



Code of Ethics and Publication Guidelines Policy

1. GUIDELINES ON GOOD PUBLICATION PRACTICE

We deemed it crucial to establish a comprehensive framework for ethical conduct in scientific publishing. These guidelines aim to provide valuable insights for authors. Promoting intellectual honesty should be a cornerstone in all medical and scientific educational endeavors. It is imperative to integrate it into publication ethics to deter misconduct. With this objective, the following guidelines have been formulated.

Good research must be thoroughly justified, meticulously planned, appropriately designed, and ethically sanctioned. Anything less may be considered misconduct.

1.1. Actions to Ensure Research Quality:

- 1.1.1. Laboratory and clinical research should adhere to a structured protocol; pilot studies must be accompanied by a written rationale.
- 1.1.2. Research protocols ought to address specific inquiries rather than merely collect data.
- 1.1.3. Protocols must undergo meticulous review and agreement by all contributors and collaborators, including participants if applicable.
- 1.1.4. The finalized protocol should be incorporated into the research records.
- 1.1.5. Early consensus on contributors' roles, collaboration terms, authorship, and publication matters are recommended.



- 1.1.6. Statistical considerations should be addressed early in study design, encompassing power calculations to ensure appropriate participant numbers.
- 1.1.7. All studies involving human subjects, medical records, or anonymized human tissues necessitate formal and documented ethical approval from a recognized research ethics committee.
- 1.1.8. Utilization of human tissues in research should adhere to the highest ethical standards, such as those endorsed by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics.
- 1.1.9. Obtaining fully informed consent is paramount, although circumstances may arise where it's not feasible. In such cases, an appropriate research ethics committee should evaluate ethical acceptability.
- 1.1.10. When participants are incapable of providing informed consent, research should comply with international guidelines, such as those outlined by the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS).
- 1.1.11. Animal experimentation must fully comply with local, national, ethical, and regulatory standards, including obtaining local licensing approvals. International standards may vary.
- 1.1.12. Formal supervision, typically the responsibility of the principal investigator, should be provided for all research projects, encompassing quality control and regular review, with primary outputs retained for up to 15 years.

1.2. Data Analysis

Data analysis should be conducted appropriately. However,

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Rajbaug, Loni Kalbhor, Pune - 412 201, India

director.rdc@mituniversity.edu.in

Tel.: +91 206765 3057 (Extn.) 2521

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inappropriate analysis does not necessarily constitute misconduct, while fabrication and falsification of data are considered misconduct.

1.2.1. Action:

1.2.1.1. Disclosure of Sources and Methods:

All sources and methods utilized for data collection and analysis, including any electronic preprocessing, should be fully disclosed. Detailed explanations should be provided for any exclusions made during the analysis.

1.2.1.2. Explanation of Analysis Methods:

Methods of analysis must be thoroughly explained, and if not commonly used, referenced appropriately.

1.2.1.3. Disclosure of Post Hoc Analysis:

Post hoc analysis of subgroups is permissible but must be disclosed. Failure to disclose that the analysis was post hoc is unacceptable.

1.2.1.4. Discussion of Bias in Study Design and Interpretation:

The discussion section of a paper should address any issues of bias considered during the study and explain how they were managed in the design and interpretation.

1.3. Authorship

Authorship lacks a universally agreed definition, but authors should take responsibility for specific sections of the study at a minimum.

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1.3.1.1. Balanced Attribution of Authorship:

Authorship should reflect intellectual contributions to the conception, design, analysis, and writing of the study balanced against data collection and routine work.

If an individual cannot reasonably be attributed to a specific task, they should not be credited with authorship.

1.3.1.2. Early Decision on Attribution:

To prevent disputes, determine authorship, contributors, and acknowledgments early in the research project planning.

1.3.1.3. Public Responsibility:

All authors must publicly take responsibility for the content of their paper, even in multidisciplinary research.

Disclosure of individual contributions can resolve issues arising from the multidisciplinary nature of research.

