It was approved by the COPE Council on 7 March 2011.


**Preliminary information**

The COPE Code of Conduct for Journal Editors by COPE is designed to set out the minimum standards that all COPE members are expected to comply with. Complaints about members who do not comply with these will be evaluated and necessary action will be taken. Compliance with The Best Practice Guidelines is optional, these are recommendations developed upon requests from editors to provide guidance on complex ethical issues. The rules that must be followed in this document are written in plain text, and application recommendations are indicated in italics.


**1. General duties and responsibilities of editors**

1.1. The editor is responsible for everything published in the journal.

1.2. should try to meet the needs of readers and writers.

1.3. It should strive to constantly improve its journal.

1.4. should use appropriate processes to ensure the quality of the articles it publishes.

1.5. defend freedom of expression.

1.6. must preserve the integrity of his academic background.

1.7. should not allow business needs to overshadow their intellectual and ethical standards.

1.8. should not hesitate to issue corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when necessary.


*App suggestions for editors:*

*• To seek the opinions of the authors, readers, referees and editorial board members on the development of the journal's processes,*

*• Follow and encourage research on refereeing and publishing, and review the processes of the journal in the light of new information,*

*• Try to persuade their publishers to provide necessary resources and expert advice (eg designers, lawyers, etc.),*

*• Support initiatives considered to reduce inappropriate behavior and abuses in research and publishing,*

*• Support initiatives to educate researchers on publication ethics,*

*• Evaluate the effects of journal policies on authors and referees and revise these policies, if necessary, to encourage responsible behavior and to deter abuses,*

*• Make sure that the press releases published by the journal accurately reflect the message of the relevant article and put it in context,*

## 2. Relationships with readers

2.1. Readers should be informed about who is funding the research and whether the funders have a role in the research and publication process.

*App suggestions for editors:*

*• Ensuring that all published research reports and reviews are reviewed by suitably qualified referees (including statistical review when necessary)*

*• Ensuring that the sections of the journal that are not subject to peer review are clearly indicated,*

*• Adopting processes that will encourage the accurate, complete and clear preparation of research reports,*

*• Using appropriate guidelines and checklists (eg MIAME,1 CONSORT2)*

*• Developing transparency policies to encourage disclosure of non-research articles,*

*• Adopting authorship and contribution systems that ensure that the named people are the real people who do the work, to prevent undesirable practices (such as ghost and guest writers) and to encourage good practice,*

*• To inform the readers about the measures taken to ensure that the articles from the editorial board and other employees of the journal are also evaluated in an objective and unbiased manner,*


## 3. Relations with authors

3.1. The editor's decision to accept or reject a manuscript submitted for publication should be based on the importance, originality, and clarity of the manuscript, the validity of the study, and its suitability for the journal's subject area.

3.2. Editors should not change the acceptance decision for submitted articles unless there is a serious problem with the article.

3.3. New editors should not change the publication decision of the submitted articles in the previous editorial period, unless there is a serious problem.

3.4. A description of the peer review process should be published and editors should be able to explain any deviations from this process.

3.5. Journals should have a clear mechanism to ensure that authors can object to the editor when necessary.

3.6. Editors should prepare a guide that will guide the authors in every subject that may be required, this guide should be updated periodically and should provide a link to this directive.

3.7. Editors should guide the list of contributors in accordance with the principles of authorship and the standards of the relevant field.


*App suggestions for editors:*

*• Regularly review the guidelines for authors and provide links to relevant guidelines (eg ICMJE5, Responsible research publishing: international standards for authors)*

*• Posting relevant conflicts of interest for all contributors and issuing corrections if this information has emerged after publication,*

*• Ensuring that appropriate reviewers (ie, people who can evaluate the article without suspicion of conflict of interest) are selected for submitted articles.*

*• Respect the author's request not to submit his article to a particular person for review, if there is a reasonable explanation and if applicable,*

*• Consulting COPE workflow charts for guidance in cases of suspected fraud and controversial authorship (http://publicationethics.org/flowcharts)*

*• In detail how to apply in cases of suspected abuse (eg.*

*(by providing links to the COPE workflow charts),*

*• To publish the application and acceptance dates of the articles,*


## 4. Relations with referees

4.1. Editors should provide a guide to reviewers as to what is expected of them, including the confidentiality of submitted material. This guide should be updated regularly and should link to this guide.

