

Ethics Declaration

Ethics and Malpractice Statement: Upholding Integrity in Scholarly Publishing

The **Axis Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (AJHRS)** is dedicated to advancing knowledge with an unwavering commitment to the highest principles of ethical academic and scientific conduct. As a double-blind, peer-reviewed, open-access publication, our credibility and reputation are built upon a foundation of trust, rigor, and transparency. This comprehensive policy document delineates the explicit roles, responsibilities, and ethical obligations expected of every participant involved in our publication process, including authors, editorial board members, peer reviewers, and the journal's management.

1. Fundamental Duties and Responsibilities of Authors

Authors who submit their work to AJHRS are obligated to adhere to the following ethical standards to ensure the integrity and quality of the scholarly record:

- **Originality and Scholarly Attribution:** Manuscripts must represent the authors' own original work and intellectual contribution. Any text, data, ideas, or findings from other works must be appropriately cited and credited using accepted scholarly conventions. Plagiarism in any form—from verbatim copying to paraphrasing without attribution—constitutes unacceptable ethical misconduct.
- **Accuracy and Data Integrity:** Authors must present an accurate account of the research performed and an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data must be represented honestly without fabrication, falsification, or inappropriate data manipulation. The journal may request raw data for editorial review and must be prepared to provide public access to such data where practicable.
- **Exclusive Submission and Prior Publication:** Manuscripts must not be under consideration, accepted for publication, or published elsewhere in any language. Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently is a serious breach of publishing ethics.
- **Authorship Criteria and Contribution:** The list of authors should accurately reflect individuals who have made significant intellectual contributions to the work. All co-authors must approve the final version of the manuscript and agree to its submission for publication.

- **Transparency and Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** Authors are required to disclose any financial, personal, professional, or other relationships that could be perceived as influencing or constituting a conflict of interest regarding their submitted manuscript. This disclosure must be made at the time of initial submission.
 - **Acknowledgement of Sources and Permissions:** Proper acknowledgment of the work of others must always be provided. Authors should also obtain permission to reproduce any copyrighted material (e.g., images, tables, extensive quotations) included in their submission.
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2. Core Responsibilities of the Editorial Board

The editors of AJHRS, including the Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editors, and Editorial Board members, bear the ultimate responsibility for maintaining the journal's ethical standards and are committed to the following:

- **Fair and Objective Editorial Decisions:** Decisions concerning the acceptance or rejection of a manuscript will be based solely on its intellectual and scholarly merit, relevance to the journal's scope, and the validity of its findings, without regard to the authors' race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, citizenship, or institutional affiliation.
 - **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Editors and editorial staff must ensure the confidentiality of all submitted manuscripts. They shall not disclose any information about a submission to anyone other than the corresponding author, potential peer reviewers, and the publisher, as appropriate. Unpublished materials must not be used in an editor's own research without the express written consent of the author.
 - **Vigilance against Misconduct:** Editors have a duty to act if they suspect ethical misconduct in either submitted or published papers. This includes pursuing alleged cases with due diligence, in conjunction with the publisher and/or the authors' institution.
 - **Transparency in Peer Review:** Editors will ensure the integrity of the double-blind peer-review process by safeguarding the anonymity of both authors and reviewers. They are responsible for selecting reviewers with relevant expertise and avoiding those with conflicts of interest.
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3. Essential Obligations of Peer Reviewers

Peer review is a cornerstone of scholarly publishing. Reviewers for AJHRS are expected to contribute to the editorial process by providing the following:

- **Objective, Constructive, and Unbiased Assessment:** Reviews should be conducted objectively, with clear, supporting arguments. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate and unacceptable. Reviewers should express their views clearly with supporting arguments to help authors improve their manuscript.
- **Strict Confidentiality:** Manuscripts received for review are confidential documents and must be treated as such. They must not be shown to or discussed with others except as authorized by the editor. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must not be used for personal advantage.
- **Alertness to Ethical Issues and Conflicts of Interest:** Reviewers should be alert to potential ethical issues in the manuscript, including any substantial similarity or overlap with other published works, and must immediately bring this to the editor's attention. Reviewers must decline to review a manuscript if they perceive a conflict of interest (e.g., competitive, collaborative, or other relationships with any of the authors or institutions connected to the paper).
- **Timeliness and Punctuality:** Reviewers should only agree to review a manuscript if they can provide their feedback within the stipulated timeframe. If an extension is needed or a reviewer cannot complete the task, they should notify the editor immediately.

4. Policy on Addressing Allegations of Misconduct

AJHRS takes all allegations of potential misconduct—including plagiarism, data fabrication, falsification, and inappropriate authorship—with the utmost seriousness.

- **Initial Assessment:** Upon receiving an allegation, the Editor-in-Chief will confidentially initiate an initial assessment to determine the validity and severity of the claim.
- **Formal Investigation:** If warranted, a formal investigation will be launched. This may involve contacting the authors' institution(s) for verification and further inquiry. The individuals accused of misconduct will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations.

- **Outcomes and Corrective Actions:** Based on the findings of the investigation, AJHRS will take appropriate corrective action. This can range from issuing a formal correction or expression of concern for minor infractions to the full retraction of a published article for severe violations. In cases of confirmed misconduct, the authors' institutions will be notified, and the involved individual(s) may be prohibited from submitting future work to AJHRS for a defined period or indefinitely.
- **Commitment to Fairness:** Throughout any investigative process, AJHRS is committed to handling the matter fairly, confidentially, and with respect for all parties involved.

This Ethics and Malpractice Statement is designed to protect the integrity of the scientific record within the fields of health and rehabilitation sciences, promote a collaborative and respectful scholarly environment, and uphold the public's trust in published research. All participants in the AJHRS publishing ecosystem are expected to familiarize themselves with and rigorously adhere to these guidelines.