WHY IS PEER REVIEW IMPORTANT?

I think peer reviewing is important to make sure that research stays applicable and understandable by non-researchers. Where academics are educated to be critical, practitioners often are not. Articles are easily misinterpreted, and, especially in health-care, this could have tremendous effects for individual patients.

WHAT’S THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF YOUR WORK RIGHT NOW?

For me the biggest challenge is writing good articles that will get accepted by good journals. As I am now in my second year of my PhD, the first results are coming out and I need to start communicating my research to the world. I think it is really important to publish in a good journal that fits the target audience. But more so, it is quite a challenge to get your thoughts on paper in a way that people are going to understand.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FEARS AROUND PEER REVIEW?

There is actually not just one fear; it is an accumulation of things. First, I will probably review an article from someone who has a lot more experience than me, so why would that person even bother to consider my feedback? Then, the chances are quite high the paper was authored by a colleague I actually know. I know reviewing is quite often anonymous, but still, it might be the person sitting next to you at the following conference.

“And then, probably my biggest fear: what if I don’t understand the article at all…”

It is probably not a grounded fear at all, but it is something that creeps into my mind. The idea you accept to review something and it is not at all what you expected, of course this can be as much a flaw of the writers as yours, after all they made it sound like you would be able to do it. But as an inexperienced reviewer, it is quite scary to put your thoughts out there, nobody has to appreciate them in the end.

Thanks so much Susanne for joining in on the conversation about Peer Review.