

Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement

The publication of an article in a peer-reviewed journal is an essential building block in the development of a coherent and respected network of knowledge. It is a direct reflection of the quality of the work of the authors and the institutions that support them. Peer-reviewed articles support and embody the scientific method.

It is therefore important to agree upon standards of expected ethical behavior for all parties involved in the act of publishing: the author, the journal editor, the peer reviewer, the publisher and the society of society-owned or sponsored journals.

The following duties outlined for editors, authors, and reviewers are based on the **Committee on Publication Ethics COPE** Code of Conduct for Journal Editors- publicationethics.org/

Consent to publish

For all manuscripts that include details, images, or videos relating to individual participants, written informed consent for the publication of these must be obtained from the participants (or their parent or legal guardian in the case of children under 18) and a statement to this effect should appear in the manuscript. Documentation showing consent for publication must be made available to the Editor on request and will be treated confidentially. In cases where images are entirely unidentifiable and there are no details on individuals reported within the manuscript, consent for publication of images may not be required.

Guide for Authors

Authors of reports 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 paper. 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.

1. 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, which have been appropriately, cited or quoted. Copyright material (e.g. data, tables, figures or extensive quotations) should be reproduced only with appropriate permission and acknowledgement.
- Authors must ensure that they have written entirely original work.
- Author should not submit and publish the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently. It is also expected that the author will not publish redundant manuscripts or manuscripts describing same research in more than one journal.

- Authors should acknowledge all sources of data used in the research and cite publications that have been influential in research work. Important note: the journal may use software to screen for plagiarism.

2. Authorship and Authors responsibilities

- Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to conception, design, execution or interpretation of the reported study. Others who have made significant contribution should be listed as co-authors or clearly acknowledged.
- Authors also ensure that all the authors have seen and agreed to the submitted version of the manuscript and their inclusion of names as co-authors.
- A single study is not split up into several parts to increase the quantity of submissions and submitted to various journals or to one journal over time (e.g. “salami-publishing”).
- Data access and retention: Authors may be asked to provide the raw data in connection with a paper for editorial review, and should be prepared to provide public access to such data.
- Authors need to provide proper acknowledgment of sources.
- All submissions must include disclosure of all relationships that could be viewed as presenting a potential conflict of interest.
- Authors should alert the editor promptly if they discover a significant error or inaccuracy in any submitted manuscript or published work, the error or inaccuracy must be reported to the editors.
- Authors should represent the work of others accurately in citations and quotations and they should not copy references from other publications if they have not read the cited work.
- Authors should use appropriate methods of data analysis and display (and, if needed, seek and follow specialist advice on this)
- Authors should take collective responsibility for their work and for the content of their publications. Authors should check their publications carefully at all stages to ensure methods and findings are reported accurately. Authors should carefully check calculations, data presentations, typescripts/submissions and proofs.
- Authors should ensure that only those individuals who meet authorship criteria (i.e. made a substantial contribution to the work) are rewarded with authorship and that deserving authors are not omitted.
- All authors should agree to be listed and should approve the submitted and accepted versions of the publication. Any change to the author list should be approved by all authors including any who have been removed from the list. The corresponding author should act as a point of contact between the editor and the other authors and should keep co-authors informed and involve them in major decisions about the publication (e.g. responding to reviewers’ comments).
- If requested, authors should provide raw data related to their manuscript for editorial review and must retain such data for a period of three years after the publication.
- Authors should inform the editor if they withdraw their work from review, or choose not to respond to reviewer comments after receiving a conditional acceptance.
- Authors should respond to reviewers’ comments in a professional and timely manner.

- Authors are strongly advised to ensure the correct author group, corresponding author, and order of authors at submission. Changes of authorship or in the order of authors are not accepted after acceptance of a manuscript.
- Adding and/or deleting authors and/or changing the order of authors at revision stage may be justifiably warranted. A letter must accompany the revised manuscript to explain the reason for the change(s) and the contribution role(s) of the added and/or deleted author(s). Further documentation may be required to support your request.
- Requests for addition or removal of authors as a result of authorship disputes after acceptance are honored after formal notification by the institute or independent body and/or when there is agreement between all authors.
- Authors are responsible report research involving humans or animals:
 - If requested by editors, authors should supply evidence that reported research received the appropriate approval and was carried out ethically (e.g. copies of approvals, licenses, participant consent forms).
 - Researchers should not generally publish or share identifiable individual data collected in the course of research without specific consent from the individual (or their representative). Researchers should remember that many scholarly journals are now freely available on the internet, and should therefore be mindful of the risk of causing danger or upset to unintended readers (e.g. research participants or their families who recognize themselves from case studies, descriptions, images or pedigrees).
 - Authors should supply research protocols to journal editors if requested (e.g. for clinical trials) so that reviewers and editors can compare the research report to the protocol to check that it was carried out as planned and that no relevant details have been omitted. Researchers should follow relevant requirements for clinical trial registration and should include the trial registration number in all publications arising from the trial.

