

Publication Ethics Policies

Authors are expected to adhere to basic standards of professional ethics and conduct accepted across all areas of scholarly publishing. In submitting a manuscript for publication, authors are assuring that their work is original and has not been published elsewhere. As well, all parties are also expected to conform to common standards of professional respect and civility. This document summarizes the expected standards of professional and ethical conduct with regard to publication in *The Researcher*.

Plagiarism and Republication

Plagiarism involves reproducing text or other materials from other papers without properly crediting the source. Material is regarded as being plagiarized regardless of whether it is has been modified or paraphrased. A serious ethical breach, plagiarism may constitute a legal breach of copyright if the reproduced material has been previously published. This includes repeating text from previously published papers by the author or authors (i.e., "self-plagiarism").

Attribution and Citation Practice

Papers published in *The Researcher* should include citations to previously published papers which are directly relevant to the results being presented. This requirement is especially important when new ideas or results are being presented. Deliberate refusal to credit or cite prior or corroborating results, while not regarded technically as constituting plagiarism, represents a comparable breach of professional ethics, and can result in summary rejection of a manuscript.

An unintentional failure to cite a relevant paper does not necessarily imply misconduct. The volume of published materials on some subjects makes it difficult for an author to be aware of every relevant paper. Authors are expected to devote care to the correctness and appropriateness of literature citations as to the other components of the manuscript and to follow the recommendations of reviewers and editors to correct and augment the citations when appropriate. Responsibility for updating references after acceptance (but before publication) of a paper rests fully with the authors.

Conflicts of Interest

The Researcher peer-review system is based on a double-blind reviewer model, and reviewers assume responsibility for evaluating the clarity, veracity, and significance of the results presented. For such a system to function effectively, it is essential

that the reviewer be free of any conflicts of interest that might influence the content or the promptness of the review.

When a paper is submitted, authors may identify individuals who they believe are conflicted and should not serve as referees. Likewise, individuals who are asked to review a paper should identify any potential conflicts of interest, allowing the editor to determine whether these are substantive enough to disqualify that reviewer.

In most instances an individual working at the same institution as one of the co-authors is ineligible to referee the paper. Editors must also guard against conflicts of interest and are required to disqualify themselves whenever a real or perceived conflict is present.

Confidentiality Guidelines

The Researcher will not reveal the identities of reviewers nor the contents of peer-review-related materials to individuals outside of the respective peer-review process for the purpose of quotation and direct attribution.

Strictly speaking, authors are not bound by similar confidentiality requirements (for example, they may choose to consult with co-authors and colleagues when revising a paper in response to a referee report), but public dissemination of the contents of referee reports and editorial correspondence is inappropriate. Any authors who do so forfeit their rights to confidentiality protection by *The Researcher*.

Professional Conduct and Civility

All participants in the publication process, including editors, authors, referees, and journal staff members, are expected to conform to basic standards of professional courtesy and respect the basic rules and guidelines that govern the peer-review and publication process. Energetic debate and critique are expected as part of the scholarly process, but these activities are only acceptable when conducted with civility and professional respect for all parties. Personal attacks and verbal abuse, whether oral or written, are unacceptable under any circumstances, and *The Researcher* reserves the right to refuse submissions from individuals who violate these guidelines or refuse to cooperate with editors and reviewers in the normal peer review and publication processes.

Investigation of Misconduct Allegations

The integrity of *The Researcher* rests on the professionalism of its authors, reviewers, and editors. Alleged cases of unethical conduct will be investigated vigorously by the editor and the editorial board of the journal. Accusations of misconduct falling outside of the peer review or publication process may be more

properly directed to the relevant institutional authorities. Editorial inquiries will be conducted with the maximum degree of confidentiality that is practical. *The Researcher* also recognizes an obligation to protect their authors and referees against frivolous or unfounded allegations of misconduct. The leveling of unfounded allegations against others is no more acceptable than the alleged acts themselves, and repeated frivolous complaints by individuals may be summarily dismissed by the journal editor.

Subject consent

Requirement for consent

In order to comply with all applicable laws and regulations concerning the privacy and/or security of personal information, appropriate consents, permissions and releases must be obtained where authors wish to include case details or other personal information or images of research subjects and any other individuals in the journal

It is the responsibility of the author to ensure that:

- Each individual, or the individual's legal guardian or other person with legal authority to act on the individual's behalf who appears in any video, recording, photograph, image, illustration or case report (or in any other identifiable form) is made aware in advance of the fact that such photographs are being taken or such video, recording, photograph, image, illustration or report is being made, and of all the purposes for which they might be used, including disclosure to *The Researcher* and use by *The Researcher* or its licensees in any work or product. That individual, legal guardian or person with legal authority must give his/her explicit written consent. If such consent is made subject to any conditions (for example, adopting measures to prevent personal identification of the person concerned), *The Researcher* must be made aware in writing of all such conditions. Written consents must be retained by the author and copies of the consents or evidence that such consents have been obtained must be provided to *The Researcher* on request.
- The form of written consent complies with each requirement of all applicable Data Protection and Privacy Laws. Particular care should be taken with obtaining consent where children are concerned (in particular where a child has special needs or learning disabilities), where an individual's head or face appears, or where reference is made to an individual's name or other personal details.
- In the case of a child, if parents or guardians disagree on the use of the images of that child, then consent should be deemed not to have been given and those images should not be used. It is also important to ensure that only

images of children in suitable dress are used to reduce the risk of images being used inappropriately.

- Even if consent has been obtained, care must be taken to ensure that the portrayal and captioning of the individual concerned are respectful and could not be seen as denigrating that individual.

Special considerations

- Research subjects' names, initials, hospital or social security numbers, dates of birth or other personal or identifying information should not be used.
- Images of patients or research subjects should not be used unless the information is essential for scientific purposes and explicit permission has been given as part of the consent. Even where consent has been given, identifying details should be omitted if they are not essential.
- If identifying characteristics are altered to protect anonymity, authors should provide assurances that such alterations do not distort scientific meaning.

Data

What constitutes research data will differ from field to field, but broadly speaking, it refers to the result of observations or experimentation that validate research findings. Research data can include but are not limited to raw data, processed data, software, algorithms, protocols, methods, and materials. Research data do not include text in manuscript or final published article form nor do they include data or other materials submitted and published as part of a journal article.

The following principles underpin *The Researcher* data policy:

- Research data should be made available free of charge to all researchers wherever possible and with minimal reuse restrictions.
- Researchers invest substantially to create and interpret data, and others such as data archives, publishers, funders and institutions further add value and/or incur significant cost. In all such cases, these contributions need to be recognized and valued.
- Expectations and practices around research data vary between disciplines and need to be taken into account.
- Platforms, publications, tools and services can enhance data by improving their discoverability, use, reuse, and citation.
- Standard identifiers, vocabularies, taxonomies, and ontologies enhance the discovery, management and use of data.

Duplicate submission

Except in very unusual circumstances (and then only with your agreement as the editor), authors are expected to submit articles that are original and have not been submitted to any other publication