

## PUBLICATION ETHICS AND PUBLICATION MALPRACTICE STATEMENT

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For all parties involved in the act of publishing (the author, the journal editor(s), the peer reviewer and the publisher) it is necessary to agree upon standards of expected ethical behaviour. The ethics statements for our journal are based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors.

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##### Fair play

Submitted manuscripts are evaluated for their intellectual content without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy of the authors.

##### Confidentiality

The Editor-in-Chief and any editorial staff must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

##### Disclosure and conflicts of interest

Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in an Editor's own research without the explicit written consent of the author(s).

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The handling Editor-in-Chief of the journal is responsible for deciding which of the submitted articles should be published. The Editor-in-Chief may be guided by the policies of the journal's Editorial Board and constrained by such legal requirements as shall then be in force regarding libel, copyright infringement and plagiarism. The Editor-in-Chief may confer with other editors or reviewers in making this decision.

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Peer review assists the Editor-in-Chief in making editorial decisions and, through the editorial communication with the author, may also assist the author in improving the manuscript.

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Any invited referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its timely review will be impossible should immediately notify the Editor-in-Chief so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

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Personal criticism of the author is unacceptable.

Referees should express their views clearly with appropriate supporting arguments.

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Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that an observation, derivation, or argument had been previously reported should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also call to the Editor's attention any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published data of which they have personal knowledge.

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Authors reporting results of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the manuscript. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behaviour and are unacceptable.

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The authors should ensure that they have written entirely original works, and if the authors have used the work and/or words of others that this has been appropriately cited or quoted.

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An author should not in general publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal or primary publication. Parallel submission of the same manuscript to more than one journal constitutes unethical publishing behaviour and is unacceptable.

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Proper acknowledgment of the work of others must always be given. Authors should also cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work.

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Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors. Where there are others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project, they should be named in an Acknowledgement section. The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co-authors (according to the above definition) and no inappropriate co-authors are included in the author list of the manuscript, and that all co-authors have seen and approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication.

### Disclosure and conflicts of interest

All authors should disclose in their manuscript any financial or other substantive conflict of interest that might be construed to influence the results or their interpretation in the manuscript. All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed.

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