1.3.1.4. Review Journal's Guidance:

Authors should carefully review the target journal's "Advice to Authors" considering current uncertainties.

1.4. Strategies for Resolving Authorship Disputes in Academic

New researchers ought to proactively address and resolve issues related to authorship. Typically, the primary author signifies the most substantial contribution to the research. Sometimes significance is attached to being the last-named author. However, views about this do seem to vary, so don't assume that everybody feels the same way about it. Frequently, authors designate the last position to a senior team member who provided expertise and guidance.

1.4.1. How to handle disputes

1.4.1.1. Disputes

These are largely questions of interpretation, such as whether someone's contribution was 'substantial' or not. In such cases you need to negotiate with the parties involved. If the suggestions to inclusion or exclusion of names came from your supervisor, make clear that you are not disputing his or her right to make such a decision, but show dispassionately why you do not agree with the decision. This should be supported by evidence, such as laboratory notebooks, manuscripts or Instructions to Authors etc. If you remain dissatisfied with your supervisor's decision, you may consider an appeal to higher authority, such as the departmental head or dean. However, such actions should be reserved for exceptional circumstances only, and it's important to communicate your intentions to your supervisor beforehand.

1.4.1.2. Misconduct

Avoid scientific misconduct and sometimes someone is proposing to do changes in the authorship list unethically, avoid it. Engaging in such behavior could potentially harm your career prospects and jeopardize future funding opportunities.

1.4.2. What you can do if authorship issues are not resolved

Before submission, all authors must carefully review the final version of the article. If any unethical content is discovered, you have the option to withdraw your name from the publication. In

the event that your name is included against your wishes, it is important to promptly notify the other authors.

1.4.3. Key points in authorship

1.4.3.1. Acknowledgements:

All individuals who contributed to the work but are not listed as authors should be acknowledged in the Acknowledgments section, along with a description of their contributions.

1.4.3.2. Appeals:

You may ask a journal to withdraw your name from a paper if it has been included against your wishes.

1.4.3.3. Contributorship:

Authors should provide details of their contribution to project.

1.4.3.4. Corresponding author:

The individual responsible for receiving reviewers' comments, proofs, etc., and whose contact information is provided on the article for readers to request reprints or contact the research group is known as the corresponding author. This role primarily entails administrative duties, yet some authors mistakenly associate it with seniority. It's advisable to consult with your co-authors early on and establish in advance who will serve as the corresponding author. Ideally, select someone whose contact information is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

1.4.3.5. First and last authors:

Consequently, the first named author is typically regarded as having made the most significant contribution to the research. It's

common for authors to reserve the last position for a senior team member who provided expertise and guidance.

1.4.3.6. Ghost authors:

Ghost authors are individuals who engage in research, data analysis, and/or manuscript writing but are not credited or acknowledged in the author byline or acknowledgments. It is imperative that all individuals designated as authors meet the criteria for authorship, and all eligible contributors should be included in the article's author list.

1.4.3.7. Gift authors:

Individuals listed as authors without making a substantial contribution to the research should be avoided. Gift authorship fails to meet the criteria for authorship.

1.4.3.8. Order of authors:

The sequence of authorship in the article should be determined collectively by the authors. In some cases, author names are listed alphabetically, accompanied by a statement indicating that all authors contributed equally to the research. This information should be communicated to the editor.

1.5. Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest include those that may not be immediately apparent and could influence the judgment of authors, reviewers, and editors. These conflicts may encompass personal, commercial, political, academic, or financial interests.

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1.5.1.1. Comprehensive Disclosure:

Authors, reviewers, and editors must disclose any conflicts of interest, including financial interests such as employment, research funding, stock ownership, payment for lectures or travel, consultancies, and company support for staff.

1.5.1.2. Maintain Integrity:

To avoid misleading readers, any conflicts of interest, when revealed later, should not compromise the integrity of the research or the publication process.

1.6. Peer Review

Peer reviewers, selected by editors, offer written opinions to enhance the quality of a study. Different journals employ varying review methods, including open procedures where reviewer identities are disclosed along with full or edited reports.

