

Editorial and Ethical Policies

Editorial and Ethical Policies

This section details the core principles, processes, and guidelines that govern the conduct of the journal's editors, authors, and reviewers, ensuring fairness, integrity, and ethical rigor throughout the publication process.

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Comprehensive Publication Ethics and Integrity Policy

Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)

1.0 Foundational Commitment
The **Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)** is dedicated to upholding the highest standards of publication ethics and academic integrity. We are committed to ensuring that all stages of the publication process—from submission to final publication—are conducted with rigor, fairness, transparency, and accountability. This policy outlines the ethical responsibilities of all parties involved: authors, reviewers, editors, and the journal itself.

2.0 Authorship and Contributor Responsibilities
AJHRS follows the **International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)** criteria for authorship. Each author is required to meet all four of the following criteria:

- **Substantial Contributions:** Made significant contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work.
- **Drafting and Revision:** Participated in drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content.
- **Final Approval:** Provided final approval of the version to be published.
- **Accountability:** Agreed 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.
- **Contributorship Statement:** In addition to listing authors, AJHRS requires a detailed **Contributorship Statement** that specifies the exact role of each contributor (e.g., conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing). Individuals who do not meet all four ICMJE criteria but have made valuable contributions may be acknowledged in this section.
- **Corresponding Author Responsibility:** The corresponding author is the primary point of contact and is responsible for ensuring all co-authors have reviewed, approved, and agreed to be accountable for the final manuscript and its submission.

3.0 Conflicts of Interest (COI) and Transparency
Full transparency is mandatory to maintain trust in the published record.

- **Mandatory Disclosure:** All authors, reviewers, and editors must disclose any financial, personal, professional, or other relationships that could be perceived as influencing their work. This includes, but is not limited to, funding sources, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, patents, and personal relationships.
- **Publication of Disclosures:** A summary of all disclosed conflicts of interest, or a statement declaring their absence, will be published in a dedicated section within every article.
- **Management of Conflicts:** The editorial team will assess disclosed conflicts and take appropriate action, which may include recusal of an editor or reviewer, or requiring a more detailed disclosure from authors.

4.0 Ethical Oversight of Research

AJHRS maintains stringent requirements for the ethical conduct of research involving living organisms.

- **Research Involving Human Participants:** Any study involving human subjects must comply with the principles of the **Declaration of Helsinki**. Authors must explicitly state within their manuscript that formal approval was granted by an appropriate institutional or regional ethics committee (e.g., Institutional Review Board) and that informed consent was obtained from all participants. The name of the ethics committee and reference number must be provided.
- **Research Involving Animal Subjects:** Studies involving animals must report adherence to internationally recognized guidelines for the care and use of laboratory animals (e.g., those from the NIH, OLAW, or Directive 2010/63/EU). Authors must provide details of the institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC) or equivalent body that granted approval, and must describe efforts to minimize animal suffering.

5.0 Editorial and Peer Review Integrity

- **Fairness and Objectivity:** Editorial decisions are based solely on the academic and scientific merit of a manuscript, without regard to the authors' race, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, religious beliefs, or institutional affiliation.
- **Confidentiality:** Editors and reviewers must treat all submitted manuscripts as confidential documents. They must not use unpublished information for their own research or disclose any details of the manuscript to others.
- **Vigilance against Misconduct:** The editorial team has a duty to investigate suspected incidents of ethical misconduct, such as plagiarism, data fabrication, or image manipulation, in accordance with **COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics)** guidelines.

6.0 Addressing Ethical Misconduct

Allegations of ethical misconduct will be investigated promptly and confidentially. If misconduct is confirmed, AJHRS will take appropriate action, which may include:

- Rejection of the manuscript.
- Retraction of a published article.
- Publication of an expression of concern.
- A ban on future submissions from the involved authors.
- Notification of the authors' institution(s).

This comprehensive policy ensures that AJHRS fulfills its duty to maintain the integrity of the scientific record and to promote trust in the research we publish.

Policy on Informed Consent, Participant Privacy, and Confidentiality

Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)

1.0 Fundamental Principle
The **Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)** places the highest priority on the rights, welfare, and privacy of human research participants. Research involving human subjects must be conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the **Declaration of Helsinki**. This policy mandates that authors obtain and document appropriate informed consent, ensuring that participation is voluntary and that participants' privacy is rigorously protected.

