

Publication Malpractice and Ethics Statement

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The *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine (WestJEM)* and *Clinical Practice and Cases in Emergency Medicine (CPC-EM)* and its publisher, the University of California, Irvine, Department of Emergency Medicine follow the COPE [*Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors*](#) and the [*Code of Conduct for Journal Publishers*](#).

In addition, these journals follow the International Committee of Medical Journal Editor's (ICMJE) [*Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals*](#). It is expected of authors, reviewers and editors that they follow the best-practice guidelines on ethical behavior contained therein.

A selection of key points is included below, but please refer to the three documents listed above for full details.

Duties of Editors

Fair play and editorial independence

Editors evaluate submitted manuscripts exclusively on the basis of their academic merit (importance, originality, study validity, clarity) and its relevance to the journal's scope and niche, without regard to the authors' race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, citizenship, religious belief, political philosophy or institutional affiliation. Decisions to edit and publish are not determined by the policies of governments or any other agencies outside of the journal itself. The Editor-in-Chief has full authority over the entire editorial content of the journal and the timing of publication of that content.

Confidentiality

Editors and editorial staff will 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

Editors and editorial board members will not use unpublished information disclosed in a submitted manuscript for their own research purposes without the authors' explicit written permission. Privileged information or ideas as a result of handling the

manuscript will be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage. Editors will recuse themselves from considering manuscripts where they have conflicts of interest from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships with any of the authors, companies or institutions connected to the papers. They will ask another decision editor to handle the manuscript.

Publication decisions

The editors ensure that all submitted manuscripts considered for publication undergo peer-review by at least two reviewers who are expert in the field. The Editor-in-Chief and Senior Decision Editors are responsible for deciding which of the manuscripts submitted to the journal will be published, based on the validation of the work in question, its importance to researchers and readers, the reviewers' comments.

Involvement and cooperation in investigations

Editors (in conjunction with the publisher and/or society) will take responsive measures when ethical concerns are raised with regard to a submitted manuscript or published paper. Every reported act of unethical publishing behavior will be looked into, even if it is discovered years after publication. *WestJEM* and *CPC-EM* editors follow the COPE [Flowcharts](#) when dealing with cases of suspected misconduct. If, on investigation, the ethical concern is well-founded, a correction, retraction, expression of concern or other note, as may be relevant, will be published.

Duties of Reviewers

Contribution to editorial decisions

Peer review assists editors in making editorial decisions and, through editorial communications with authors, may assist authors in improving their manuscripts. Peer review is an essential component of formal scholarly communication and lies at the heart of scientific endeavor. *WestJEM* and *CPC-EM* believes that all scholars who wish to contribute to the scientific process are obligated to do a fair share of reviewing.

Promptness

Any invited referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should immediately notify the editors and decline the invitation to review so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

Confidentiality

Any manuscripts received for review are confidential; they must not be shown to or discussed with others except if authorized by the Editor-in-Chief. This applies also to invited reviewers who decline the review invitation.

Standards of objectivity

Reviews should be conducted objectively and observations formulated clearly with supporting arguments so that authors can use them for improving the manuscript. Personal criticism of the authors is inappropriate.

Acknowledgement of sources

Reviewers should identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that is an observation, derivation or argument that has been reported in previous publications should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also notify the editors of any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other manuscript (published or unpublished).

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

Any invited referee who has conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies or institutions connected to the manuscript and the work described therein should immediately notify the editors to decline the invitation so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

Unpublished material disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in a reviewer's own research without the express written consent of the authors. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for the reviewer's personal advantage. This applies also to invited reviewers who decline the review invitation.

Duties of Authors

Reporting standards

Authors of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed and the results, followed by an objective discussion of the significance of the work. The manuscript should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Review articles should be accurate, objective and comprehensive, while editorial 'opinion' or perspective pieces should be clearly identified as such. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

Data access and retention

Authors may be asked to provide the raw data of their study together with the manuscript for editorial review, and should be prepared to make the data publicly available, if practicable. In any event, authors should ensure accessibility of such data to other competent professionals for at least 10 years after publication (preferably via an institutional or subject-based data repository or other data center), provided that the

confidentiality of the participants can be protected and legal rights concerning proprietary data do not preclude their release.

