

Ethics Statement

Authorship

The authors' central obligation is to present a concise, accurate account of the research performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to public sources of information.

The results of research should be recorded and maintained in a form that allows analysis and review, both by collaborators before publication and by other scholars for a reasonable period after publication. Exceptions may be appropriate in certain circumstances to preserve privacy or similar reasons.

Fabrication of data is an egregious departure from the expected norms of scholarly conduct, as is the selective reporting of data with the intent to mislead or deceive, as well as the theft of data or research results from others.

Proper acknowledgment of the work of others used in a research project must always be given. Authors should cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work. Information obtained privately, as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, should not be used or reported without explicit permission from the investigator with whom the information originated. Information obtained in the course of confidential services, such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications, cannot be used without permission of the author of the work being used.

Authors must obtain permission for use of any previously published materials from the original publisher. Proof of permission must be provided before manuscripts containing previously published material can be published. Proper credit lines for all previously published material must be included in the manuscript.

Plagiarism constitutes unethical scholarly behaviour and is never acceptable.

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the concept, design, execution, or interpretation of the research study. All those who have made significant contributions should be offered the opportunity to be listed as

authors. Other individuals who have contributed to the study should be acknowledged, but not identified as authors.

All collaborators share some degree of responsibility for any paper they co-author. Every co-author should have the opportunity to review the manuscript before it is submitted for publication. Any individual unwilling or unable to accept appropriate responsibility for a paper should not be a **co-author**.

It is unethical for an author to publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal of primary publication. Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently is unethical and unacceptable.

When an error is discovered in a published work, it is the obligation of all authors to promptly retract the paper or correct the results.

Peer review

Review by independent scholars provides advice to editors of scholarly journals concerning the publication of research results. It is an essential component of the scholarly enterprise, and all scholars have an obligation to participate in the process.

Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for competitive gain. Reviewers must disclose conflicts of interest resulting from direct competitive, collaborative, or other relationships with any of the authors, and avoid cases in which such conflicts preclude an objective evaluation.

Reviewers should judge objectively the quality of the research reported and respect the intellectual independence of the authors. In no case is personal criticism appropriate. Reviewers should explain and support their judgments in such a way that editors and authors may understand the basis of their comments.

Reviewers should point out 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 between the

manuscript under consideration and any published paper or manuscript submitted concurrently to another journal.

A reviewer should treat a manuscript sent for review as a confidential document. It should neither be shown to nor discussed with others except, in special cases, to persons from whom specific advice may be sought; in that event, the identities of those consulted should be disclosed to the editor.

Reviewers should not use or disclose unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations contained in a manuscript under consideration, except with the consent of the author.

Editorial responsibilities

The editor of a journal has complete responsibility and authority to accept a submitted paper for publication or to reject it. The editor may confer with associate editors or reviewers for an evaluation to use in making this decision.

An editor should give prompt and unbiased consideration to all manuscripts offered for publication, judging each on its merits without regard to race, gender, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy of the authors, and respecting the intellectual independence of the authors. Situations that may lead to real or perceived conflicts of interest should be avoided.

The editor and the editorial staff should not disclose any information about a manuscript under consideration to anyone other than reviewers and potential reviewers. Unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations disclosed in a submitted manuscript should not be used in an editor's own research except with the consent of the author.

An editor presented with convincing evidence that the substance or conclusions of a published paper are erroneous should promote the publication of a correction or retraction.

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