2.0 Requirement for Informed Consent

- **Mandatory Consent:** For all research involving human participants (including surveys, interviews, interventional studies, and case reports), authors must obtain written informed consent from each participant or their legally authorized representative prior to their involvement in the study.
- **Scope of Consent:** The consent process must explicitly cover:
 1. **Participation in the Research:** Explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty.
 2. **Publication of Identifiable Information:** Specific, separate consent must be obtained for the publication of any personally identifiable information in a open-access journal. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Photographs
 - Videos
 - Audio recordings
 - Detailed case descriptions
 - Genetic information
- **Language:** The consent form and process must be conducted in a language and manner understandable to the participant.

3.0 Documentation and Verification

- **Author Attestation:** Upon manuscript submission, the corresponding author must attest—via a mandatory checklist and cover letter statement—that informed consent has been obtained from all participants and that this consent explicitly includes permission for publication in an open-access format.
- **Document Retention:** Authors must retain the original, signed informed consent forms for a period consistent with their institutional and national regulations. AJHRS reserves the right to request copies of these documents or evidence of ethical approval at any stage of the review process.

4.0 Privacy and Confidentiality Protections

Protecting participant confidentiality is a non-negotiable ethical obligation.

- **De-identification:** Authors must take all necessary steps to ensure that information within the manuscript cannot be used to identify any individual participant, unless explicit consent for identification has been obtained. This involves removing names, initials, specific dates, geographic identifiers, and other potentially identifying details.
- **Compliance with Regulations:** All research must comply with applicable international, national, and local data protection laws and regulations (e.g., GDPR, HIPAA).
- **Special Considerations:** Extra precautions must be taken for vulnerable populations (e.g., minors, prisoners, individuals with cognitive impairments) and sensitive research topics.

5.0 Implementation and Editorial Oversight

- **Submission Requirement:** As part of the submission process, authors must provide:
 - The name of the ethics committee that approved the study.
 - The reference number of the ethical approval.
 - A direct statement within the manuscript's 'Methods' section confirming that informed consent was obtained.
- **Editorial Verification:** The AJHRS editorial team will verify compliance with this policy during the peer-review process. Failure to provide adequate documentation will result in the manuscript being rejected or review being delayed.
- **Publication Statement:** All published articles that involved human participants will include a statement in the article text confirming that informed consent was obtained and that the study was performed in accordance with ethical standards.

6.0 Exceptions

Exceptions to the requirement for consent for publication (e.g., in the case of retrospective studies where the participant is deceased or cannot be traced) may be granted only after rigorous editorial review. In such cases, authors must demonstrate that every effort has been made to protect anonymity and that the ethical oversight board explicitly approved the waiver of consent.

This stringent policy ensures that AJHRS fulfills its ethical duty to protect research participants and upholds the trust placed in us by the scientific community and the public.

Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Originality

Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)

1.0 Policy Statement and Principles
The **Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)** upholds the highest standards of academic integrity and originality. Plagiarism, in any form, constitutes a serious breach of publishing ethics and is strictly prohibited. AJHRS defines plagiarism as the unauthorized or unacknowledged use of another person's ideas, text, data, or other creative work, presenting it as one's own. This policy applies to all submitted manuscripts and published works.

2.0 Forms of Plagiarism
AJHRS recognizes and will take action against the following forms of plagiarism:

- **Verbatim Plagiarism:** The direct copying of text from another source without quotation marks and proper citation.
- **Paraphrasing Plagiarism:** The reproduction of another's ideas using different words without appropriate attribution.
- **Idea Plagiarism:** The unauthorized use of a novel hypothesis, theory, research methodology, or conclusion without credit.
- **Self-Plagiarism (Text Recycling):** The reuse of significant portions of one's own previously published work without transparent disclosure and citation of the original source. This includes publishing the same manuscript in multiple journals.
- **Data Plagiarism (Misappropriation):** The use of another author's data, research findings, or visual representations (e.g., figures, tables) without permission and acknowledgment.

3.0 Screening and Detection

- **Screening Software:** All submitted manuscripts are screened using **iThenticate** or similar plagiarism detection software to identify potential overlaps with published literature.
- **Similarity Index Threshold:** While no single similarity score is definitive, AJHRS employs a **15% overall similarity index** as a general benchmark for initial assessment. Manuscripts exceeding this threshold will undergo rigorous manual scrutiny to determine the nature and context of the matched text.
- **Editorial Review:** The editorial team conducts a detailed analysis of the similarity report, focusing on:
 - The extent of copying from a single source.
 - Whether matched text is properly quoted and cited.
 - Whether the matched text consists of generic, common scientific phrases or constitutes original intellectual property.
 - Evidence of self-plagiarism and whether it is appropriately cited.

