

Journal of **Pharmacy Practice and Research**

Editorial Policy

This document provides amplification of the ‘Information for Authors’ statement contained in the *Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research*. This is drawn primarily from ‘Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication’.¹ This document was originally developed by the Vancouver Group—which evolved into the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).¹ Since the 1990s, the Journal under its original title, the *Australian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, has been listed as complying with ICMJE's Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts. Other resources include: Committee on Publication Ethics;² Council of Science Editors (Editorial Policy Statements);³ and World Association of Medical Editors.⁴ Further details are available from the web links shown in the references.

The Journal has endorsed the following requirements:

- Editorial Independence
- Conflict of Interest
- Informed Consent
- Ethical Treatment of Human Subjects and Animals

Editorial Independence

The Editor has complete editorial freedom in terms of content and is not under the direction of The Society of Pharmacists of Australia or its Council in such matters. This position is consistent with the definition of ‘editorial independence’ from the World Association of Medical Editors and adopted by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.

Conflict of Interest

The Journal’s ‘Information for Authors’ <www.shpa.org.au/pdf/journal/Information_for_authors.pdf> states that the covering letter should include, among other information, ‘a statement of competing interests; authors must declare financial or other relationships

that might lead to a conflict of interest'. The Journal considers potential 'conflicts of interest' for authors, reviewers and editors:

- authors are asked to provide a statement of competing interests when they submit their manuscript and this statement will be included in the article if published;
- reviewers are asked to identify any potential competing interests when they are invited to review an article;
- Associate Editors are asked to declare any competing interests to the Managing Editor before editing articles;
- if the Managing Editor identifies any personal competing interests the Editor is advised.

The ICMJE states that: 'Conflict of interest exists when an author (or the author's institution), reviewer, or editor has financial or personal relationships that inappropriately influence (bias) his or her actions (such relationships are also known as dual commitments, competing interests, or competing loyalties)'. The complete policy is available from <www.icmje.org/#conflicts>.

The ICMJE divides potential conflicts of interest into three main categories:

1. Individual authors—where the possibilities of conflicts of interest may be:

- financial, personal, political or academic;
- assistance with writing and related funding sources; and
- whether any potential conflicts of interest were disclosed to study participants.

2. Project support—support received and the role of any sponsor:

- commercial firms, private foundations and government or government agencies;
- including role (or lack of) of study sponsor (if any) within the project; and the
- independence of investigator from the sponsor.

3. Editors, journal staff or reviewers—consideration must include:

- editors must have no personal, professional or financial involvement in any issues;
- they may be editing and must not use the work for their own interests;

- editors should provide disclosure statements about potential conflicts of interest related to commitments of journal staff;
- in selecting external peer reviewers, consideration should be given to any potential conflicts; and
- reviewers must disclose (explicitly) any conflicts of interest and must not use the work for their own interests.

Failure to Disclose

In the event that an author of a published article is shown to have not disclosed competing interests relevant to the paper, the Editor will convene a meeting of the Editorial Committee (includes Editor, Managing Editor, Associate Editors) to review the circumstances and, where necessary, seek additional information from the authors. If, in reviewing the information, the Editorial Committee, is able to reasonably conclude that misconduct has occurred, then action appropriate to the situation up to and including the retraction of the article will be undertaken.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The Journal's 'Information for Authors' <www.shpa.org.au/pdf/journal/Information_for_authors.pdf> states that the covering letter 'for studies involving experimental investigations on humans, a statement that the subjects provided informed consent, and the name of the ethics committee that approved the study should be supplied'. The ICMJE divides the subjects of Privacy and Confidentiality into issues surrounding study participants and authors and reviewers. The key issues are outlined below.

Study Participants

Authors of articles that include investigations on human subjects must be able to demonstrate that:

- approval was obtained from the relevant Human Research and Ethics Committee responsible for the welfare of those subjects in the context of that research;
- that informed consent was obtained from each participant; and
- anonymity was maintained throughout the study and publication process to ensure patient privacy.

Authors and Reviewers—Role of Editors

Editors have an important role in ensuring the integrity of the editing and review process in relation to privacy and confidentiality.

- Authors' rights must be protected by maintaining anonymity and the confidential treatment of their work.
- Reviewers must have an understanding of the privileged nature of the communications relating to and including authors' work.
- Reviewers have a right to the confidentiality of their opinions and have the right to approve any comments returned to the author, whether their anonymity is protected or not.

Ethical Treatment of Human Subjects and Animals

Where the study includes experiments with animals or humans, authors must include an appropriate statement outlining compliance with local and national ethical treatment guidelines, e.g. in Australia the National Health and Medical Research Council <www.nhmrc.gov.au> and the Australian Health Ethics Committee. Any quoted guidelines must be consistent with the Declaration of Helsinki (including clarifications 2004) <www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm>.

References

1. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform Requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals: writing and editing for biomedical publication. Updated October 2008. Available from <www.icmje.org/index.html>.
2. Committee on Publication Ethics. Guidelines. London: Committee on Publication Ethics. Available from <www.publicationethics.org.uk/guidelines>.
3. Council of Science Editors. Editorial policy statements. Reston: Council of Science Editors. Available from <www.councilscienceeditors.org/services/draft_approved.cfm>.
4. The World Association of Medical Editors. Resources. Shiraz: The World Association of Medical Editors. Available from <<http://www.wame.org/resources>>.

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