Last Update: May 31, 2024

Ethical Approval

[Journal Name] is committed to upholding the integrity of the published work, which primarily relies on the ethical practices of all individuals involved in the process. We encourage our authors, reviewers, and editors to consult the Guidelines on research ethics and published codes of conduct developed by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Research Involving Human Subjects

When reporting research involving human subjects, human material, human tissues, or human data, authors must declare that the investigations were conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki of 1975, revised in 2013. This declaration confirms, as stated in point 23, that the relevant institution's ethical committee approved the study. The authors must also affirm that the study followed the ethical standards outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

The Materials and Methods section of the article should include an Ethical Approval letter containing, at minimum, a statement of the project identification code, approval date, and names of the ethical committee members, along with their affiliations. Detailed information about individual participants' data should be provided. Still, private information that can identify participants need not be included unless relevant to the research (e.g., photographs of participants' faces showing a specific symptom). If the study is exempt from requiring ethical approval, this should be clearly mentioned in the manuscript, along with an explanation of the reasons for the exemption. The editors reserve the right to reject any submission that does not adhere to these requirements.

Example of an ethical statement
"All subjects gave informed consent for inclusion before participating in the study. The study was conducted following the Declaration of Helsinki, and the Ethics Committee approved the protocol of XXX (Project identification code)."

- Written informed consent for publication must be obtained from participating individuals or patients who can be identified (including the patients themselves). A template is available to download.
- Patients' initials or other personal identifiers must not appear in any image.
- For manuscripts that include any case details, personal information, and/or images of patients, authors must obtain signed informed consent from patients (or their

relatives/guardians) before submitting to the [Journal Name]. You may refer to our patient consent form template for articles containing patient details and/or images.

- Patient details must be anonymized as far as possible. For example, do not mention a specific age, ethnicity, or occupation where they are not relevant to the conclusions.
- You must otherwise provide a detailed justification for why informed consent is unnecessary.

1. **Written informed consent for publication** must be obtained from individuals or patients who can be identified, including the patients themselves. A template is available for this purpose.
2. Images must not contain **patients' initials or other personal identifiers**.
3. For manuscripts that include case details, personal information, and/or images of patients, authors must obtain **signed informed consent from the patients or their relatives/guardians** before submitting to [Journal Name]. You can refer to our patient consent form template for articles containing patient details and/or images.
4. **Patient details should be anonymized** to the fullest extent possible. Age, ethnicity, or occupation should not be mentioned if they are irrelevant to the conclusions drawn.
5. If informed consent is deemed unnecessary, a detailed justification must be provided.

[Journal Name] requires an approval, permission, or release form that grants an unlimited license for publication in all formats (including print, electronic, and online), including sub-licensed and reprinted versions (such as translations and derived works), as well as in other works and products under an open access license. To respect the privacy of patients and other individuals, please do not submit signed forms. However, the journal reserves the right to request signed forms from authors if necessary.

Clinical Trial Registration

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a clinical trial is "any research study that prospectively assigns human participants or groups of humans to one or more health-related interventions to evaluate the effects on health outcomes." In this context, intervention is "an act performed for, with, or on behalf of a person or population to assess, improve, maintain, promote, or modify health, functioning, or health conditions." The health-related outcome encompasses any change in the health of an individual or population resulting from the intervention.

The author must register prospective clinical trials (phase II-IV trials) in the appropriate publicly available repositories, such as www.clinicaltrials.gov or any WHO International Clinical Trial

Registry Platform. The Trial Registration Number (TRN) and registration date must be included as the last line of the abstract in the manuscript. For clinical trials that have not been registered prospectively, authors are encouraged to register retrospectively to ensure the complete and proper publication of the results. In such cases, the TRN, registration date, and the phrase 'retrospectively registered' should be included as the last line of the abstract.