4.0 Actions and Consequences for Plagiarism
If plagiarism is detected at any stage—before or after publication—AJHRS will take decisive action based on the severity of the misconduct:

- **Pre-Publication:** Manuscripts found to contain plagiarism will be immediately rejected. The corresponding author and their institution may be notified.
- **Post-Publication:** Published articles found to contain plagiarism will be retracted immediately. A formal retraction notice stating the reason will be published and linked to the original article in all online databases.
- **Sanctions:** Authors found to have committed plagiarism will be prohibited from submitting new manuscripts to AJHRS for a period of **three (3) to five (5) years**, depending on the severity of the offense. In cases of egregious or repeated violations, a permanent ban may be instituted. The authors' institutions and/or funding bodies may be informed of the misconduct.

5.0 Author Guidelines for Maintaining Originality
To avoid plagiarism, authors are required to:

- Ensure all verbatim text from other sources is placed in quotation marks and immediately cited.
- Paraphrase others' ideas thoroughly, ensuring the new text is fundamentally different in structure and wording, and always provide a citation.

- Clearly cite their own previously published work when building upon it. Extensive reuse of one's own text may require permission from the copyright holder of the original publication.
- Obtain permission and provide attribution for the reuse of figures, tables, or data from other sources.

This zero-tolerance policy is essential to protect the integrity of the scholarly record, ensure fair credit for original work, and maintain the trust of the academic community and the public.

Advertising and Sponsorship Policy

Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)

1.0 Policy Purpose and Scope
The **Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)** maintains a strict policy regarding advertising and sponsored content to ensure the integrity, independence, and academic focus of the journal are never compromised. This policy governs the acceptance, display, and management of all advertisements and sponsored materials on the AJHRS website, in email communications, or in any other journal-related media.

2.0 Guiding Principles

- **Independence and Integrity:** The publication of advertisements must not influence editorial decisions, content, or peer review in any way. A strict separation between advertising and editorial content will always be maintained.
- **Relevance:** Advertisements must be relevant to the fields of health sciences, rehabilitation medicine, academic publishing, and the professional interests of our readership (researchers, clinicians, educators, and students).
- **Accuracy and Decency:** All advertising content must be factually accurate, evidence-based where applicable, and in good taste. Advertisements must not contain false, misleading, or exaggerated claims.
- **Transparency:** Advertising content must be clearly distinguishable from editorial and scholarly content. All advertisements will be explicitly labeled as "Advertisement" or "Sponsored Content."

3.0 Eligibility and Content Restrictions
AJHRS reserves the right to accept or reject any advertisement at its sole discretion. The following content is **strictly prohibited**:

- Advertisements for products or services that are illegal in the country of publication or that violate applicable laws and regulations.
- Content that is discriminatory, defamatory, offensive, or infringes upon individual privacy.
- Promotional materials for tobacco products, weapons, or gambling services.
- Advertisements that make unsubstantiated health claims or promote products that are deemed harmful to public health.
- Advertisements that directly attack a competitor's products or services.
- Advertisements that mimic the look and feel of AJHRS editorial content in a way that may deceive readers.

4.0 Review and Approval Process

- **Mandatory Pre-approval:** All potential advertisements are subject to prior review and explicit written approval by the AJHRS Management Team.
- **Review Criteria:** Approval will be based on adherence to this policy, relevance to the audience, and the overall quality and accuracy of the content.
- **Right to Refuse or Remove:** AJHRS reserves the unequivocal right to refuse any advertisement or to cancel any advertising agreement at any time if it is deemed to be in conflict with the journal's ethical standards, academic mission, or this policy. No reasons for refusal or cancellation need be provided.

5.0 Placement and Design

- **Clear Distinction:** Advertisements will be displayed in designated areas of the website and will not be integrated within or adjacent to article text in a manner that suggests endorsement by the journal, authors, or editors.
- **No Endorsement Implied:** The acceptance of an advertisement does not imply endorsement by AJHRS, its editors, editorial board, or publisher. A disclaimer to this effect will be displayed in the journal's advertising section.

