Ethical foundations

monitor VERSORGUNGS FORSCHUNG

Ethical foundations for MVF*

Our publishing practices and ethics are grounded in the „Code of Conduct for Journal Editors“ (1), the guidelines established by the German Association of Journal Publishers (VDZ) (2), the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) (3) and the Regulation (EU) No 536/2014 oft hte EU-Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on clinical trials on medicinal products for human use (4).

1. General Duties and Responsibilities of Editors

1.1. Editors bear full responsibility for all content published in their journals. Consequently, editors must:
1.2. Strive to fulfill the needs of both readers and authors;
1.3. Continuously work towards improving their journal;
1.4. Implement procedures that ensure the quality of published material;
1.5. Uphold the principle of freedom of expression;
1.6. Preserve the integrity of academic records;
1.7. Prevent business considerations from undermining intellectual and ethical standards;
1.8. Be ready to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions, and apologies whenever necessary.

Best practices for editors include.

- Proactively seek feedback from authors, readers, reviewers, and the Editorial Advisory Board to enhance journal operations; annual Advisory Board meetings are held for this purpose (**).
- Stay informed about peer review and publication research and continuously reevaluate journal processes.
- Ensure the publisher provides adequate resources and access to expert advice (e.g., designers, lawyers).
- Support initiatives aimed at reducing research and publication misconduct.
- Advocate for educational programs on publication ethics for researchers.
- Assess the impact of journal policies on author and reviewer behavior, and revise policies as needed to promote responsible conduct and deter misconduct.
- Ensure all press releases accurately reflect the published article and provide proper context.

2. relationships with readers

2.1 Readers must be informed about the funding sources for the published research or scholarly work and the extent of funders‘ involvement in the research and its publication. Accordingly, appropriate author statements are included with each peer-reviewed article.

3. Editorial Responsibilities:

- Ensure all published scientific reports undergo review by qualified reviewers, including statistical review when appropriate.
- Clearly identify non-peer-reviewed sections of the journal, as exemplified by the „Science“ page identifier and distinct color coding in MVF, which differentiates editorial content from the scientific section.
- Implement procedures that enhance the accuracy, completeness, and clarity of research reports, utilizing guidelines and checklists such as MIAME or CONSORT.
- Develop a transparency policy that maximizes disclosure of the origins of all articles, including non-research pieces.
- Establish authorship and contribution systems that accurately reflect individuals‘ work and discourage unethical practices like ghostwriting and honorary authorship.-
- Inform readers about the measures taken to ensure objective and unbiased reviews of contributions from journal staff or editorial board members.

4. Reviewer Responsibilities

Reviewers play a crucial role in the peer review process by aiding the editor in making informed editorial decisions and by providing constructive feedback to help authors enhance their work.

References/Links

1: Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). (2011, March 7). Code of conduct and best practice. Guidelines for journal editors: https://t1p.de/uh4z9
2: https://t1p.de/ot70k
3: https://t1p.de/l6uqa / https://t1p.de/g20q7
4: https://t1p.de/smdve
*: https://www.m-vf.de

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Listed in alphabetical order:

Access to data and retention
Authors are encouraged to make their raw study data publicly available alongside their paper, when feasible. If authors are unable to do so, the editor will coordinate with the publisher to facilitate this. Authors should ensure that the data remains accessible to qualified professionals for a minimum of ten years after publication, ideally through an institutional or subject-specific data repository.

Acknowledgement of sources
Reviewers should identify any relevant published work referenced in the paper that is missing from the literature section. They must also ensure that observations or arguments derived from other sources are properly credited. Additionally, reviewers should inform the editor if they notice significant similarities or overlaps between the manuscript under review and other published works with which they are familiar.

Authorship
Authorship is reserved for those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the work. All contributors who meet these criteria will be listed as co-authors. The corresponding author is responsible for ensuring that all qualified co-authors are included and that no unqualified individuals are listed. Additionally, the corresponding author must confirm that all co-authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and consent to its submission.

Authors` Duties
Authors of original research must present a precise account of their work and provide a solid foundation for an objective discussion of the article's main claims. The data should be reported as accurately as possible, with enough detail and references to enable replication of the study. Any fraudulent or deliberately misleading information is considered unethical and unacceptable.

Confidentiality
Manuscripts received for review are treated with strict confidentiality and will not be shared or discussed with third parties without the editor's approval

Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest
Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and may not be used for personal gain. Reviewers may not consider manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest arising from competitive, collaborative or other relationships or affiliations with any of the authors, companies, or institutions associated with the papers.

Fundamental errors in published work
Should an author identify a significant error or inaccuracy in their published work, they must collaborate with the editor to issue a retraction or correction in the form of an erratum.

Multiple, redundant or concurrent publication
Papers presenting the same research should not be published in multiple journals. Submitting identical papers to more than one journal is considered unethical and unacceptable. Manuscripts that have already been published elsewhere as copyrighted material may not be resubmitted.

Originality, Plagiarism and Citation of Sources.
Authors must submit only original work and appropriately cite all sources and contributions from other authors. Key publications that have significantly influenced the submitted work should also be acknowledged.

Research Ethics for Vulnerable Groups
For studies involving vulnerable populations - including individuals with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities, the homeless, former prisoners, individuals with substance abuse issues, isolated elderly people, and children, along with their parents, guardians, and relatives - MVF adheres to established best practices in this field (4).

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Speed
If a reviewer chosen by the editor feels unqualified to assess a manuscript or is unable to conduct a timely review, they must notify the editor within 3 working days and withdraw from the process.

Standards of objectivity
Reviews must be conducted impartially, avoiding personal criticism of the author. Reviewers should present their evaluations clearly, supported by well-reasoned arguments.