DE GRUYTER

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Editorial Policies

Open Medicine endorses editorial policies recommended by the World Association of Medical Editors and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

OVERVIEW OF THE EDITORIAL PROCESS

For detailed submission guidelines please refer to the Instructions for Authors or contact the Managing Editor of the journal.

Submission

Each manuscript should be accompanied by a cover letter which should explicitly state that the authors have the authority to publish the work and that the manuscript (or one with substantially the same content, by any of the authors) has not been previously published in any language anywhere and that it is not under simultaneous consideration by another journal. All authors of the manuscript are responsible for its content; they must have agreed to its publication and have given the corresponding author the authority to act on their behalf in all matters pertaining to publication. The corresponding author is responsible for informing the co-authors of the manuscript status throughout the submission, review, and production process.

Authorship

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. Those who do not meet that criteria should be acknowledged (see Instructions for Authors). It is the sole responsibility of contributors to determine the authors of the manuscript submitted to the journal.

Authors must ensure that anyone named in the acknowledgments agrees to being so named. Following the Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals from ICMJE, editors of ***Open Medicine*** are advised to require that the corresponding author obtain written permission to be acknowledged from all acknowledged individuals.

Addition or Removal of Authors

The authors' request for addition or removal of an author should be properly justified. Please note that a change in authorship (order of listing, addition or deletion of a name, or corresponding author designation) after submission of the manuscript will be implemented only after receipt of signed statements of agreement from all parties involved (all listed authors and the author to be removed or added).

Peer Review process

Each manuscript after uploading to Editorial Manager receives an individual identification code that is used in all correspondence regarding the publication process. However a submission may be declined by the Managing Editor without review, if the studies reported are not sufficiently novel or important to merit publication in the journal. Manuscripts deemed unsuitable (insufficient originality or of limited interest to the target audience) are returned to the author(s) without review. The Managing Editor may appoint an Editor, with expertise in the relevant field, who is fully responsible for further handling the manuscript and an ultimate decision about its acceptance/rejection.

Choice of reviewers

The Editor seeks advice from experts in the appropriate field. Research articles and communications are refereed by a minimum of two reviewers, review papers by at least three.

Suggestions from authors

Authors are requested to suggest persons competent to review their manuscript. However, please note that this will be treated only as a suggestion, and the final selection of reviewers is exclusively the Editor's decision. The authors' names are revealed to the referees, but not vice versa.

The reviewers make an objective, impartial evaluation of scientific merits of the manuscript. Reviewers operate under guidelines set forth in the Guidelines for reviewers and are asked to comment on the following aspects of submitted manuscripts:

- novelty and originality of the work;
- broad interest to the community of researchers;
- significance to the field, potential impact of the work, conceptual or methodological advances described;
- study design and clarity;
- substantial evidence supporting claims and conclusions;

- rigorous methodology

If a manuscript is believed to not meet the standards of the journal or is otherwise lacking in scientific rigor or contains major deficiencies, the reviewers will attempt to provide constructive criticism to assist the authors in ultimately improving their work. If a manuscript is believed to be potentially acceptable for publication but needs to be improved, it is invited for reconsideration with the expectation that the authors will fully address the reviewer's suggestions.

Once all reviews have been received and considered by the Editor, a decision letter to the author is drafted. There are several types of decisions possible:

- Accept without revision
- Minor revision
- Major revision
- Reject

Revised manuscript submission

When revision of a manuscript is requested, authors should return the revised version of their manuscript as soon as possible. Prompt action may ensure fast publication, if a paper is finally accepted for publication. If it is the first revision of an article, authors need to return their revised manuscript within 28 days. If it is the second revision authors need to return their revised manuscript within 14 days. If these deadlines are not met, and no specific arrangements for completion have been made with the Editor, the manuscript will be treated as a new one and will receive a new identification code along with a new registration date.

The final decision is made by the Managing Editor, or in case of conflict, by the Editor-in-Chief.

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Authors will receive a pdf file with the edited version of their manuscript for final proofreading. This is the last opportunity to view an article before its publication on the Journal web site. No changes or modifications can be introduced once it is published. Thus authors are requested to check their proof pages carefully against the manuscript within 3 working days and prepare a separate document containing all changes that should be introduced. Authors are sometimes asked to provide additional comments and explanations in response to remarks and queries from the language or technical editors.

Immediate publication

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- retracting the manuscript;
- alerting editors of other journals and publishers;
- bringing the concerns to the authors' sponsoring or funding institution or other appropriate authority for investigation

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Serious errors in a published manuscript and infringements of professional ethical codes will result in an article being retracted. This will occur where the article is clearly defamatory, or infringes others' legal rights, or where the article is, or there is good reason to expect it will be, the subject of a court order, or where the article, if acted upon, might pose a serious health risk. In any of these cases all coauthors will be informed about a retraction. A Retraction Note detailing the reason for retraction will be linked to the original article.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In order to encourage transparency without impeding publication, all authors, referees and editors must declare any association that poses a conflict of interest in connection with the manuscript. There should be no contractual relations or proprietary considerations that would affect the publication of information contained in a submitted manuscript. A competing interest for a scholarly journal is anything that interferes with, or could reasonably be perceived as interfering with, the full and objective presentation, review, or publication of research findings, or of articles that comment on or review research findings. Potential conflicts of interest exist when an author, editor or reviewer has financial, personal or professional interests in a publication that might influence their scientific judgment.

