

# **JOURNAL POLICY**

## **1. DEFINING THE ROLE OF AUTHOR AND NON-AUTHOR CONTRIBUTORS**

The journal considers authorship on following four criteria as recommended by ICMJE:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
- Final approval of the version to be published;
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

The journal requires all four of the above criteria to be met for authorship. Those who do not fulfill the criteria are considered as non-author contributors and should only be given acknowledgement.

The journal requires the corresponding author to take responsibility for communication with the journal throughout the publication process and to determine that authors meet all four criteria. The journal requires submission of a signed Authorship Declaration form by the corresponding author, clearly stating each author's last name against following appropriate categories:

- Idea conception and study design
- Accusation of data
- Analysis and interpretation
- Manuscript writing and proof reading
- Revisions and final version approval

The journal will not entertain any omission or addition of authors after the manuscript has been accepted for publication.

## **2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The journal considers conflict of interest when personal gains or biases (financial or otherwise) influence professional judgment. The journal requires submission of a signed Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form from authors, editors and reviewers. The manuscript will be published with the disclosure and sources of funding if applicable.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF AUTHORS, JOURNAL, REVIEWER AND PUBLISHER**

#### **a. Author**

It is the responsibility of the authors to follow principles of authorship and conflict of interest in the submission process.

#### **b. Journal**

The responsibilities of the journal in the submission and review process are as under:

##### **i. Confidentiality**

- The journal considers manuscripts as author's private communications which are not to be disclosed. The editors will not share information about manuscript and will safely store and archive the files. When a manuscript is not accepted, the editor will remove it from their system.
- The journal will retain the record for at least three years.
- The journal will notify the authors if confidentiality is breached in case of alleged scientific misconduct.

##### **ii. Timeliness**

- The journal follows a time-bared 9 – 10 weeks processing of manuscripts (see review process)
- The journal editor will ensure timely communication to the author regarding manuscript acceptance. Any planned delays in publication will be negotiated with the author.

##### **iii. Peer Review**

- The editor of the journal is responsible for reviewer selection and that they have access to all relevant materials for evaluation.
- The journal reserves the right of final decision for selection of all contents to the editor of the journal.
- The editor will acknowledge the contribution of peer reviewers to their journal.
- As true scientific peer review begins only after the paper is published, the journal encourages the readers to submit comments, questions, or criticisms about published articles in letter to editor section. Authors will have a responsibility to respond appropriately.

##### **iv. Integrity**

- Editorial decisions will be based on manuscript's novelty, quality and scientific contribution. The studies that are not statistically significant or with negative findings will also be considered for publication.

**c. Reviewer**

- It is the responsibility of the reviewer to keep manuscripts strictly confidential and must destroy copies of manuscript after submitting their reviews.
- It is the responsibility of reviewers to submit reviews within the time agreed.

**4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDITORIAL TEAM**

**a. EDITOR IN CHIEF**

**i. Responsibilities**

- The Editor in Chief is the principle arbiter of the scientific content of the journal. He must be an active scientist, well known and well regarded in his/her discipline.
- The Editor in Chief will act as an ambassador. He will exercise his public voice on behalf of the journal to actively solicit the manuscripts from leading practitioners to facilitate the publication of quality and innovative science.
- The Editor in Chief will set the strategy and objectives of the journal in collaboration with the team to assure that the journal is meeting the best international practices of editing, reviewing and publishing.
- The Editor in Chief is responsible to appoint and dismiss editors. The Editors will be informed regarding their responsibilities, authority and general terms of appointment. Their performance will be assessed through various journal metrics.
- The Editor in Chief upholds the ethics and conflict of interest policies of the journal. Ethical violation may include, but are not limited to, copy right violation, republishing, plagiarizing, falsification of data or results and misattribution of authors or citations.
- The journal has an independent editorial board for establishing and maintaining editorial policy and to support editorial decision. The Editor in Chief will ensure establishment and communication of all such policies.
- The Editor in Chief will ensure periodic journal assessment to monitor its performance through metrics such as original articles published, timely review process, rejection rate and other quantitative & qualitative measures as he/she deems appropriate.
- The Editor in Chief will preside all meetings of the editorial board.
- The Editor in Chief will review and approve the journal's yearly budget.
- The Editor in Chief will ensure provision of legal advice/insurance in the event of legal action against the editor.

**ii. Editorial freedom**

- The Editor in Chief will ensure complete autonomy of the Editors in determining the editorial content.
- The Editor in Chief will decide about the sponsored content.

**iii. Term of appointment**

- The appointment of Editor in Chief is for two years term, extendable with mutual agreement.
- The Editor in Chief is required to provide one-month notice if he/she is unable to complete the current term.

**b. EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

**i. Responsibilities**

- The Executive Editor will act as an advocate for the journal at scientific and academic platforms.
- The Executive Editor will ensure flow of good quality manuscripts by seeking papers from researchers, faculties of reputable universities and academics of good international standing to publish in the journal.
- The Executive Editor will make recommendations on policy and publication practices, review manuscripts relevant to his/her field and write journal's editorials.