1.6.1. Action:

1.6.1.1. Author Suggestions for Reviewers:

While authors' recommendations for potential reviewers can be beneficial, editors are not obligated to use them.

1.6.1.2. Confidentiality Assurance:

Expert reviewers must uphold confidentiality when assessing manuscripts. This obligation extends to reviewers' colleagues, who may offer opinions on specific sections with the editor's permission.

1.6.1.3. Manuscript Security:

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Reviewers and editors must not retain or copy the submitted manuscript.

1.6.1.4. Respect for Manuscript Content:

Reviewers and editors should refrain from using the manuscript's data, arguments, or interpretations without the authors' explicit permission.

1.6.1.5. Quality Review Expectations:

Reviewers are expected to furnish prompt, accurate, courteous, unbiased, and justifiable reports.

1.6.1.6. Reporting Suspected Misconduct:

If reviewers suspect misconduct, they should confidentially communicate their concerns to the editor.

1.6.1.7. Transparency in Processes:

Journals should accurately describe their peer review, selection, and appeals processes to ensure transparency.

1.6.1.8. Regular Audits for Efficiency:

Journals should conduct regular audits of acceptance rates and publication times to maintain efficiency and fairness in the peer review process.

1.7. Redundant publication

Redundant publication arises when two or more papers, lacking complete cross-referencing, present the same hypothesis, data, discussion points, or conclusions.

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- 1.7.1.1. Published studies do not need to be repeated unless further confirmation is required.
- 1.7.1.2. Previous publication of an abstract during the proceedings of meetings does not preclude subsequent submission for publication, but full disclosure should be made at the time of submission.
- 1.7.1.3. Re-publication of a paper in another language is acceptable, provided that there is full and prominent disclosure of its original source at the time of submission.
- 1.7.1.4. At the time of submission, authors should disclose details of related papers, even if in a different language, and similar papers in press.

1.8. Plagiarism

Plagiarism encompasses the unacknowledged utilization of ideas, whether published or unpublished, including those from research grant proposals, to the presentation of an entire paper under a "new" authorship, occasionally in a different language. It can manifest at any phase of the academic process, spanning from conception and research to writing and publication, and it pertains to both traditional print and electronic formats.

1.8.1. Action:

1.8.1.1. Disclosure of Sources:

All sources utilized must be appropriately cited.

1.8.1.2. Permission for Extensive Use:

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Seek permission when incorporating substantial portions of others' written or illustrative content.

1.9. Duties of Editors

Editors are the guardians entrusted with the oversight of journals. Typically, they assume responsibility from their predecessors and aim to ensure the journal's continued excellence. Their commitment extends to maintaining the journal in optimal condition for subsequent custodians. Most editors play a pivotal role in setting the course for the journal. They provide guidance and establish a robust management team to uphold its standards and advance its mission.

Editors must navigate the diverse interests of various stakeholders. This includes readers, authors, staff, owners, editorial board members, advertisers, and the media. Balancing these interests is essential for maintaining the integrity and relevance of the journal.

1.9.1. Editorial Actions

1.9.1.1. Objective Decision-making:

Editorial decisions regarding paper acceptance or rejection should be solely based on the paper's significance, originality, clarity, and its alignment with the journal's scope.

1.9.1.2. Fair Treatment of Challenging Studies:

Studies that challenge previously published work should be given a particularly sympathetic consideration.

1.9.1.3. Inclusion of Negative Results:

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Studies reporting negative results should not be disregarded but should be considered for publication.

1.9.1.4. Thorough Peer Review:

All original studies must undergo rigorous peer review, with careful attention paid to potential biases stemming from related or conflicting interests.

1.9.1.5. Confidentiality:

Editors are obliged to treat all submitted papers with confidentiality.

1.9.1.6. Responsibility for Corrections:

In the event that a published paper is found to contain major flaws, editors must promptly and prominently correct the record, assuming full responsibility.