6.0	Policy	on	Sponsored	Content
Sponsored articles, supplements, or webinars may be considered but are subject to an even more rigorous approval process. They must:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergo the same peer-review process as all other scholarly content if presenting original research. Be clearly labeled as "Sponsored" or "Supported by" in the title and throughout the content. Maintain high scientific and ethical standards, consistent with the journal's regular content. 				

7.0	Policy	Review
This advertising policy is subject to periodic review by the AJHRS editorial management board to ensure it continues to meet the evolving standards of academic publishing and the needs of our community.		

This policy ensures that advertising serves as a resource for our readers without undermining the academic credibility and mission of the Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.

Policy on Appeals, Complaints, and Dispute Resolution

Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)

1.0	Policy	Purpose	and	Guiding	Principles
The Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS) is committed to fairness, transparency, and accountability in all its operations. This policy establishes a formal, structured, and impartial process for addressing appeals against editorial decisions and for handling complaints regarding any aspect of the journal's procedures, the conduct of staff, or the actions of authors and reviewers. All matters will be treated with confidentiality, seriousness, and respect for all parties involved.					

2.0	Scope
This policy covers two distinct but related processes:	

- Appeals:** Requests for reconsideration of a formal editorial decision (e.g., rejection of a manuscript).
- Complaints:** Allegations of misconduct, ethical breaches, or procedural failures by authors, reviewers, editorial board members, or journal staff.

3.0	Appeals	Process:	Editorial	Decisions
An appeal must be based on a substantive academic or procedural grounds, not simply a disagreement with the decision.				

- Grounds for Appeal:** Valid grounds for an appeal may include:
 - A demonstrable error in the scientific evaluation of the manuscript.
 - Evidence that the peer review process was fundamentally flawed or biased.
 - New and significant data that has become available since the original decision and which directly addresses the reviewers' concerns.
- Initiation of Appeal:**
 - The corresponding author must submit a formal appeal to the **Editorial Office** within **30 days** of the decision notification.
 - The appeal must be a detailed letter outlining the specific grounds for the appeal, with a point-by-point response to the reviewers' and/or editor's comments. It must be objective and professional in tone.
- Appeal Review:**
 - The Editor-in-Chief will constitute an **Appeals Committee**, typically consisting of at least two senior editors not involved in the original decision.
 - This committee will review the manuscript, the original peer review reports, the editor's decision, and the author's appeal letter.
 - The committee may seek additional expert opinion if deemed necessary.
- Outcome:** The decision of the Appeals Committee is final. Outcomes may include:
 - Upholding the original decision.

- Overturning the decision and initiating a new round of peer review.
- Overturning the decision and proceeding directly to a final editorial decision.
- The appellant will be notified of the committee's decision and the rationale behind it within a reasonable timeframe.

4.0 Complaints Process: Misconduct and Procedural Issues
Complaints may concern any perceived ethical breach or failure in process, such as plagiarism, data fabrication, biased peer review, or unprofessional conduct.

- **Submission of a Complaint:**
 - Complaints should be submitted in writing to the **Editor-in-Chief** via the journal's official email, providing a detailed description of the issue and any supporting evidence.
 - Complaints must be made in good faith.
- **Investigation:**
 - The Editor-in-Chief will form a **Complaints Committee** of impartial experts (which may include external members to ensure objectivity).
 - The committee will conduct a confidential investigation, which may involve contacting the parties concerned for their responses.
 - The investigation will be guided by the principles of natural justice, allowing all parties an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
- **Resolution:**
 - Based on the findings, the Complaints Committee will recommend a resolution to the Editor-in-Chief.
 - Resolutions may range from a formal apology, a correction or retraction of a published article, to the banning of an individual from future participation in the journal.
 - The complainant and the subject of the complaint will be informed of the outcome, though the full details may remain confidential to protect all parties.

5.0 General Provisions

- **Timeliness:** All appeals and complaints will be addressed in a timely manner. The journal will acknowledge receipt within 5 business days and aim to provide a substantive response within 4-8 weeks.
- **Confidentiality:** All proceedings related to an appeal or complaint will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- **Good Faith:** Frivolous, vexatious, or malicious appeals or complaints made in bad faith are taken seriously and may themselves result in sanctions.

This robust policy ensures that AJHRS operates with integrity and provides a clear mechanism for the community to hold the journal accountable, thereby upholding trust in our scholarly practices.