Originality and plagiarism

Authors should ensure that they have written and submit only entirely original works, and if they have used the work and/or words of others, that this has been appropriately cited. Publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the work reported in the manuscript should also be cited. Plagiarism takes many forms, from "passing off" another's paper as the author's own, to copying or paraphrasing substantial parts of another's paper (without attribution), to claiming results from research conducted by others. Plagiarism in all its forms constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.

Multiple, duplicate, redundant or concurrent submission/publication

Papers describing essentially the same research should not be published in more than one journal or primary publication. Hence, authors should not submit for consideration a manuscript that has already been published in another journal. Submission of a manuscript concurrently to more than one journal is unethical publishing behavior and unacceptable.

The publication of some kinds of articles (such as clinical guidelines, translations) in more than one journal is sometimes justifiable, provided that certain conditions are met. The authors and editors of the journals concerned must agree to the secondary publication, which must reflect the same data and interpretation of the primary document. The primary reference must be cited in the secondary publication.

Authorship of the manuscript

Only persons who meet these authorship criteria should be listed as authors in the manuscript as they must be able to take public responsibility for the content: (i) made significant contributions to the conception, design, execution, data acquisition, or analysis/interpretation of the study; and (ii) drafted the manuscript or revised it critically for important intellectual content; and (iii) have seen and approved the final version of the paper and agreed to its submission for publication. All persons who made substantial contributions to the work reported in the manuscript (such as technical help, writing and editing assistance, general support) but who do not meet the criteria for authorship must not be listed as an author, but should be acknowledged in the "Acknowledgements" section after their written permission to be named has been obtained. The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate coauthors and no inappropriate coauthors are included in the author list, and verify that all coauthors have seen and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to its submission.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

Authors should—at the earliest stage possible (generally by submitting a disclosure form at the time of submission and including a statement in the manuscript)—disclose any conflicts of interest that might be construed to influence the results or their interpretation in the manuscript. Examples of potential conflicts of interest that should be disclosed include financial ones such as honoraria, educational grants or other funding, participation in speakers' bureaus, membership, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity interest, and paid expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements, as well as non-financial ones such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs in the subject matter or materials discussed in the manuscript. All sources of financial support for the work should be disclosed (including the grant number or other reference number, if any).

Acknowledgement of sources

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Hazards and human or animal subjects

If the work involves chemicals, procedures or equipment that have any unusual hazards inherent in their use, the authors must clearly identify these in the manuscript. If the work involves the use of animals or human participants, the authors should ensure that all procedures were performed in compliance with relevant laws and institutional guidelines, and that the appropriate institutional committee(s) has approved them; the manuscript should contain a statement to this effect. Authors should also include a statement in the manuscript that informed consent was obtained for experimentation with human participants. The privacy rights of human participants must always be observed.

Peer review

Authors are obliged to participate in the peer review process and cooperate fully by responding promptly to editors' requests for raw data, clarifications, and proof of ethics approval, patient consents and copyright permissions. In the case of a first decision of "revisions necessary", authors should respond to the reviewers' comments systematically, point by point, and in a timely manner, revising and re-submitting their manuscript to the journal by the deadline given.

Fundamental errors in published works

When authors discover significant errors or inaccuracies in their own published work, it is their obligation to promptly notify the journal's editors or publisher and cooperate to either correct the paper in an erratum or retract the paper. If the editors or publisher learns from a third party that a published work contains a significant error, then it is the authors' obligation to promptly correct or retract the paper, or provide evidence to the editors of the correctness of the paper. **Duties of the Publisher**

Handling of unethical publishing behavior

In cases of alleged or proven scientific misconduct, fraudulent publication or plagiarism, the publisher, in close collaboration with the editors, will take all appropriate measures to clarify the situation and to amend the article in question. This includes the prompt publication of an erratum, clarification or, in the most severe case, the retraction of the affected work. The publisher, together with the editors, shall take reasonable steps to identify and prevent the publication of papers where research misconduct has occurred,

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