

Guidelines On Good Publication Practices

This document has been adapted from the COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) Report 1999. The Editorial Team hope that they will be disseminated widely, endorsed by the editor, and refined by those who use them.

Study design and ethical approval

Good research should be well justified, well planned, appropriately designed, and ethically approved. To conduct research to a lower standard may constitute misconduct

Action

- The research should be driven by protocol; pilot studies should have a written rationale.
- Research protocols should seek to answer specific questions, rather than just collect data.
- Protocols must be carefully agreed by all contributors and collaborators, including, if appropriate, the participants.
- The final protocol should form part of the research record.
- Early agreement on the precise roles of the contributors and collaborators, and on matters of authorship and publication, is advised.
- Statistical issues should be considered early in study design, including calculations, to ensure there are neither too few nor too many participants.
- Formal and documented ethical approval from an appropriately constituted research ethics committee is required for all studies involving people.

Data Analysis

Data should be appropriately analysed, but inappropriate analysis does not necessarily amount to misconduct. Fabrication and falsification of data do constitute misconduct.

Actions

- All sources and methods used to obtain and analyse data, including any pre-processing, should be fully disclosed; detailed explanations should be provided for any exclusions.
- Methods of analysis must be explained in detail, and referenced.
- The discussion section of a paper should mention any issues of bias which have been considered, and explain how they have been dealt with in the design and interpretation of the study.

Authorship

There is no universally agreed definition of authorship, although attempts have been made. As a minimum, authors should take responsibility for a particular section of the study.

Actions

- The award of authorship should balance intellectual contributions to the conception, design, analysis and writing of the study against the collection of data and other routine work. If there is no task that can reasonably be attributed to a particular individual, then that individual should not be credited with authorship.
- To avoid disputes over attribution of academic credit, it is helpful to decide early on in the planning of a research project who will be credited as authors, as contributors, and who will be acknowledged.
- All authors must take public responsibility for the content of their paper. The multidisciplinary nature of much research can make this difficult, but this can be resolved by the disclosure of individual contributions.

Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest comprise those which may not be fully apparent and which may influence the judgment of author, reviewers, and editors. They have been described as those which, when revealed later, would make a reasonable reader feel misled or deceived. They may be personal, commercial, political, academic or financial. "Financial" interests may include employment, research funding, stock or share ownership, payment for lectures or travel, consultancies and company support for staff.

Action

- Such interests, where relevant, must be declared to editors by researchers, authors, and reviewers.
- Editors should also disclose relevant conflicts of interest to their readers. If in doubt, disclose. Sometimes editors may need to withdraw from the review and selection process for the relevant submission.

Peer Review

Peer reviewers are external experts chosen by editors to provide written opinions, with the aim of improving the study. Working methods vary from journal to journal, but some use open procedures in which the name of the reviewer is disclosed, together with the full or "edited" report.

Actions

- Suggestions from authors as to who might act as reviewers are often useful, but there should be no obligation on editors to use those suggested.
- The duty of confidentiality in the assessment of a manuscript must be maintained by expert reviewers, and this extends to reviewers' colleagues who may be asked (with the editor's permission) to give opinions on specific sections.
- The submitted manuscript should not be retained or copied.

- Reviewers and editors should not make any use of the data, arguments, or interpretations, unless they have the authors' permission.
- Reviewers should provide speedy, accurate, courteous, unbiased and justifiable reports.
- If reviewers suspect misconduct, they should write in confidence to the editor.
- Journals should publish accurate descriptions of their peer review, selection.
- Journals should also provide regular audits of their acceptance rates and publication times.

Redundant Publication

Redundant publication occurs when two or more papers, without full cross reference, share the same hypothesis, data, discussion points, or conclusions.

Actions

- Published studies do not need to be repeated unless further confirmation is required.
- 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.
- 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.
- At the time of submission, authors should disclose details of related papers, even if in a different language, and similar papers in press.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism ranges from the unreferenced use of others' published and unpublished ideas, including research grant applications to submission under "new" authorship of a complete paper, sometimes in a different language. It may occur at

any stage of planning, research, writing, or publication: it applies to print and electronic versions.

Actions

- All sources should be disclosed, and if large amounts of other people's written or illustrative material is to be used, permission must be sought.

Duties of Editor

Editors are the stewards of journals. They usually take over their journal from the previous editor(s) and always want to hand over the journal in good shape. Most editors provide direction for the journal and build a strong management team. They must consider and balance the interests of many constituents, including readers, authors, staff, owners, editorial board members, advertisers and the media.

Actions

- Editors' decisions to accept or reject a paper for publication should be based only on the paper's importance, originality, and clarity, and the study's relevance to the remit of the journal.
- Studies that challenge previous work published in the journal should be given an especially sympathetic hearing.
- Studies reporting negative results should not be excluded.
- All original studies should be peer reviewed before publication, taking into full account possible bias due to related or conflicting interests.
- Editors must treat all submitted papers as confidential.
- When a published paper is subsequently found to contain major flaws, editors must accept responsibility for correcting the record prominently and promptly.

Editorial Team ObIES Journal