Policy on Authorship Criteria and Contributor Responsibilities

Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)

1.0 Preamble: Upholding Academic Integrity
The Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS) is committed to ensuring that authorship credit accurately reflects substantial intellectual contribution and scholarly responsibility. Adherence to clear, internationally recognized authorship criteria is essential to maintain transparency, accountability, and trust in the published research. This policy is designed to prevent both honorary and ghost authorship.

2.0 Authorship Eligibility: ICMJE Criteria
AJHRS strictly adheres to the **International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)** Recommendations for defining authorship. Each individual listed as an author must fulfill all four of the following criteria:

1. **Substantial Contribution to Conception and Design, Data Acquisition, or Data Analysis and Interpretation:** The individual must have made a significant intellectual contribution to the foundational ideas, structure of the study, or the gathering and meaningful interpretation of the data.
2. **Drafting the Article or Revising It Critically for Important Intellectual Content:** The individual must have participated in writing the manuscript or provided critical revisions that significantly improved its intellectual quality and clarity.

3. **Final Approval of the Version to Be Published:** The individual must review and provide explicit approval of the final manuscript that is submitted for publication and any subsequent revisions.
4. **Agreement to Be Accountable for All Aspects of the Work:** The individual must be prepared to take public responsibility for the entire work, ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

3.0 Corresponding Author Responsibilities

The corresponding author undertakes a role of significant responsibility and acts on behalf of all co-authors. Their duties include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring that all co-authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to its submission to AJHRS.
- Managing all communication with the journal throughout the submission, peer-review, and publication process.
- Confirming that all authors meet the full ICMJE authorship criteria outlined in this policy.
- Informing all co-authors of the status of the manuscript and sharing reviewer comments and editorial decisions with them.
- Serving as the primary point of contact for any post-publication inquiries, including those related to the integrity and ethics of the work.

4.0 Non-Author Contributors: The Acknowledgments Section

Individuals or groups who have contributed to the work but do not meet all four ICMJE criteria for authorship must be listed in the **Acknowledgments** section with a description of their specific contribution. Examples include:

- Technical assistance (e.g., data collection, laboratory analysis).
- Administrative support that facilitated the research.
- Financial or material support (formally acknowledged in the Funding section).
- Writing or editorial assistance that does not rise to the level of a critical intellectual revision.

5.0 Authorship Order and Changes

- **Determining Order:** The order of authorship should be a collective decision that accurately reflects the relative substantive contributions of the individuals involved, with the earlier listings typically indicating greater contribution. All authors must agree upon the order before submission.
- **Changes in Authorship:** Any addition, deletion, or change in the order of authors after the initial submission must be requested in writing from the corresponding author to the Editor-in-Chief. The request must include:
 - A clear reason for the change.
 - Written confirmation (e.g., via email) from *all* original authors and any new author agreeing to the change.
 - The journal will not consider changes to authorship after acceptance of a manuscript except in extraordinary circumstances, and such changes are subject to editorial approval.

6.0 Enforcement

Misrepresentation of authorship (e.g., gift/honorary authorship, ghost authorship) constitutes a serious breach of publishing ethics. Allegations will be investigated in accordance with COPE guidelines and may result in sanctions, including rejection of the manuscript, retraction of a published article, and a ban on future submissions from the involved authors.

This rigorous policy ensures that credit for scholarly work is assigned fairly and that all authors are properly accountable for the content and integrity of the research published in AJHRS.

Double-Blind Peer Review and Editorial Process Policy

Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)

1.0 Commitment to Rigorous and Impartial Review

The Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS) employs a double-blind peer review system to ensure that all manuscripts are evaluated based solely on their intellectual and scholarly merit, free from bias related to the authors' or reviewers' identity, institution, or nationality. This process is designed to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity, provide constructive feedback to authors, and facilitate the publication of robust and reliable research.

