

Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement

For all parties involved in the act of publishing (the author, the journal editor(s), the peer reviewer and the publisher) it is necessary to agree upon standards of expected ethical behavior. The ethics statements for our journals are based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors.

Duties of the Editor-in-Chief

Fair play

Submitted manuscripts are evaluated for their intellectual content without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy of the authors.

Confidentiality

The Editor-in-Chief and any editorial staff must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

Publication decisions

The Editor-in-Chief of the journal is responsible for deciding which of the submitted articles should be published. The Editor-in-Chief may be guided by the policies of the journal's Editorial Board and constrained by such legal requirements as shall then be in force regarding libel, copyright infringement and plagiarism. The Editor-in-Chief may confer with other editors or reviewers in making publication decisions.

The Editor-in-Chief and any editorial staff should maintain the integrity of the academic record, preclude business needs from compromising intellectual and ethical standards, and always be willing to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when needed. The editor is committed to ensuring that advertising, reprint or other commercial revenue has no impact or influence on editorial decisions.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in an Editor's own research without the explicit written consent of the author(s).

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The Editor-in-Chief should seek to ensure a fair and appropriate peer review process. Editors should recuse themselves (i.e. should ask a co-editor, associate editor or other member of the editorial board instead to review and consider) from considering manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or (possibly) institutions connected to the papers.

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Editors should require all contributors to disclose relevant competing interests and publish corrections if competing interests are revealed after publication. If needed, other appropriate action should be taken, such as the publication of a retraction or expression of concern. The Editor will be guided by COPE's Guidelines for Retracting Articles when

considering retracting, issuing expressions of concern about, and issuing corrections pertaining to articles that have been published in the journal.

Involvement and cooperation in investigations

Editors should guard the integrity of the published record by issuing corrections and retractions when needed and pursuing suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct. Editors should pursue reviewer and editorial misconduct. An editor should take reasonably responsive measures when ethical complaints have been presented concerning a submitted manuscript or published paper.

Duties of peer reviewers

Contribution to editorial decisions

Peer review assists the Editor-in-Chief and his/her team in making editorial decisions and, through the editorial communication with the author, may also assist the author in improving the manuscript.

Promptness

Any invited referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its timely review will be impossible should immediately notify the handling Editor so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

Confidentiality

Any manuscripts received for review must be treated as confidential documents. They must not be shown to or discussed with others except if authorized by the handling Editor.

Standards of objectivity

Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is unacceptable. Referees should express their views clearly with appropriate supporting arguments.

Acknowledgment of sources

Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also call to the Editor's attention any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published data of which they have personal knowledge.

Disclosure and conflict of interest

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Duties of authors

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Authors reporting results of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the manuscript. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

Originality and plagiarism

The authors should ensure that they have written entirely original works, and if the authors have used the work and/or words of others that this has been appropriately cited or quoted. The publisher provides an automated scan for plagiarism when a manuscript is submitted online. The Editors of the journal reserve their right to immediately reject manuscripts without peer-review in obvious cases of intended plagiarism. Concomitantly they may also impose a ban on authors prohibiting further submission of manuscripts for a period of two years.

Multiple, redundant or concurrent publication

An author should not in general publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal or primary publication. Parallel submission of the same manuscript to more than one journal constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.

Acknowledgment of sources

Proper acknowledgment of the work of others must always be given. Authors should also cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work.

Authorship of a manuscript

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a **significant contribution** to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors. Where there are others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project, they should be named in an Acknowledgments section.

The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co-authors (according to the above definition) and no inappropriate co-authors are included in the author list of the manuscript, and that **all co-authors have seen and approved** the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication. All co-authors must be clearly indicated as of

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Work involving humans should comply with the principles laid down in the Declaration of Helsinki, as revised in 2013. At the end of the main text, the manuscript should contain a statement that the study has been approved by the Ethical Committee of the institution where the study was performed, and that the study subjects, or their legal guardians, gave informed consent for participation in the study. When reporting experiments on animals, authors should indicate whether institutional and national standards for the care and use of laboratory animals were followed. Please note the Journal's Author Statement Information for further details and orientation in formulation.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

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When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published work, it is the author's obligation to promptly notify the journal's Editor-in-Chief or publisher and cooperate with them to either retract the paper or to publish an appropriate erratum.

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