

Publication Ethics & Publication Malpractice Statement (Based COPE's Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors)

Ethical Guidelines for Journal Publication

Epidemiology International (ISSN: 2455 - 7048) is committed to ensuring ethics in publication and quality of articles.

Conformance to standards of ethical behavior is therefore expected of all parties involved: Editors, Authors, Reviewers, and the Publisher.

General Duties and Responsibilities of Editors

Editors should be responsible for everything published in their journals. They should:

- Strive to meet the needs of readers and authors;
- Constantly improve the journal;
- Ensure the quality of the material they publish;
- Champion freedom of expression;
- Maintain the integrity of the academic record;
- Preclude business needs from compromising intellectual standards;
- Always be willing to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when needed.
- Ensure that the authors have informed the readers about who has funded research and about the role of funders in the research.
- Accept or reject a paper for publication based only on the paper's importance, originality, clarity, and the study's relevance to the remit of the journal.
- Ensure that peer review process is published.
- Ensure that the Journals should have a declared mechanism for authors to appeal against Editorial decisions.
- Ensure that the journal publish guidance to authors on everything that is expected of them. This guidance should be regularly updated and should refer or link to this code.
- Not reverse decisions to accept submissions unless serious problems are identified with the submission.
- Not overturn decisions to publish submissions made by the previous Editor unless serious problems are identified.
- Publish guidance to reviewers on everything that is expected of them. This guidance should be regularly updated and should refer or link to COPE's best practices.
- Have systems to ensure that peer reviewers' identities are protected - unless they have an open review system that is declared to authors and reviewers.
- Have systems to ensure that material submitted to their journal remains confidential while under review.
- Follow the procedure set out in the COPE flowchart as far as complaints are concerned.
- Ensure that cogent criticisms of published work are published unless Editors have convincing reasons why they cannot be. Authors of criticized material should be given the opportunity to respond.
- Ensure that the studies reporting negative results should not be excluded.
- Ensure that the research material they publish conforms to internationally accepted ethical guidelines. They should seek assurances that all research has been approved by an appropriate body (e.g. research ethics committee, institutional review board). However, they should recognize that such approval does not guarantee that the research is ethical.
- Protect the confidentiality of individual information (e.g. that obtained through the doctor-patient relationship). It is therefore almost always necessary to obtain written informed consent from patients described in case reports and photographs of patients. It may be possible to publish without explicit consent if the report is important to public health (or is in some other way

important); consent would be unusually burdensome to obtain; and a reasonable individual would be unlikely to object to publication (all three conditions must be met).

- Have a duty to act if they suspect misconduct. This duty extends to both published and unpublished papers. They should not simply reject papers that raise concerns about possible misconduct. They are ethically obliged to pursue alleged cases. They should first seek a response from those accused. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should ask the relevant employers or some appropriate body (perhaps a regulatory body) to investigate. They should make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a proper investigation is conducted; if this does not happen, Editors should make all reasonable attempts to persist in obtaining a solution to the problem. This is an onerous but important duty.
- Ensure integrity of the academic record. Whenever it is recognized that a significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distorted report has been published, it must be corrected promptly and with due prominence. If, after an appropriate investigation, an item proves to be fraudulent, it should be retracted. The retraction should be clearly identifiable to readers and indexing systems.
- Make decisions on which articles to publish based on quality and suitability for readers rather than for immediate financial or political gain of the authors, publishers, or owner of the journal.
- Have declared policies on advertising in relation to the content of the journal and on processes for publishing supplements. Misleading advertisements must be refused, and Editors must be willing to publish criticisms, according to the same criteria used for material in the rest of the journal. Reprints should be published as they appear in the journal unless a correction is to be added.
- Have systems for managing their own conflicts of interest as well as those of their staff, authors, reviewers and Editorial board members.

General Responsibility of Authors

Authors should follow the ethical codes of publications. They should:

- Present an objective discussion of the significance of research work as well as sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the experiments.
- Ensure that fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements are not given.
- Ensure that review articles should also be objective, comprehensive, and accurate.
- Ensure that their work is entirely original work, and if the work and/ or words of others have been used, this has been appropriately acknowledged. Plagiarism in all its forms constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.
- Not submit the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently.
- Ensure that there is full consensus of all co-authors in approving the final version of the paper and its submission for publication, and that the corresponding author empowered on their behalf can submit the article.

General Responsibility of Reviewers

Reviewers have an important role in publication. They should:

- Treat any manuscript submitted to them as confidential document.
- Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and should not be used for personal advantage.
- Review the manuscript objectively, and observations should be formulated clearly with supporting arguments, so that authors can use them for improving the paper.
- Report promptly if they feel unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript.
- Not consider manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions connected to the papers.