2.0 Stages of the Editorial and Peer Review Process

- **Step 1: Initial Administrative Check & Screening**
 - Upon submission, the editorial office performs a technical screening to ensure the manuscript meets the journal's formatting guidelines, includes all required sections (e.g., disclosure statements, data availability statement), and falls within the journal's scope.
 - The manuscript is screened using plagiarism detection software (e.g., iThenticate). Manuscripts failing this check are returned to the author or rejected.
- **Step 2: Initial Editorial Evaluation**
 - The Editor-in-Chief or an assigned Associate Editor assesses the manuscript for its overall originality, methodological soundness, significance to the field, and clarity.
 - Manuscripts that do not meet the journal's priority standards or quality threshold may be rejected at this stage without full peer review ("desk rejection"), with a brief explanation provided to the author.
- **Step 3: Double-Blind Peer Review**
 - Manuscripts passing initial evaluation are assigned to at least two independent expert reviewers.
 - The journal's management system ensures all identifying author information (names, affiliations, acknowledgements) is removed from the manuscript file before it is sent to reviewers.
 - Reviewers are also anonymized; their identities are not disclosed to the authors or to other reviewers.
- **Step 4: Reviewer Recommendations and Editorial Decision**
 - Reviewers evaluate the manuscript based on pre-defined criteria, including originality, validity, significance, clarity, and ethical compliance. They provide a detailed, constructive report and a recommendation (Accept, Minor Revisions, Major Revisions, Reject).
 - The handling editor synthesizes the reviewers' comments, considers their own assessment, and makes one of the following decisions:
 - **Accept:** Rare at this stage; usually requires only minor typographical corrections.
 - **Minor Revisions:** Requires slight modifications to address specific, straightforward reviewer concerns.
 - **Major Revisions:** Requires substantial changes or additional analysis. A revised manuscript will be re-reviewed, often by the original reviewers.
 - **Reject:** The manuscript has fundamental flaws and is not suitable for publication in AJHRS.
- **Step 5: Author Revisions**
 - Authors are given a specified timeframe to revise their manuscript according to the reviewers' and editor's comments.
 - The resubmission must include a detailed "Response to Reviewers" document that addresses each comment point-by-point.
- **Step 6: Final Acceptance and Production**
 - Once the handling editor is satisfied that all concerns have been adequately addressed, a final acceptance decision is made.
 - The accepted manuscript is then forwarded to the production team for copyediting, typesetting, and proofing before publication.

3.0

AJHRS is committed to a efficient review process. While the complexity of each manuscript varies, our goal is to provide an initial decision **within 4-6 weeks** of submission. The cooperation of authors in submitting revisions promptly is essential to maintaining this timeline.

Timeliness

4.0 Confidentiality and Ethical Obligations

- **Reviewers** must treat the manuscript as a confidential document. They must not use knowledge of the work before its publication for their own advantage or disclose any details to others.
- **Editors** and **** editorial staff**** must also maintain confidentiality and must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, and potential reviewers.

This meticulous and transparent process ensures that every publication in AJHRS has undergone rigorous scrutiny, thereby safeguarding the quality and credibility of the scientific record in health and rehabilitation sciences.

Policy on Manuscript Withdrawal

Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)

1.0	Policy	Objective
The Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS) recognizes that authors may have legitimate reasons for withdrawing a submitted manuscript. This policy establishes clear and ethical guidelines for the withdrawal process to protect the integrity of the scholarly record, prevent the waste of valuable editorial and peer-review resources, and ensure transparent communication between authors and the journal.		

2.0	Conditions	for	Withdrawal
Authors may request to withdraw their manuscript from consideration at any point in the editorial process prior to its formal acceptance for publication. However, the stage of the process dictates the conditions and implications of withdrawal.			

- **Prior to Peer Review:** Authors are encouraged to carefully review their work before submission. However, if a significant error is discovered or there is a compelling reason for withdrawal at this early stage, the journal will process the request promptly.
- **During Peer Review:** Withdrawal during the peer-review process is strongly discouraged as it represents a significant waste of academic resources and the voluntary time of editors and reviewers. Requests at this stage must be accompanied by a detailed and compelling rationale (e.g., identification of a critical flaw in the study methodology or analysis that cannot be corrected).
- **After Acceptance but Prior to Publication:** Withdrawal after a manuscript has been formally accepted is highly disruptive and is only considered under **extraordinary circumstances** (e.g., proven ethical misconduct, legal concerns, or irreconcilable authorship disputes). Withdrawal at this stage is not permitted for reasons of submitting to another journal.

3.0	Withdrawal	Procedure
To initiate a withdrawal, the corresponding author must:		

1. Submit a formal, written request to the journal's editorial office from the official email account used during submission.
2. Clearly state the manuscript ID, title, and the **detailed reason for the withdrawal request**.
3. Include a signed statement from all co-authors confirming their unanimous agreement to withdraw the manuscript.

