

## Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement

### Duties of the Editors-in-Chief

#### Fair play

The editors evaluate submitted manuscripts exclusively on the basis of their academic merit (importance, originality, study's validity, clarity) and its relevance to the journal's scope, without regard to the authors' race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, citizenship, religious belief, political philosophy or institutional affiliation. Decisions to edit and publish are not determined by the policies of governments or any other agencies outside of the journal itself. The editors have full authority over the entire editorial content of the journal and the timing of publication of that content.

#### Confidentiality

The editors will 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.

#### Disclosure and conflicts of interest

Editors and editorial board members will not use unpublished information disclosed in a submitted manuscript for their own research purposes. Privileged information or ideas obtained by editors as a result of handling the manuscript will be kept confidential and not used for their personal advantage. Editors will refuse themselves from considering manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships/connections with any of the authors, companies or institutions connected to the papers; instead, they will ask another member of the editorial board to handle the manuscript.

#### Publication decisions

The editors ensure that all submitted manuscripts being considered for publication undergo a double-blind peer-review by independent experts. They are responsible for deciding which of the manuscripts submitted to the journal will be published, based on the validation of the work in question, its importance to researchers and readers, the reviewers' comments, and such legal requirements as are currently in force regarding libel, copyright infringement and plagiarism. They can, however, only publish articles that have been approved for publication by two of independent reviewers (see Peer Review guidelines).

#### Investigations

The editors (in conjunction with the publisher and/or society) will take responsive measures when ethical concerns are raised with regard to a submitted manuscript or published paper. Every reported act of unethical publishing behaviour will be looked into, even if it is discovered years after publication. If, on investigation, the ethical concern is well-founded, a correction, retraction, expression of concern or other note as may be relevant, will be published in the journal.

### Duties of peer reviewers

#### Contribution to editorial decisions

Peer review assists editors in making editorial decisions and, through editorial communications with authors, may assist authors in improving their manuscripts. Reviewers are addressed by the editors. Any invited referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should immediately notify the editors and decline the invitation to review so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

#### Confidentiality

Any manuscripts received for review are confidential documents and must be treated as such; they must not be shown to or discussed with others.

#### Standards of objectivity

Reviews should be conducted objectively and observations formulated clearly with supporting arguments so that authors can use them for improving the manuscript. Personal criticism of the authors is inappropriate.

#### Acknowledgement of sources

Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that is an observation, derivation or argument that has been reported in previous publications should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also notify the editors of any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other manuscript (published or unpublished) of which they have personal knowledge.

#### Disclosure and conflict of interest

Any invited referee who has conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies or institutions connected to the manuscript and the work described therein should immediately notify the editors to declare their conflicts of interest and decline the invitation to review so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

Unpublished material disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in a reviewer's own research without the express written consent of the authors. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for the reviewer's personal advantage. This applies also to invited reviewers who decline the review invitation.

### Duties of authors

#### Reporting standards

Authors of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed and the results, followed by an objective discussion of the significance of the work. The manuscript should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Review articles should be accurate, objective and comprehensive, while editorial opinion or perspective pieces should be clearly identified as such. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behaviour and are unacceptable.

#### Originality and plagiarism

Authors should ensure that they have written and submit only entirely original works, and if they have used the work and/or words of others, that this has been appropriately cited. Publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the work reported in the manuscript should also be cited. Plagiarism in all its forms constitutes unethical publishing behaviour and is unacceptable.

#### Multiple, duplicate, redundant or concurrent publication

Papers describing essentially the same research should not be published in more than one journal or primary publication. Hence, authors should not submit for consideration a manuscript that has already been published in another journal.

**Authorship of the manuscript**

All authors of a contribution must be listed in the manuscript as they must be able to take public responsibility for the content. As authors count those who made significant contributions to the conception, design and execution of the study, drafted the manuscript or revised it critically for important intellectual content; have seen and approved the final version of the paper; and have agreed to its submission for publication.

**Disclosure and conflicts of interest**

Authors should disclose any conflicts of interest that might be construed to influence the results or their interpretation in the manuscript.

**Confidentiality**

Authors should not use information obtained in the course of providing confidential services, such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications, unless they have obtained the explicit written permission of the author(s) of the work involved in these services.

**Human subjects**

If the work involves the use of human participants, the authors should ensure that all procedures were performed in compliance with relevant laws and institutional guidelines and that the appropriate institutional committee(s) has approved them; the manuscript should contain a statement to this effect.

**Peer review**

Authors are obliged to participate in the peer review process and cooperate fully by responding promptly to editors' requests for additional information, clarifications, and proof of ethics approval.

**Fundamental errors**

When authors discover significant errors or inaccuracies in their own published work, it is their obligation to promptly notify the journal's editors or publisher and cooperate with them to either correct the paper in the form of an erratum or to retract the paper. If the editors or publisher learns from a third party that a published work contains a significant error or inaccuracy, then it is the authors' obligation to promptly correct or retract the paper or provide evidence to the journal editors of the correctness of the paper.

**Publisher's confirmation**

In cases of alleged or proven scientific misconduct, fraudulent publication or plagiarism the publisher, in close collaboration with the Editors-in-Chief, will take all appropriate measures to clarify the situation and to amend the article in question. This includes the prompt publication of an erratum or, in the most severe cases, the complete retraction of the affected work.

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