Policies on Conflict of Interest, Human and Animal Rights, Informed Consent, and Data Sharing

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when there is a divergence between an individual's private interests and his or her responsibilities to scientific and publishing activities such that a reasonable observer might wonder if the individual's behavior or judgment was motivated by considerations of his or her competing interests (WAME).

- Authors should disclose all financial/relevant interest that may have influenced the development of the manuscript.
- Reviewers should disclose any conflict of interest and, if necessary, decline the review of any manuscript they perceive to have a conflict of interest. Editors should also decline from considering any manuscript that may have conflict of interest. Such manuscripts will be re-assigned to other editors.

Further reading
COPE - Flowcharts on Conflict of Interest
ICMJE - Conflicts of Interest
STM – International Ethical Principles for Scholarly Publication
WAME - Conflict of Interest in Peer-Reviewed Medical Journals

Human and Animal Rights

All research must be carried out within an appropriate ethical framework. If there is suspicion that work has not taken place within an appropriate ethical framework, editors may reject the manuscript and/or contact the author(s)' ethics committee. On rare occasions, if the editor has serious concerns about the ethics of a study, the manuscript may be rejected on ethical grounds, even if approval from an ethics committee has been obtained.

- Research involving human subjects, human material, or human data must have been approved by an appropriate ethics committee.
- The submitted study has to be supported by the ethics/bioethics committee approval.
- Authors reporting the use of a new procedure or tool in a clinical setting, for example as a technical advance or case report, must give a clear justification in the manuscript for why the new procedure or tool was deemed more appropriate than usual clinical practice to meet the patient's clinical need. Such justification is not required if the new procedure is already approved for clinical use at the authors' institution. Authors will be expected to have obtained ethics committee approval and informed patient consent for any experimental use of a novel procedure or tool where a clear clinical advantage based on clinical need was not apparent before treatment.

Informed Consent

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