3. Transparency of authors

- Authors must clearly disclose relevant financial and non-financial interests, support and relationships that might be considered likely to affect the interpretation of their findings or which editors, reviewers or readers might reasonably wish to know. This includes any relationship to the journal, for example if editors publish their own research in their own journal. In addition, authors should follow journal and institutional requirements for disclosing competing interests.

Guide for Editors

Editors are in a unique position to indirectly foster responsible conduct of research through their policies and processes. They should encourage authors to strive for, and adhere themselves to, the highest standards of publication ethics.

- **Publication Decisions:** Based on the review report of the editorial board, the editor can accept, reject, or request modifications to the manuscript.

- **Review of Manuscripts:** Editor may make a decision, on original manuscripts, based two reviewers using a double-blind peer review.
- Editor can reject a paper without review if he deems the quality too low for the journal standards, is out of the journal's scope, or contains plagiarism, or double submission.
- The editor must ensure that manuscripts received are reviewed for their intellectual content without regard to sex, gender, race, religion, citizenship, etc. of the authors.
- The editor must ensure that information in and regarding manuscripts submitted by the authors is kept confidential.
- The editor of the Journal will not use unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript for his own research without written consent of the author.

If there is a suspicion of misconduct, the JOOUST will carry out an investigation following the COPE guidelines. If, after investigation, the allegation seems to raise valid concerns, the author or authors in question will be contacted and given an opportunity to address the issue. If misconduct has been established beyond reasonable doubt, this may result in the Editor-in-Chief's implementation of the following measures, including, but not limited to:

- If the article is still under consideration, it may be rejected and returned to the author.
- If the article has already been published online, it will be removed from the published issue.
- The author's institution may be informed.

The article can be also rejected by editors if it:

- Lacks proper structure
- Lacks the necessary detail for readers to fully understand the authors' analysis
- Has no new science
- Does not clearly explain which parts of the findings are new science, versus what was already known
- Lacks up-to-date references
- Contains theories, concepts, or conclusions that are not fully supported by its data, arguments, and information
- Does not provide enough details about materials and methods to allow other scientists to repeat the experiment
- Lacks clear descriptions or explanations of:
 - Hypotheses tested
 - The experimental design
 - Sample characteristics and descriptive statistics
 - Describes poor experimental design, or faulty or insufficient statistical analysis
 - Has poor language quality

Guide for Reviewers

The reviewer is responsible for critically reading and evaluating a manuscript in their specialty field, and then providing respectful, constructive, and honest feedback to authors about their submission. It is appropriate for the Reviewer to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the article, ways to improve strength and quality of the work, and evaluate the relevance and originality of the manuscript.

Reviewer is responsible for:

- Reviewing the articles only in his area of expertise. If reviewer received a manuscript that covers a topic that does not sufficiently match his area of expertise, he needs to notify the editor as soon as possible. Recommending an alternate reviewer is welcomed.
- Finishing review of an article within two weeks. If he does not think he can complete the review within this time frame, he should contact and let the editor know and if possible, suggest an alternate reviewer. If reviewer agreed to review a paper but will no longer be able to finish the work before the deadline, he should contact the editor as soon as possible.
- Verifying that there are no potential conflicts of interests.
- While conflicts of interest will not disqualify reviewer from reviewing the manuscript, it is important to disclose all conflicts of interest to the editors before reviewing. If the reviewer has any questions about potential conflicts of interests, he can contact the relevant editors.
- Content Quality and Originality of article. He needs to make sure that authors fulfilled their requirements properly.
- Manuscript reviewers must ensure that authors have acknowledged all sources of data used in the research. Any kind of similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration with any other published paper of which reviewer has personal knowledge of, must be brought to the editor's attention.
- Ensure that the Title clearly describe, Abstract reflects the content of the article, Introduction describes what the author hoped to achieve accurately, and clearly state the problem being investigated, Method accurately explain how the data was collected, Results explain in words what was discovered in the research. It should be clearly laid out and in a logical sequence.
- Conclusion supported by the results seems reasonable. Tables, Figures and Images are appropriate and properly show the data and are easy to understand.
- The reviewer's recommendation regarding an article will be strongly considered when the editors make the final decision, and his thorough, honest feedback will be much appreciated.