Ethical Guidelines for the Use of Animals in Research

The editors will require that the potential benefits derived from any research involving harm to animals outweigh the costs endured by the animals and that the procedures followed are unlikely to cause significant offense to the majority of readers. Authors should ensure that their research adheres to the widely accepted '3Rs' principles:

1. Replacement of animals with alternatives whenever possible,
2. Reduction in the number of animals used, and
3. Refinement of experimental conditions and procedures to minimize harm to animals.

In addition, any experimental work must comply with relevant national legislation regarding the use of animals for research. Authors should consult the Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Animals Used in Scientific Procedures for further guidance.

Manuscripts that present original research conducted on experimental animals must provide information about approval obtained from a duly constituted research ethics committee. At the very least, the Methods section should include the project identification code, the date of approval, and the name of the ethics committee or institutional review board.

[Journal Name] supports adopting the ARRIVE guidelines for reporting experiments involving live animals. Authors and reviewers are encouraged to use the ARRIVE guidelines as a checklist to ensure comprehensive reporting.

Research Involving Cell Lines

The Materials and Methods sections of submissions reporting research with cell lines should include specific information regarding the origin of the cell lines (such as humans), when and where they were obtained, whether they have been authenticated, and the authentication method. Additionally, references should be provided to published papers or commercial sources, including the company name, cell type, number of cell lines, and batch information. If previously unpublished de novo cell lines were used or if cell lines were obtained from another laboratory as a gift, it is important to provide details of institutional review board or ethics

committee approval. Furthermore, confirmation of written informed consent is required if the cell line is of human origin.

To ensure accuracy and prevent potential issues with cell lines, it is recommended that the NCBI database be checked for misidentification and contamination of human cell lines prior to conducting the study or submitting the manuscript. This precaution can save significant time and effort, as it alerts the author to possible problems associated with the cell line. For further information, please refer to the International Cell Line Authentication Committee.

An example of Ethical Statements
The HCT116 cell line was obtained from XXXX. The MLH1+ cell line was provided by XXXXX, Ltd. The DLD-1 cell line was obtained from Dr. XXXX. The DR-GFP and SA-GFP reporter plasmids were obtained from Dr. XXX and the Rad51K133A expression vector was obtained from Dr. XXXX.

Research Involving Plants

Experimental research involving plants, whether they are cultivated or wild, should adhere to institutional, national, or international guidelines. Authors are advised to ensure compliance with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

For each submitted manuscript, supporting genetic information and origin details are necessary. In the case of research manuscripts involving rare and non-model plants (excluding commonly studied plants like *Arabidopsis thaliana, Nicotiana benthamiana, Oriza sativa*, and other typical model plants), voucher specimens should be deposited in an accessible herbarium or museum. Future investigators may request vouchers for verification of the material's identity, especially if taxonomic rearrangements are anticipated. The vouchers should include information on the collected populations' location (GPS coordinates), date of collection, and relevant documentation on the specific part(s) used in the study. Exceptions may be made for rare, threatened, or endangered species, but authors must provide an explanation in the cover letter.

Please note that the editors retain the right to reject any submission that does not adhere to these requirements.

An example of Ethical Statements
Toreniafournieri plants were used in this study. White-flowered Crown White (CrW) and violet-flowered Crown Violet (CrV) cultivars selected from ‘Crown Mix’ (XXX Company, City, Country) were kindly provided by Dr. XXX (XXX Institute, City, Country). *Arabidopsis mutant* lines (SALKxxxx, SAILxxxx,...) were kindly provided by Dr. XXX, institute, city, country).

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Retrospective Ethics Approval

If a study has yet to receive approval from the ethics committee before the commencement of the research, obtaining retrospective ethical approval is not possible. Consequently, the article cannot be considered for peer review, and the decision on whether to proceed to peer review is at the discretion of the Editor.

Ethical Approval for Retrospective Studies

Though retrospective studies are conducted using existing data or materials, where obtaining informed consent may not be necessary or difficult, ethical approval may still be required based on the respective country's laws and national ethical guidelines. Therefore, authors should check with their relevant institutions to ensure compliance with specific legal requirements.

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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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