

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.

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Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in an Editor's own research without the explicit written consent of the author(s).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

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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

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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

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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.

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Acknowledgment of sources

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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 the moment of manuscript submission. Adding co-authors at a later stage will not be accepted.

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