Publication Malpractice and Ethics Statement

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.

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*Disclosure and conflicts of interest*

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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.

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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**

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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.

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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.
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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.

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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.

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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
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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.

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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.

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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.

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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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