Examples of such conflicts include, but are not limited to:

- Financial conflicts: stock ownership; patents; paid employment or consultancy; board membership; research grants; travel grants and honoraria for speaking or participation at meetings; gifts
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- Professional conflicts: public associations with institutions or corporations whose products or services are related to the subject matter of the article; membership of a government advisory council/committee; relationship with organizations and funding bodies

Authors should declare whether they have any conflicts of interests that could have influenced the reporting of the experimental data or conclusions in their paper. Such a statement should list all potential interests or, if appropriate, should clearly state that there are none.

The editors may decide not to publish papers when we believe the competing interests are such that they may have compromised the work or the analyses or interpretations presented. Upon submission of a manuscript, authors may suggest to exclude any specific editors or reviewers from the peer review of their article. It is the responsibility of authors to disclose in the Acknowledgments section any funding sources for the project or other relationships that are relevant. Authors are suggested to fill in the ICMJE Conflicts of Interest Form and send the electronic version to the Journal Editor.

Editors should consider whether any of the above competing interests are relevant to them and the manuscript under consideration. Editor who believes that the conflict will preclude an impaired judgment should disclose to the Editor the nature of the conflict and decline to handle the paper.

Reviewers should consider whether any of the above applies to them and declare any such competing interests. If they feel they cannot review a paper because of any competing interest, they should tell us. They should also declare any association with the authors of a paper.

ETHICAL POLICIES

For all parties involved in the act of publishing (the author, the journal editor(s), the peer reviewer and the publisher) it is necessary to agree upon standards of expected ethical behavior. The ethics statements for this Journal are based on the Committee on

Publication Ethics (COPE) Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors. Submission of a manuscript to De Gruyter journal implies that all authors have read and agreed to its content and that the manuscript conforms to the journal's policies.

Authorization for the use of human subjects

Manuscripts containing information related to human use should clearly state that the research has complied with all relevant national regulations and institutional policies and has been approved by the authors' institutional review board or equivalent committee. These statements should appear in the Methods section. Copies of the guidelines and policy statements must be available for review by the Managing Editor if necessary. The editors reserve the right to seek additional information or guidance from reviewers on any cases in which concerns arise.

Clinical investigation with human subjects must have been conducted by following the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration. For manuscripts reporting experiments involving human subjects, authors must identify the committee or review board approving the experiments, and a statement indicating approval of the research must be available for review by the Managing Editor if necessary.

Consent

Our human participant policy conforms to the Uniform Requirements of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Patients have a right to privacy that should not be infringed without informed consent. Identifying information (patients' names, hospital unit numbers) should not be published unless the information is essential for scientific purposes and the patient (or parent or guardian) gives written informed consent for publication. Information about the signed form of Informed consent obtained from participants should appear as an appropriate statement in the published article. We encourage authors to submit a sample of a patient consent form, and may require submission on particular occasions.

Authorization for the use of experimental animals

Manuscripts containing information related to animals use should clearly state that the research has complied with all relevant national regulations and institutional policies and has been approved by the authors' institutional review board or equivalent committee. These statements should appear in the Methods section. Copies of the guidelines and policy statements must be available for review by the Managing Editor if necessary. The editors reserve the right to seek additional information or guidance from reviewers on any cases in which concerns arise.

The research using animal subjects should be conducted according to the Principles of Laboratory Animal Care and similar documents (e.g. http://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/olaw.htm). For manuscripts reporting experiments on live vertebrates or higher invertebrates, authors must identify the committee approving the experiments, and must confirm that all experiments were performed in accordance with relevant regulations.

CLINICAL TRIAL REGISTRATION

De Gruyter requires that all clinical trials reported in manuscripts submitted to its journals, should be registered in public trial registry such as WHO International Clinical Trials Registry Platform. Registration must be made at the time or before the first patient enrollment. For more detailed information, see ICMJE FAQs.

The trial registration number should be provided at the end of the Abstract.

DECLARATION OF NEW TAXA

As of January 2012, electronic publication of taxon names is a valid form of publication. Manuscripts containing new taxon names or other nomenclatural acts must follow set by the International Code of Nomenclature. All new taxa reported in articles published in ***Open Medicine*** will be available in PDF format at De Gruyter Online platform and digitally preserved in Portico.

New Zoological Taxa

For a new zoological taxon name, authors guidelines set by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN). For novel fungal taxon name, authors should contact ZooBank about registration of the new species name and request the corresponding unique digital identifier, a Life Science Identifier (LSID). The unique identifier should be provided in the final published article. The final version of the article must cite the relevant LSIDs (or GUIDs), where available.

New Botanical or Fungal Taxa

For a novel plant taxon name, authors must follow guidelines set by the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants. For novel fungal taxon name, authors should contact MycoBank or Index Fungorum about registration of the new species name and request the corresponding Globally Unique Identifier (GUID), currently in the form of a Life Science Identifier (LSID). The unique identifier should be provided in the final published article. The final version of the article must cite the relevant LSIDs (or GUIDs), where available.

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Readers are free to submit comments, questions or criticism about all articles published in the ***Open Medicine*** journal.

De Gruyter reserves the right not to post comments deemed to be discourteous, inaccurate or libelous and the right to remove comments already posted.

Comments may also be declined if they:

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- are lacking cogency
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- apear to be advertising

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Appeals

Authors who want may appeal on the rejection of their manuscript should contact Managing Editor of the journal. Appeals should refer to scientific content of the manuscript and its suitability for publication. The decision made by the Managing Editor is final.

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Authors who want to make complaints should, in first instance, contact Editor of the specific journal. In case, the Managing Editor is not able to resolve the complaint, the Authors should contact us directly.