

Publication Ethics

Our ethical standards and best practice policy statement is based mainly on the COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) Code of Conduct and Best-Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors, 2011. It outlines recommended principles to promote ethical conduct of the key persons involved in publishing our journals.

Editors

- serve the needs of readers, authors, reviewers and business managers
- are professional in all oral or written communications
- evaluate each potential manuscript based primarily on its importance, originality, clarity and validity and publish only papers that are relevant to our journals' scope and are of interest to our reading community
- provide written guidance and feedback to authors, reviewers, print and online publishing staff and quickly and professionally resolve all issues that arise during document review, revision, formatting and publication
- assign qualified referees, facilitate their communication with authors, and preserve the anonymity of reviewers
- ensure the quality of both published material and its presentation
- respond promptly to complaints and conduct a thorough investigation if they suspect or are informed of alleged misconduct related to either published and unpublished papers, and ensure corrective measures are put in place to resolve proven unethical behaviour
- publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when needed
- ensure fair, accurate and timely remuneration of any fees or reimbursements due to authors
- make sure readers are well-informed of changes to a journal that affect subscription, content or presentation
- monitor on-going relevance of, and compliance with, these publication ethics
- follow and promote all other company ethical policy guidelines
- being open to research that challenges previous work published in the journal

Authors

- make a good-faith effort to follow journal submission standards and guidelines
- attest that any submitted paper or its substantive content have not been published elsewhere by themselves or others
- verify that the actual investigators and authors of the paper are correctly listed and accompanying biographical information is accurate
- identify the funding of their research work to avoid conflicts of interest and any appearance of bias
- confirm that the results described in a submitted paper are original, truthful and complete, and that content used or referenced from other sources is cited and properly acknowledged
- consent to and fully participate in the required formal peer review process
- assure that all data presented in a paper is authentic, are prepared to make the data publicly available if practicable, and ensure accessibility of the data for at least ten years after publication
- inform the editor about any potential conflicts of interest and work to resolve any related issues
- inform the editor immediately if an error in their publication is identified, and correct, clarify or retract the paper when requested
- follow all contractual rules regarding dissemination, future reference and reuse of their material published in the journal

Peer Reviewers

- make a good-faith effort to follow journal review standards and guidelines
- assess assigned manuscripts for relevance, methodology, scientific accuracy and validity of results and conclusions before publication and help the editor improve the paper
- review articles objectively, without bias or personality-related judgements
- treat reviewed material confidentially and do not pass information on to third parties
- inform the editor about potential conflicts of interest related to themselves, the authors, the publisher or third parties
- withdraw from the review process for a paper if they feel that they are not qualified to professionally and fairly evaluate it or are unable to meet publishing deadlines

Malpractice Statement

- Editors have a duty to act if they suspect misconduct or if an allegation of misconduct is brought to them. This duty extends to both published and unpublished papers
- Editors should make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a proper investigation into alleged misconduct is conducted
- The compliance with the publication ethics will be monitored.
- Misconduct and unethical behavior are taken seriously and entail consequences. (This applies for published as well as unpublished papers.)
- Publications are retracted or withdrawn if necessary
- Encouraging debate and handling of complaints
- We encourage debate and consider cogent criticism or published seriously
- Authors of criticised material are given the opportunity to respond.
- Studies reporting negative results are not excluded.
- Editors respond promptly to complaints and ensure there is a way for dissatisfied complainants to take complaints further