1.10. Media Relations

The dissemination of medical research findings to the media has gained significant traction. Journalists often attend scientific meetings where preliminary results are presented, leading to their premature publication in mass media.

1.10.1. Actions:

1.10.1.1. Balanced Media Engagement:

Authors approached by the media should provide a balanced account of their work, clearly distinguishing between evidence and speculation.

1.10.1.2. Simultaneous Publication:

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Whenever feasible, authors are encouraged to pursue simultaneous publication in both mass media and a peer-reviewed journal, indicating sufficient evidence and data for critical readers.

1.10.1.3. Assistance without Data Provision:

Authors should assist journalists in producing accurate reports but refrain from supplying additional data if simultaneous publication is not possible.

1.10.1.4. Patient Notification:

Authors should prioritize informing patients who participated in the research about the results before they are disseminated through mass media, particularly if there are clinical implications.

1.10.1.5. Awareness of Journal Policies:

Authors should be informed by the organizers if journalists are expected to attend scientific meetings. Additionally, authors may benefit from being acquainted with any media policies set by the journal where their work is slated for publication.

1.11. Advertising

Scientific journals and conferences often generate substantial income from advertising, with reprints also being a potential source of revenue.

1.11.1. Actions:

1.11.1.1. Editorial Independence:

Editorial decisions must remain uninfluenced by advertising revenue or reprint profits. Clear separation between editorial and advertising administration is essential.

1.11.1.2. Rejecting Misleading Advertisements:

Advertisements that are deceptive or misleading must be declined. Editors should be open to publishing criticisms of such advertisements, following the same criteria applied to other journal content.

1.11.1.3. Treatment of Reprints:

Reprints should be published exactly as they appear in the journal unless a correction is warranted.

1.12. Dealing with Misconduct

1.12.1. Principles:

1.12.1.1. Defining Misconduct:

Misconduct is primarily characterized by the intention to assert falsehoods as truths.

1.12.1.2. Intention Focus:

In assessing misconduct, scrutiny should extend beyond specific acts or omissions to include the intentions of all involved parties, such as researchers, authors, editors, reviewers, or publishers.

1.12.1.3. Types of Deception:

Deception in misconduct can stem from intentional actions, reckless disregard for consequences, or negligence. Upholding "best practice" necessitates complete honesty and full disclosure.

1.12.1.4. Limitations of Codes:

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While codes of practice serve to raise awareness, they cannot comprehensively cover all possible instances of misconduct.

1.12.2. Investigating Misconduct

1.12.2.1. Editorial Obligation:

Editors are ethically bound to not merely reject papers raising misconduct concerns but to actively pursue the case. Nevertheless, understanding how to investigate and respond to potential cases of misconduct can pose challenges.

1.12.2.2. Editorial Discretion:

It falls upon the editor to determine the appropriate course of action to address the misconduct allegation.

1.12.3. Serious Misconduct

1.12.3.1. Taking Allegations Seriously:

Editors are obligated to treat all allegations and suspicions of misconduct seriously. However, editors must acknowledge their limited legal authority and resources to conduct investigations into serious cases.

1.12.3.2. Employer Notification:

The editor must determine the appropriate timing for alerting the employers of the accused author(s).

1.12.3.3. Evidence Requirement:

While some evidence is necessary, editors may refrain from assembling a complete case if employers have procedures in place for investigating accusations. Doing so could be ethically

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unsound, potentially spreading unwarranted doubts about the author(s).

1.12.3.4. Passing on Convincing Evidence:

If editors receive convincing evidence of serious misconduct, particularly from reviewers, they should promptly relay this information to the employers. Authors should also be notified of this action.

1.12.3.5. Seeking Expert Advice:

In instances where accusations lack convincing evidence, editors should seek confidential expert advice.

1.12.3.6. Responding to Expert Findings:

If experts raise serious concerns about the research, editors should notify the employers.

1.12.3.7. Proceeding with Editorial Processes:

If experts find no evidence of misconduct, editorial processes should resume as usual.