**c. EDITOR**

**i. Responsibilities**

- The Editor will act as an advocate for the journal at scientific and academic platforms.
- The Editor will make recommendations on policy and publication practices in collaboration with the editorial team.
- The Editor will ensure flow of good quality manuscripts.
- The Editor has the final authority to accept/reject manuscript.
- The Editor is responsible for the selection of peer reviewer, takes decision on manuscripts acceptance, respond to letters to editor and review manuscript relevant to his/her field.
- The Editor is responsible to oversee and provide guidance for operational management.

**d. MANAGING EDITOR**

**i. Responsibilities**

- The Managing Editor is responsible for operational working of the journal.

- The Managing Editor is responsible to ensure manuscript review process and publications are according to the laid down timelines of the journal.
- The Managing Editor will coordinate with peer-reviewers, authors and editorial members.
- The Managing Editor will review manuscripts relevant to his/her field, write news and research highlights and responds to letter to editors.

## **5. PROTECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

- The journal requires submission by the corresponding author of an Institutional Review Committee approval for all researches involving human data.
- The editor has the right to exercise his authority in deciding whether the conduct of the research was appropriate even if the study has IRB approval.
- When reporting experiments on animals, authors will indicate whether institutional and national standards for the care and use of laboratory animals were followed. The journal requires a written statement by the authors that attests that they have received and archived written patient consent.

## **6. REGISTRATION OF CLINICAL TRIALS**

- The journal considers publication of only registered clinical trials at or before the time of first patient enrollment.

## **7. ISSUES RELATED TO PUBLICATION**

### **a. Duplicate submission**

The journal considers duplicate submission as submission of the same manuscript simultaneously to more than one journal in same or different languages. The journal does not accept any duplicate submission. Authors will require a signed declaration stating that the manuscript has not been submitted elsewhere. All submitted manuscripts without such signed declaration will be rejected.

### **b. Duplicate publication**

The journal considers duplicate publication as a publication of a manuscript which substantially utilizes already published manuscript without referencing it. The journal does not accept such publications. Following are not considered as duplicate publication:

- Letter to editor, abstract, poster and/or complete report following a preliminary report.
- Paper not published in full, but presented at a scientific meeting.

- Any information related to public health emergency requires immediate dissemination even if it impedes subsequent publication in a journal.

**c. Acceptable secondary publication**

The journal considers secondary publication as beneficial information meant to be disseminated to widest audience as for example guidelines and evidence-based practices generated by government agencies. The journal will consider secondary publications for all other reasons if the following ICMJE conditions are met:

- The editors of the journals have given consent/approval to the authors.
- The editors of the journals have negotiated with the authors regarding the priority of the primary publication by a publication interval.
- The primary version must be fully reflected in the secondary version.
- The secondary version must cite the primary reference and state that “This article is based on a study first reported in the [journal title, with full reference”.

**d. Manuscript based on the same data base**

The journal considers independent submission as manuscripts received from separate research organizations or from the same group analyzing the same data set if they differ in their analytic methods, conclusions, or both. Secondary analyses/results of clinical trial data should clearly mention primary publication and the same identifying trial registration number.

**e. Correction and Retractions / Republications and Version control**

The journal considers all updates of previous publications as new publication. A correction will be published in the journal if honest scientific error of fact is made. The journal will follow ICMJE standards for publication of correction:

- The journal will publish the correction on the electronic or numbered print page that is included in a Table of Content to ensure proper indexing. It will archive all prior versions of the article and the citation will be of the most recent version.

The journal will have the right to retract any published article if the scientific errors invalidate results, interpretations and conclusions. Retraction with republication by the journal will only be considered on case to case basis.

**f. Scientific misconduct, expressions of concern and retraction**

The journal considers scientific misconduct as data fabrication and falsification. Data falsification includes deceptive manipulation of images and plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined by HEC Plagiarism Policy as "taking

and using the thoughts, writings, and inventions of another person as one's own". The journal will carry out objective check through plagiarism software.

The journal will carry out individual assessment of each case of alleged scientific misconduct. An investigation committee headed by the editor will contact the corresponding author with his enclosed signed authorship statement and documentary evidence of misconduct, for an explanatory response. If the investigation proves scientific misconduct, then the journal will publish a retraction of the article. The journal will prominently label the retraction, on electronic or numbered print page or a print table of contents.

#### **g. License to Publish and Distribute**

The journal has following copyright agreements based on Creative Common License:

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#### **h. Correspondence**

The journal responds comments or questions through a correspondence section namely "Letter to Editor". Editors will have the prerogative to reject correspondence.

#### **i. Supplements**

The journal considers supplements as thematic issues that deal with related topics, published as a separate issue of the journal or as part of a regular issue. The same principles of authorship, conflict of interest, confidentiality, timeliness, peer-review, integrity, scientific misconduct and secondary publication, as discussed under relevant sections will also be applicable to supplements.

**j. Fees**

The journal may charge fees required for manuscript processing or publishing material.

**k. Electronic publishing**

The journal is available in electronic as well as print version and the policy applies equally to both. The journal is not responsible for advertising on the external linked sites. The journal will archive or use a credible repository for published material.

**l. Advertising**

The journal carries advertising on non-profit basis. The editors will have final authority for approving print and online advertisements.