

## **Publishing Ethics Statement**

Our journal is committed to upholding the highest standards of publication ethics, per the guidelines provided by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). To ensure the integrity and quality of our published content, we adhere to the following ethical principles for all parties involved in the publishing process: authors, editors, reviewers, and the publisher.

### **1. Duties of Authors**

- **Originality and Plagiarism:** Authors must ensure that their work is original and has not been published elsewhere. Proper acknowledgement of the work of others must always be given. Plagiarism in any form, including self-plagiarism, is unacceptable.
- **Authorship Criteria:** All individuals who contributed significantly to the research should be listed as co-authors. Others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project should be acknowledged or listed as contributors.
- **Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest:** Authors must disclose any financial or other conflicts of interest that could influence the results or interpretation of their manuscript. All sources of financial support should be disclosed.
- **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 if possible.
- **Multiple, Redundant, or Concurrent Publication:** Authors should not submit the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently. Submitting the same paper to multiple journals constitutes unethical publishing behaviour.
- **Acknowledgment of Sources:** Authors must properly cite and acknowledge the work of others.

### **2. Duties of Editors**

- **Fair Play:** Editors evaluate submitted manuscripts solely on their academic merit (importance, originality, study's validity, and clarity) and their relevance to the journal's scope, without regard to the authors' race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy.
- **Confidentiality:** The editor must ensure that manuscript information is kept confidential. Editors and editorial staff must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, or the publisher.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Editors should recuse themselves from processing manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest.
- **Publication Decisions:** The editor is responsible for deciding which articles submitted to the journal should be published, guided by the policies of the journal's editorial board and legal requirements regarding libel, copyright infringement, and plagiarism.
- **Investigation of Misconduct:** Editors must take responsive measures when ethical concerns are raised regarding a submitted or published manuscript. They will follow COPE's flowcharts when investigating suspected ethical breaches.

### **3. Duties of Reviewers**

- **Confidentiality:** Reviewers must treat the manuscript as confidential and must not use the information obtained during the peer-review process for personal advantage.
- **Objectivity:** Reviews should be conducted objectively, and reviewers should express their views clearly with supporting arguments. Any personal criticism of the author is inappropriate.
- **Acknowledgment of Sources:** Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. They should also inform the editor of any substantial similarity between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper of which they have personal knowledge.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Reviewers should not review manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest.

#### 4. Duties of the Publisher

- **Maintaining Editorial Independence:** The publisher must ensure that editorial decisions are autonomous and not influenced by commercial interests, such as advertising or reprint revenue.
- **Ethical Oversight:** The publisher, in collaboration with editors, takes all appropriate measures to ensure the ethical standards of publication are upheld, including handling potential conflicts of interest, responding to allegations of misconduct, and implementing procedures to manage any breaches of the journal's policies.
- **Corrections and Retractions:** The publisher and editors will promptly publish corrections, clarifications, retractions, and apologies when needed, according to the COPE guidelines.

#### 5. Misconduct and Investigation

The journal takes all forms of ethical misconduct seriously. Suspected cases of research or publication misconduct, including falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, redundant publication, or failure to declare conflicts of interest, will be investigated following COPE's recommended procedures. If a breach is confirmed, the journal will take corrective action, which may include retracting the article or notifying the relevant authorities.

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This *Publishing Ethics Statement* is subject to regular review and may be updated to ensure continued alignment with best practices in scholarly publishing.