

## Research Misconduct & Ethical Issues

The [Journal Name] upholds a strict ethical policy to ensure that the scientific works published in our journal meet high-quality standards. Our Publication Ethics and Malpractice statement is guided by the principles and guidelines developed by the Committee on Publication Ethics. Our editors implement a rigorous peer-review process to ensure that the publications meet ethical standards and provide valuable contributions to the field.

Despite our best efforts, instances of plagiarism, data falsification/fabrication, image manipulation, duplicate submission/publication, redundant publication, inappropriate authorship credit, undeclared conflict of interest (CoI), and ethical problems can occur. At [Journal Name], we take such publishing ethics issues seriously and have a zero-tolerance policy. Our editors are trained to handle such cases with due diligence and utmost care.

Researchers are expected to conduct their research according to the ethical codes and best practices prescribed by professional and regulatory bodies at national and international levels, from the inception of the research proposal to the publication of the findings. However, in the unlikely event that the journal detects any potential ethical issues or research misconduct, researchers can refer to guidelines that will help them handle the situation effectively and mitigate any potential consequences of breaching the codes of conduct.

Authors seeking to publish their papers in the [Journal Name] must comply with the following requirements:

- Research findings must be accurately presented, and authors must include an objective discussion of their significance.
- The paper should provide sufficient details regarding the data and methods used in the research to enable other researchers to replicate the work.
- Authors should publicly deposit the raw data before submitting their manuscripts. If requested, they must have the raw data readily available for presentation to referees and journal editors. Additionally, they must take appropriate measures to ensure raw data retention in full for a reasonable time after publication.
- Manuscripts cannot be submitted simultaneously to more than one journal.
- Republishing content that is not novel is not allowed. For instance, an English translation of a paper previously published in another language will not be accepted.
- Authors must immediately inform the journal editors if they find any errors or inaccuracies in their published paper so that appropriate actions can be taken.
- Manuscripts should not contain information that has already been published. If previously published figures or images are included, permission must be obtained from

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- Plagiarism, data fabrication, and image manipulation are strictly prohibited.
- If text is copied from another source, it must be between quotes, and the source must be cited. If previous works have inspired the study's design or the manuscript's structure or language, these works must be explicitly cited.
- Manuscripts may be rejected if plagiarism is detected during the peer-review process. The paper may be corrected or retracted if plagiarism is detected after publication.
- Image files must not be manipulated or adjusted in any way that could lead to misinterpretation of the information provided by the original image.
- Irregular manipulation includes 1) introducing, enhancing, moving, or removing features from the original image; 2) grouping images that should be presented separately, such as from different parts of the same gel or different gels; or 3) modifying the contrast, brightness, or color balance to obscure, eliminate, or enhance some information.
- Manuscripts may be rejected if irregular image manipulation is identified and confirmed during peer review. The paper may be corrected or retracted if irregular image manipulation is identified and confirmed after publication.

Our internal editors will thoroughly investigate any claims of publication misconduct and may contact the authors' institutions or funders if necessary. If evidence of misconduct is discovered, we will take appropriate measures to rectify or retract the publication.

## **Ethical Issues**

Below are some of the fundamental ethical issues defined and outlined.

### **Data Fabrication/Data Falsification**

Data fabrication and data falsification are two forms of research misconduct that violate research integrity. Data fabrication refers to the deliberate invention of research results, while data falsification involves manipulating research data to produce a false impression or hide inconvenient results. This can include modifying images, such as micrographs, gels, or radiological images, removing outliers, altering or omitting data points, or adding data that was not collected.

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## **Image Manipulation**

While authors may make technical adjustments to improve image readability, such adjustments should only include adjusting the contrast, brightness, or color balance to the entire digital image and not specific parts. Any technical manipulation must be disclosed in the cover letter submitted with the manuscript. Improper technical manipulation is not allowed, which involves obscuring, enhancing, deleting, or introducing new elements to an image. If the journal has concerns about the figures, it may request the original data from the author. Information about digital images and misconduct, image manipulation, and a quick examination of scientific images is available.

## **Duplicate and Redundant Publication**

Duplicate submission occurs when the same research study is submitted to multiple journals for publication. This can happen either simultaneously or years apart. On the other hand, redundant publication involves dividing a single study into multiple parts and submitting them to different journals or publishing previously reported study findings without proper cross-referencing, justification, or permission. Redundant publication also includes self-plagiarism, a common and often unintentional practice. Therefore, authors need to be transparent about their past publications. Translations without proper permission or notification and resubmissions of previously published open-access articles are also considered duplicate submissions.

## **Plagiarism**

The [Journal Name] strictly prohibits any form of plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when a person presents other people's work, including theories, text, or data, as their own without properly acknowledging the original sources. To prevent plagiarism, please consult the Guide to Ethical Writing, which provides helpful tips on how to avoid it.

## **Authorship Issues**

The issue of authorship can arise when someone is listed as an author without their knowledge or when someone has contributed significantly to a research article but is not acknowledged as an author. To ensure proper authorship, following the guidelines provided by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and the Committee on Publication Ethics is recommended. For a detailed policy on authorship, please refer to the Authorship Policy page of the [Journal Name].

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### **Undeclared Conflict of Interest**

Undeclared Conflict of Interest refers to situations where authors or reviewers have financial or personal interests that could compromise or influence their professional judgment and objectivity. To avoid potential bias, authors and reviewers must disclose any conflicts of interest related to the work being considered, including financial or personal relationships that may interfere with the interpretation of the work.

### **Ethical Approvals**

This includes patient consent issues, animal experiments, or studies without ethical approval.

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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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