4.0	Consequences	of	Unethical	Withdrawal
AJHRS considers the following practices a serious breach of publishing ethics:				

- **Withdrawing a manuscript to submit it to another journal.**
- **Failing to respond to editorial communications in an attempt to force a withdrawal by default.**

In such cases, AJHRS reserves the right to:

- Formally reject the manuscript.
- Impose a moratorium on new submissions from the responsible authors for a period of **twelve (12) to twenty-four (24) months**.
- Notify the editors of the other journal(s) involved and/or the authors' institutional authorities of the unethical behavior.

5.0	Post-Publication	Retractions
This policy covers pre-publication withdrawal. For concerns regarding articles that have already been published online (e.g., discovery of a significant error, ethical issues), please refer to the journal's Correction and Retraction Policy , which governs the formal retraction process.		

This policy ensures that the manuscript withdrawal process is handled with professionalism, respects the contributions of editors and reviewers, and upholds the ethical standards of scholarly publishing.

Privacy and Data Protection Statement

Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)

1.0	Commitment	to	Data	Privacy
The Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS) is deeply committed to protecting the privacy and security of all personal information collected				



from authors, reviewers, editors, and readers. This statement outlines how we collect, use, store, and safeguard personal data in compliance with global data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other applicable privacy laws.

2.0 Scope and Information Collected
This policy applies to all personal data submitted to AJHRS through its website, manuscript submission system, email communications, or any other engagement platform. Personal information may include but is not limited to:

- Names, academic affiliations, and contact details (email addresses, postal addresses).
- Professional credentials, biographical summaries, and research interests.
- Usernames, passwords, and system usage data.
- Payment information (processed securely via third-party payment gateways; AJHRS does not store full financial details).

3.0 Purposes of Data Collection and Use
Personal data is collected and used exclusively for legitimate purposes related to the journal’s operations, including:

- Managing manuscript submission, peer review, and editorial processes.
- Facilitating communication between authors, reviewers, and editors.
- Distributing published content and notifying users of new issues or announcements.
- Processing payments for Article Processing Charges (APCs), where applicable.
- Improving user experience and journal services.

4.0 Data Storage and Security
AJHRS implements appropriate technical and organizational measures to protect personal data against unauthorized access, alteration, disclosure, or destruction.

- Data is stored on secure, encrypted servers with limited access to authorized personnel only.
- Regular security assessments are conducted to maintain data integrity.

5.0 Data Sharing and Disclosure
AJHRS does not sell, trade, or rent personal information to third parties. Data may be disclosed only under the following circumstances:

- To service providers (e.g., payment processors, IT hosting services) bound by strict confidentiality agreements.
- Where required by law, legal process, or to protect the rights, property, or safety of AJHRS, its users, or the public.
- For publication-related purposes (e.g., displaying author names, affiliations, and contact details alongside published articles).

6.0 User Rights and Control
Individuals have the right to:

- Access, correct, or update their personal data.
- Request deletion of their data, subject to legal or contractual obligations.
- Object to or restrict the processing of their data.
- Withdraw consent for specific uses (e.g., marketing communications).
- Request data portability in a structured, machine-readable format.

To exercise these rights, users may contact the editorial office at [insert dedicated email address].

7.0 Data Retention
Personal data is retained only for as long as necessary to fulfill the purposes outlined in this policy, comply with legal obligations, resolve disputes, and enforce agreements. Data associated with published articles is retained indefinitely to maintain the scholarly record.

8.0 Cookies and Tracking
The AJHRS website may use cookies to enhance user experience, analyze site traffic, and personalize content. Users can manage cookie preferences through their browser settings.

9.0 Updates to This Statement
This Privacy Statement may be updated periodically to reflect changes in legal, technical, or operational practices. Updates will be posted on the journal's website with the effective date clearly indicated.

10.0 Contact Information
For questions, concerns, or requests related to this Privacy Statement or data practices, please contact:
[Insert Designated Privacy Officer Role/Editorial Office]
[Email Address]
[Physical Address, if applicable]

This comprehensive Privacy and Data Protection Statement ensures that AJHRS operates with transparency, accountability, and respect for the privacy of all individuals engaged with the journal.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)

1.0 Foundational Commitment
The **Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)** is dedicated to fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across all aspects of our operations. We firmly believe that diverse perspectives—encompassing race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, geographic location, socioeconomic background, religion, and academic rank—are essential for advancing innovative research, promoting equitable healthcare solutions, and enriching scholarly discourse in health and rehabilitation sciences.