1.12.3.8. Referral to General Medical Council:

In instances where convincing evidence of serious misconduct arises, and there's no employer to refer to, especially if the involved authors are registered doctors, cases can be forwarded to the General Medical Council.

1.12.3.9. Publication Consideration:

In the absence of an appropriate investigating organization, if the editor deems the case sufficiently significant, they may opt to publish information in the journal. Legal counsel is crucial in such scenarios.



1.12.3.10. Notice Publication for Inadequate Investigations:

If editors believe an employer's investigation into a serious accusation was insufficient, they may find it warranted to publish a notice in the journal. Seeking legal advice is imperative.

1.12.3.11. Author Response Opportunity:

Authors accused of serious misconduct should be provided with the chance to respond to the allegations.

1.12.4. Less Serious Misconduct

1.12.4.1. Editorial Discretion:

Editors may deem it unnecessary to involve employers in less serious cases of misconduct, such as redundant publication, authorship deception, or failure to disclose conflicts of interest. In some cases, evidence may be self-evident, but it could be prudent to appoint an independent expert for assessment.

1.12.4.2. Consideration of Implications:

Editors should be mindful that even accusations of minor misconduct may carry significant consequences for the author(s). In such instances, it may become necessary to request employers to conduct an investigation.

1.12.4.3. Author Response Opportunity:

Authors accused of minor misconduct should be afforded the opportunity to respond to the charges.

1.12.4.4. Consideration of Sanctions:

If editors are convinced of wrongdoing, they may choose to implement sanctions, which could include some of the measures outlined below.

1.13. Sanctions

Sanctions may be applied individually or in combination. The following are listed in approximate order of severity.

1.13.1. Letter of Explanation and Education:

Issuing a letter to the authors, particularly if there appears to be a genuine misunderstanding of ethical principles, aiming to educate them on proper conduct.

1.13.2. Letter of Reprimand and Warning:

Sending a formal letter to the authors, serving as a reprimand and warning about future behavior.

1.13.3. Formal Communication to Institution or Funding Body:

Sending a formal letter to the relevant head of institution or funding body, highlighting the misconduct and its implications.

1.13.4. Publication of Notice:

Publishing a notice of redundant publication or plagiarism, publicly acknowledging the misconduct.

1.13.5. Editorial Disclosure:

Issuing an editorial detailing the misconduct, providing full details to readers.

1.13.6. Refusal of Future Submissions:

Refusing to accept future submissions from the individual, unit, or institution responsible for the misconduct, for a specified period.

1.13.7. Formal Paper Withdrawal or Retraction:

Formally withdrawing or retracting the paper from the scientific literature, informing other editors and indexing authorities.

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1.13.8. Reporting to Relevant Authority:


Reporting the case to the General Medical Council, or another authority or organization with the ability to investigate and act with due process.

Acknowledgement - This document has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) on good publication practice. We acknowledge COPE for their comprehensive framework, which has guided us in maintaining the highest ethical standards throughout the publication process.

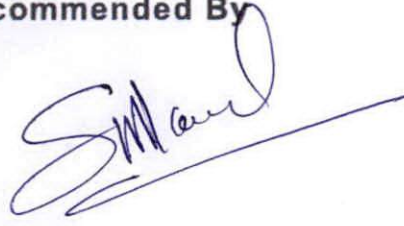
Prepared By


Dr. Prathad J. Tipole
Research Officer
MIT ADT University, Pune

Verified By


Dr. Virendra K. Bhojwani
Director (RDC)
MIT ADT University, Pune

Recommended By


Prof. Dr. Sunita M. Karad
Executive Director-MIT ADT University
Director-ICT MIT ADT University
Advisory Board Member AIMT
Chancellor, Dr. Vishwanath Karad, MIT World
Peace University

Approved By


Dr. Mohit Dubey
Pro Vice Chancellor
Research, Innovation,
Entrepreneurship
& International Relations
MIT ADT University, Pune