provide scholarship opportunities for new peer reviewers; and (6) provide mentorship and feedback to peer reviewers and authors. Each year we strive to continue to improve our processes.

The ACC 2012 Peer Review Committee succeeded in doing an excellent job. The committee is commended for their contribution to the continued improvement of scholarship of this conference. We thank the following people who provided peer review for the 2012 conference:

Steve Agocs, Medhat Alattar, Kris Anderson, Maria Anderson, Robert Appleyard, Barclay Bakum, Angela Ballew, Deborah Barr, Jason Bartlett, David Beavers, Randy Beck, Judy Bhatti, Lisa Bloom, Charles Blum, Ron Boesch, Linda Bowers, Rick Branson, Monisa Brown, Myron Brown, Jeanmarie Burke, Jerrilyn Cambron, Marni Capes, Jonathan Carlos, Tammy Cassa, Cynthia Chapman, Peter Chapman, Michael Ciolfi, Tammi Clark, Ashley Cleveland, Richard Cole, Christopher Colloca, Katharine Conable, Elaine Cooperstein, Robert Cooperstein, Matthew Cote, Kevin Cunningham, Brian Cunningham, Vincent DeBono, Dustin Derby, Martin Descarreaux, James DeVocht, Renee DeVries, Peter Diakow, Scott Donaldson, Karol Donaubauer, Paul Dougherty, Stephen Duray, Roger Engel, Dennis Enix, Roni Evans, Ana Paula Facchinato, Rene Fejer, Maggie Finn, Jason Flanagan, Mary Frost, Matthew Funk, Weiqing Ge, Brian Gleberzon, Christopher Good, Emile Goubran, Stephen Grand, Julie-Marthe Grenier, Thomas Grieve, Jerry Grod, Joseph Guagliardo, Maruti Gudavalli, Tim Guest, Andrea Haan, Michael Hall, Michael Haneline, John Hart, Daniel Haun, Shawn He, Kathryn Hoiriis, Kelly Holt, Todd Hubbard, John Hyland, Steven Jaffe, Valerie Johnson, Robert Jusino, Greg Kawchuk, Mohsen Kazemi, Kimberly Keene, Norman Kettner, Ron Kirk, Anupama Kizhakveettill, Steven Kleinfeld, Terry Koo, Charmaine Korporaal, Julie Kumar, Danik Lafond, Dana Lawrence, Makani Lew, Kathleen Linaker, Anthony Lisi, Tracey Littrell, Cynthia Lund, Michele Maiers, Christopher Major, Katherine

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These committee members have done a wonderful job and should be appropriately recognized for their service of scholarly peer review. If you are interested in becoming a peer reviewer for this conference, please consider joining us for the 2013 conference. It would be wonderful to have you join us.

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