2.0 Strategic Objectives
To translate our commitment into meaningful action, AJHRS will:

- **Cultivate Inclusive Representation:**
 - Proactively seek to diversify our editorial board, reviewer pool, and advisor network to reflect a broad range of backgrounds, expertise, and global perspectives.
 - Implement structured term limits and rotation policies for editorial roles to ensure ongoing opportunities for new voices.
- **Equitable Editorial and Peer Review Practices:**
 - Ensure all manuscripts are evaluated based solely on intellectual merit, methodological rigor, and relevance to the journal's scope, free from bias related to authors' identities or affiliations.
 - Provide implicit bias training for editors and reviewers to support fair and objective decision-making.
 - Monitor submission, acceptance, and review patterns to identify and address potential disparities.
- **Amplify Underrepresented Voices and Topics:**
 - Actively encourage submissions from researchers in low- and middle-income countries, early-career scholars, and underrepresented groups.
 - Welcome and prioritize research that addresses health disparities, accessibility, cultural competence, social determinants of health, and equitable rehabilitation practices.
 - Consider dedicating special issues or sections to topics focused on DEI in health and rehabilitation.
- **Accessible and Inclusive Publishing:**
 - Ensure journal digital content complies with accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.1) to accommodate readers with disabilities.
 - Offer fee waivers or discounts to authors facing financial barriers to publication, ensuring economic status does not hinder dissemination of valuable work.
 - Use inclusive and respectful language in all journal communications and published content.

3.0 Actionable Initiatives

- **Structured Data Collection:***
 - Voluntarily collect and analyze anonymized demographic data from authors, reviewers, and editors to measure progress and identify areas for improvement.
- **Community Engagement:**
 - Solicit feedback from the global health and rehabilitation community to inform and refine our DEI strategies.
- **Transparency and Accountability:**
 - Publicly share our DEI goals, initiatives, and progress reports annually on the journal website.

4.0 **Our** **Pledge**
AJHRS recognizes that promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion is an ongoing process that requires continuous reflection, learning, and action. We pledge to regularly review and update our policies and practices to ensure they align with the evolving needs of our community and the highest standards of equitable scholarly publishing.

By embracing these principles, AJHRS aims to contribute to a more just and representative global academic community, ultimately enriching the quality, relevance, and impact of research in health and rehabilitation sciences.

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Preprint Policy

The *Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)* supports the preprint culture for rapid sharing of research. Authors are permitted to submit manuscripts that have been made available as preprints on non-commercial servers. The submission will not be considered prior publication.

- Authors must declare the preprint server and DOI during the submission process.
- Upon acceptance and publication in AJHRS, authors are strongly encouraged to update the preprint record with a link to the final published version of the article.
- Peer review will continue to be conducted on the version submitted to the AJHRS journal system.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

AJHRS requires that authors take full responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of all content submitted in their manuscript. Regarding the use of generative AI tools:

- **AI as an Author:** AI tools and large language models (LLMs) cannot be listed as an author, as they cannot be held accountable for the work.
- **Transparency:** Authors must disclose the use of AI-assisted technologies in the preparation of their manuscript, including which tools were used and for what purpose (e.g., language polishing, grammar checks, idea generation). This declaration should be made in the cover letter and/or methods section, as appropriate.
- **Human Oversight:** Authors are responsible for manually reviewing, editing, and verifying any AI-generated output. The author(s) must ensure the work is original, valid, and does not contain plagiarism, fabricated information, or copyright infringement.

Conflict of Interest (CoI) Policy

AJHRS mandates full transparency regarding potential conflicts of interest for all involved in the publication process: authors, reviewers, and editors.

- **Authors:** All authors must complete a conflict of interest disclosure form upon submission, declaring any financial, personal, professional, or other interests that could be construed as influencing the work. This includes funding sources, affiliations, and financial interests in products mentioned. Declarations will be published alongside the article.
- **Reviewers and Editors:** Reviewers are required to decline to review a manuscript if they have a competing interest. Editors will recuse themselves from handling manuscripts where they have a conflict.
- **Management:** The journal will manage declared conflicts transparently, typically by publishing them. The Editor-in-Chief reserves the right to reject a manuscript based on the severity of an undeclared conflict."

Axis-Journal-Of-Health-And-Rehabilitation-Sciences



Recommendation: For your DOAJ application, I would strongly recommend adding **Preprint Policy** and **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**. They are forward-looking and directly address current topics of discussion in the publishing community. The **Conflict of Interest** policy is also excellent to highlight as a standalone section.