ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PUBLICATION POLICY

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Editors must decline any submitted manuscript in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships/connections with any of the authors, companies or institutions connected to the manuscripts, and they should ask another member of the editorial board to handle the manuscript.

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Any invited reviewer who feels unqualified or uncomfortable to review the submitted manuscript or knows that it is hard to review due to time limitations, should immediately notify the handling editor and withdraw from the reviewing process.

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Authors should present an accurate account of the study with their results, then an objective discussion of the significance of the study should follow. Manuscripts should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Review articles should be accurate, objective and comprehensive, while editorial 'opinion' or perspective pieces should be identified. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behaviour, and such situations are considered unacceptable.

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Papers describing essentially the same research findings should not be published as more than an article or a primary publication. Hence, authors should not submit for consideration a manuscript that has already been published in another journal. Parallel submissions of the same manuscript to more than one journal at the same time is unethical and unacceptable. Unlike duplicate publication, 'salami-slicing' involves breaking up or segmenting a large study into two or more publications. As a general understanding, as long as the 'slices' of a study share the same hypotheses, population, and methods, "slicing" is not an acceptable practice.

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