**Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement**

Our publication ethics and publication malpractice statement is mainly based on the *Code of Conduct and Best-Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors* (Committee on Publication Ethics, 2011).

**I. Responsibilities of Editorial Board**

**1.1 Publication decisions**

The editorial board is responsible for deciding which of the papers submitted to the journal will be published. The Editor-in-Chief's decision to accept or reject a paper for publication is based on its importance, originality, clarity, and its relevance to the scope of the journal.

**1.2 Fair Play**

The Editorial Board and the reviewers evaluate manuscripts for their intellectual content without regard to the author’s race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, citizenship, or political ideology.

**1.3 Confidentiality**

The Editorial Board must ensure that all material submitted to the journal remains confidential while under review. The editorial board and the editorial staff must 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.

**1.4 Disclosure and conflicts of interest**

Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted paper will not be used by the editor or the members of the editorial board for their own research purposes without the author's explicit written consent.

**1.5 Journal self citation**

An editor should never conduct any practice that obliges authors to cite his or her journal either as an implied or explicit condition of acceptance for publication. Any recommendation regarding articles to be cited in a paper should be made on the basis of direct relevance to the author’s article, with the objective of improving the final published research. Editors should direct authors to relevant literature as part of the peer review process; however this should never extend to blanket instructions to cite individual journals.

**1.6 Involvement and Cooperation in Investigations**

An editor should take reasonably responsive measures when ethical complaints have been presented concerning a submitted manuscript or published paper, in conjunction with the publisher (or society). Such measures will generally include contacting the author of the manuscript or paper and giving due consideration of the respective complaint or claims made, but may also include further communications to the relevant institutions and research bodies, and if the complaint is upheld, the publication of a correction, retraction, expression of concern, or other note, as may be relevant. Every reported act of unethical publishing behavior must be looked into, even if it is discovered years after publication.

**1.7 Publication decisions**

The Editor-in-Chief of the journal is responsible for deciding which of the submitted articles should be published. The Editor-in-Chief may be guided by the policies of the journal's Editorial Board and constrained by such legal requirements as shall then be in force regarding libel, copyright infringement and plagiarism. The Editor-in-Chief may confer with other editors or reviewers in making this decision.

**II. Responsibilities of Reviewers**

**2.1 Contribution to editorial decisions**

The peer-reviewing process assists the editor and the editorial board in making editorial decisions and may also serve the author in improving the paper.

**2.2 Promptness**

Any selected referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and withdraw from the review process.

**2.3 Confidentiality**

Any manuscripts received for review must be treated as confidential documents. They must not be disclosed to or discussed with others except as authorized by the editor.

**2.4 Standards of objectivity**

Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate. Referees should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.

**2.5 Acknowledgement of sources**

Reviewers should identify cases in which relevant published work referred to in the paper has not been cited in the reference section. They should point out whether observations or arguments derived from other publications are accompanied by the respective source. Reviewers will notify the editor of any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper of which they have personal knowledge.

**2.6 Disclosure and conflict of interest**

Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage. Reviewers should not consider manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions associated with the papers.

**III. Duties of Authors**

**3.1 Reporting standards**

Authors of original research reports should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the paper. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

**3.2 Data access and retention**

Authors could be asked to provide the raw data of their study together with the paper 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 ten 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.

**3.3 Originality, plagiarism**

Authors will submit only entirely original works, and will appropriately cite or quote the work and/or words of others. Publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work should also be cited. Plagiarism takes many forms, from “passing off” another’s paper as the author’s own paper, 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.

**3.4 Multiple, redundant or concurrent publication**

In general, papers describing essentially the same research should not be published in more than one journal. Submitting the same paper to more than one journal constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable. Manuscripts which have been published as copyrighted material elsewhere cannot be submitted. In addition, manuscripts under review by the journal should not be resubmitted to copyrighted publications.

**3.5 Acknowledgement of Sources**

Proper acknowledgment of the work of others must always be given. Authors should cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work. Information obtained privately, as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, must not be used or reported without explicit, written permission from the source. Information obtained in the course of confidential services, such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications, must not be used without the explicit written permission of the author of the work involved in these services.

**3.6 Authorship of the paper**

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors.

The corresponding author ensures that all contributing co-authors and no uninvolved persons are included in the author list. The corresponding author will also verify that all co-authors have approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication.

**3.7 Disclosure and conflicts of interest**

All authors should include a statement disclosing any financial or other substantive conflicts of interest that may be construed to influence the results or interpretation of their manuscript. All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed.

**3.8 Fundamental errors in published works**

When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published work, it is the author’s obligation to promptly notify the journal editor or publisher and to cooperate with the editor to retract or correct the paper in form of an erratum.

**References**

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). (2011, March 7). *Code of Conduct and Best-Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors.* Retrieved from http://publicationethics.org/files/Code\_of\_conduct\_for\_journal\_editors\_Mar11.pdf