

Conflict of Interest/Competing Interest

The [Journal Name] is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in scientific publishing. As part of this commitment, we require all authors, reviewers, and editors to disclose any conflicts of interest (COI) or competing interests (CI) that may influence their work. This policy ensures that the [Journal Name] maintains the integrity and objectivity of the research we publish.

Definition of Conflict of Interest and Competing Interest

A conflict of interest (COI) occurs when an individual or organization has financial, personal, or professional interests that may influence their research or decision-making process. A competing interest (CI) is a similar situation where an individual or organization has a conflicting interest, even if no financial or professional relationship is involved.

According to the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#) (ICMJE), a conflict of interest arises when an individual's professional judgment regarding a primary interest, such as the welfare of patients or the validity of research, may be influenced by a secondary interest, such as financial gain. It is worth noting that perceived conflicts of interest are considered equally important as actual conflicts of interest.

The [Committee on Publication Ethics](#) (COPE) states that conflicts of interest occur when authors, reviewers, or editors have interests that are not entirely transparent and may impact their decisions on what to publish. If these interests are not disclosed and are only revealed later, they may lead a reasonable reader to feel misled or deceived.

The situation of COI or CI that authors, reviewers, and editors may need to disclose include:

- Financial relationships, such as employment, consulting, honoraria, stock ownership, or patents
- Personal relationships, such as close family or friend relationships, romantic relationships, or rivalries
- Professional relationships, such as previous or current collaborations, mentor-mentee relationships, or academic or editorial positions

Policy for Authors

Authors submitting manuscripts to the [Journal Name] must disclose any COI or CI that may influence their work. Authors should include a statement in their manuscript stating whether or not they have any COI or CI to disclose.

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Authors with a COI or CI should include a detailed explanation of the relationship and how it may influence their research. The editors will evaluate the disclosures and consider them during the review process.

When submitting their work, authors must disclose any financial or personal interests that could impact the evaluation and publication of their content. If there are no such interests, authors should declare, "The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests."

However, authors must take specific actions if a conflict of interest exists.

1. Authors must acknowledge all forms of financial support from their contributors.
2. Authors must disclose any commercial or financial involvements that may create a perceived conflict of interest related to their contributions. They should discuss with the Editor where this information should be disclosed in the journal.
3. Authors must specify that they have not entered into any agreements with sponsors of the research reported in their contributions that would restrict the publication of both positive and negative results or require prior approval from the sponsor to publish the research.

Policy for Reviewers

Reviewers for the [Journal Name] must disclose any COI or CI that may influence their manuscript review. If a reviewer has a COI or CI, they should decline the review or explain the relationship and how it may influence their review.

Common conflicts of interest from a reviewer's perspective include:

1. A history of disagreement with the author(s)
2. Involvement in the same research project
3. Recent co-authorship in publications
4. Participation in the pre-review process before manuscript submission

If reviewers are uncertain about potential bias, they may seek guidance from the editorial staff. Furthermore, reviewers are strictly prohibited from using any part of the manuscript, including the concept and methodology, before publication. These measures are in place to ensure that the review process is fair, impartial, and maintains its integrity.

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Policy for Editors

Editors for the [Journal Name] must disclose any COI or CI that may influence their manuscript handling. If an editor has a COI or CI, they should recuse themselves from the editorial process and ask another editor to handle the manuscript.

If a reviewer or editor becomes aware of a COI or CI during the review or editorial process, they should immediately notify the Editor-in-Chief, who will evaluate the situation and take appropriate action.

The [Journal Name] takes COI and CI very seriously and expects all individuals involved in the publication process to disclose any relevant relationships. The editors and editorial board will evaluate the disclosures and take appropriate action to ensure the integrity and objectivity of the research we publish.

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Disclosure Statement

The Asian Council of Science Editors has developed this policy template with the assistance of industry experts to assist publishers, society journals, and both commercial and non-commercial journals in creating a standard for their guidelines aligned with international publishing standards. Publishers and individual journals can use and modify this template to suit their needs without permission.

We encourage publishers and journals to acknowledge the Asian Council of Science Editors if they utilize this template.

Suggested acknowledgment:

"This policy is adapted from a template provided by the Asian Council of Science Editors. We appreciate their guidance in creating a robust and comprehensive policy."

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