

RESEARCH & PUBLICATION ETHICS POLICY

PJNS promotes the research integrity and adherence to the core values of research like objectivity, honesty, openness, fairness, accountability, and stewardship. We expect that researchers who want to submit their manuscripts to PJNS believe in the culture of responsible research.

PJNS endorses the core practices of COPE and deal any suspected misconduct as per COPE guidelines. PJNS is also following the policies of WAME regarding research ethics and professionalism and Council of Science Editors.

Research Ethical Committees approval

- It is mandatory for authors to provide the institutional ethical review board/committee approval/exemption for all research articles, at the time of submission of article.
- Authors have to submit the approval of relevant authority or institution where research was conducted, if required.
- When reporting experiments on human subjects, indicate whether the procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional or regional) and with the latest version of Helsinki Declaration. Avoid using patient's names, initials, or hospital numbers, especially in illustrative material.
- When reporting experiments on animals, indicate whether the institution's or a national research council's guide for, or any national law on, the care and use of laboratory animals was followed.

PROTECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS: HUMAN AND ANIMAL RIGHTS POLICY

- PJNS aims to publish ethical and responsible research and expects from its contributors to adhere to international and national guidelines for the safety and protection of the research participants.
- PJNS requires all authors to declare any issues related with human and animal rights that may be inherent in their submissions.
- All articles under consideration that experiment on human subjects and animals in research are required to have *institutional review board approval* in accordance with ethical standards set forth in the ICMJE- Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals.
- On rare occasions, when there is a suspicion that research has not been conducted within an appropriate ethical framework, editorial board of PJNS may reject the manuscript (even if approval from an ethics committee has been obtained) and/or contact the author(s)' ethics committee about the issue concerned.

HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

- PJNS is following ICMJE Recommendations on Protection of Research Participants, and World Medical Association (WMA) Declaration of Helsinki – ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects
- Authors reporting experiments on human subjects should indicate whether the procedures followed were in accordance with the national and international ethical standards on human experimentation and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2008.

- If doubt exists whether the research was conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration, the authors must explain the rationale for their approach and demonstrate that the institutional review body explicitly approved the doubtful aspects of the study.

Informed consent & maintaining the confidentiality of research participants

- Authors of manuscripts presenting research on human subjects should provide a copy of ethical approval certificate along an undertaking that “informed consent to participate” was taken from adult participants and/or from parents/guardians of participants under 16 years of age. This should also be documented in methods section of the manuscript.
- Consent must be obtained for all Case Reports, Clinical Pictures, and Adverse Drug Reactions.
- Authors should avoid identifying patient information, including patients' names, initials, or hospital numbers, in written descriptions, photographs, and pedigrees unless the information is essential for scientific purposes and the patient (or parent/ guardian) gives written, informed consent for publication.
- Consents might be required by the editor on images from participants in the study. Consent form must be made available to Editors on request, and will be treated confidentially.
- Informed consent should be obtained if there is any doubt that anonymity can be maintained, e.g. masking the eye region in photographs of patients is inadequate protection of anonymity.
- Masked Study Participants- If identifying characteristics are altered to protect anonymity, such as in genetic malformations, authors should provide written assurance to the editors that alterations do not distort scientific meaning.
- Authors are advised to follow the CARE guidelines for case reports.

ANIMALS RIGHTS POLICY

- PJNS publishes research conducted on animals and would like its contributors to strictly follow the national and international guidelines for the care and use of laboratory animal in research.
- Authors can take guidance on animal research ethics from WMA statement on animal use in biomedical research, *International Association of Veterinary Editors' Consensus Author Guidelines on Animal Ethics and Welfare* and *Guide for the care and use of laboratory animals*
- In addition to ICMJE recommendations, PJNS also support 3Rs principals (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) for humans and animals usage in research. Briefly 3Rs are mentioned below
Replacement: approaches, which avoid or replace the use of animals
Reduction: approaches, which minimize the number of animals used per experiment
Refinement: approaches which minimize animal suffering and improve welfare
- *Prior to acceptance of a manuscript, to verify compliance with the above policies, the authors must:*
 - Provide ethical review committee approval certificate indicating that the study protocol was in accordance with international, national, and/or institutional guidelines.
 - Declare that the experiments on animals were conducted in accordance with local Ethical Committee laws and regulations as regards care and use of laboratory animals.
 - Sign a letter certifying that legal and ethical requirements have been met with regards to the humane treatment of animals described in the study;

- Indicate in the Methods (experimental procedures) section that appropriate measures were taken to minimize pain or discomfort, and details of animal care should be provided.

INFORMED CONSENT: Authors should submit the undertaking that informed consent was taken from the client if they involved the client-owned animals.

AUTHORSHIP

- All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship. An author is generally considered to be someone who has made substantive intellectual contributions to a published study. To qualify as an author one should meet all the 4 criteria for authorship as recommended by The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.
 - 1) have made substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data [must have contributed for at least ONE of these] AND
 - 2) have been involved in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
 - 3) have given final approval of the version to be published, AND
 - 4) agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.
- Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content. Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of the research group, alone, does not justify authorship.
- Authors are advised to consult COPE guidelines to avoid and handle disputes regarding authorship

PLAGIARISM

- All articles submitted to PJNS are screened through **Turnitin software** for similarity index.
- PJNS follows the standard definition and description of plagiarism and we endorse The COPE, ICMJE, & Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan policies regarding plagiarism.
- Intellectual contribution and originality of every article is to be defined by the authors and this is the responsibility of authors to be aware of various forms of plagiarism like plagiarism of ideas, text, paraphrasing, self-plagiarism including redundant/duplicate publication, salami slicing (data fragmentation) and text recycling etc. ignorance regarding plagiarism and its various forms will not be considered as an excuse.
- Any manuscript submitted for publication or a manuscript accepted for publication or even an article that has already been published in the journal is found to be plagiarized, the matter will be dealt with according to COPE guidelines.
- Editorial Board will immediately stop the processing/ publication of the article and will ask for an explanation from the authors. The corresponding author will be required to respond with an explanation within 30 days of receiving the letter from the editor.
- In case an acceptable explanation is provided by the author(s), the PJNS editorial board may recommend appropriate changes after which the review process for the submitted manuscript may commence.

- In case of non-response in the stipulated time or unsatisfactory explanation, the PJNS editorial board will decide regarding the fate of the article and authors including
 - **REJECTION** of the manuscript,
 - **RETRACTION** of already published article (as the case may be)
 - Debarment of the authors(s) from further publication in the PJNS for one year or permanent depending upon the nature of offence.
 - The author will be on watch.
- HEC, PMC, PAME and authors' institute will also be notified for information and possible action.
- The author(s) will have to provide documentary proof of retraction from publication, if such a defense is pleaded.
- Those claiming intellectual/idea or data theft of an article must provide documentary proof in their claim.