4.2. Editors should ask reviewers to disclose any potential conflicts of interest before agreeing to review a manuscript.

4.3. Editors should have a system in which the identities of reviewers are protected unless they use an open peer-review process by notifying authors and reviewers.


***App suggestions for editors:***

*• Encouraging referees to comment on ethical issues and potential research and publication abuses that may arise for the article they are reviewing (eg, an unethical publication).*

*research design, insufficient details about patient consent or protection of subjects, inappropriate data use and presentation)*

*• Encouraging referees to comment on the originality of the article they have reviewed and to be vigilant against unnecessary publication or plagiarism,*

*• Strive to provide referees with the tools they may need to review relevant publications (eg links to the bibliography list and bibliographic search facility),*

*• To convey the referee's opinions to the author as they are, unless they contain insulting or offensive expressions,*

*• Appropriately stating the contribution of the referees to the journal,*

*• To encourage academic institutions to accept refereeing as part of academic progress,*

*• To manage the work of the referees and to do what is necessary to ensure that their performance is high,*

*• Preparing a database with the names of the appropriate referees and updating this database according to the referee's performance,*

*• Stop receiving opinions from referees who constantly prepare late, rude, low-quality reports*

 *• To ensure that the referee database represents the academic community related to the subject of the journal and to add new referees as needed,*

*• Using a wide range of sources such as author recommendations, bibliographic databases, not just personal relationships, to identify possible new referees,*

*• Referring to COPE workflow charts when suspected of referee misconduct.*

## 5. Relationships with editorial board members

5.1. Editors provide new board members with guidance on everything expected of them and keep former members informed of new developments and policies.

*App suggestions for editors:*

*• To determine the appropriate qualified editorial board members for unbiased peer-review, which will contribute to the good management and development of the journal, and to determine appropriate policies for evaluating the articles coming from the members of the editorial board.*

*• Regularly review the editorial board composition*

*• Clearly orient the editorial board members on the tasks and duties expected of them. These tasks are:*

*◦ to act as ambassadors for the magazine*

*◦ supporting and promoting the magazine*

*◦ trying to find the best authors and papers (eg by reviewing meeting abstracts) and encouraging them to submit articles actively*

*◦ to examine the articles submitted to the journal*

*◦ accept commissions for writing editorials, reviews, and comments on articles in their area of expertise*

*◦ attend and contribute to editorial board meetings*

*• Consulting the members of the editorial board on a regular basis, for example once a year, to get their opinions on the management of the journal, to report changes in journal policies, and to plan for the future.*

## References

1. MIAME (Minimum information about a microarray experiment): http://www.mged.org/Workgroups/MIAME/
miame.html

2. CONSORT statement (and other reporting guidelines) can be found at: www. equator-network.org

3. BMJ transparency policy: http://resources.bmj.com/bmj/authors/editorial- policies/transparency-policy

4. Marusic A, et al. How the structure of contribution disclosure statements affects validity of authorship: a randomized study in a general medical journal. Curr Med Res Opin 2006;22:1035-44

5. ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to

biomedical journals: http://www.icmje.org/urm_main.html

6. Responsible research publication: international standards for authors (Position statement developed at the 2nd

World Conference on Research Integrity, Singapore, July 2010) In press, 2011)

7. World Association of Medical Editors statement on the relationship between journal editors-in-chief and owners:

http://www.wame.org/resources/policies

8. World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki: http://www.wma.net/e/ethicsunit/helsinki.htm

9. American Educational Research Association ethical standards: http://www.aera.net/AboutAERA/Default.aspx?menu_id=90&id=222

10. American Psychological Association ethical principles: http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx

11. British Educational Research Association ethical guidelines http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/

12. Good Clinical Practice: http://www.emea.europa.eu/pdfs/human/ich/013595en.pdf

13. US Department of Health and Human Services Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals:

http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/labrats/

14. COPE flowcharts: http://publicationethics.org/flowcharts

15. COPE retraction guidelines: http://publicationethics.org/files/u661/Retractions_COPE_gline_final_3_Sept_09 2_.pdf

16. De Angelis C, et al. Clinical trial registration: a statement from the International Committee of Medical Journal

Editors. Lancet 2004;364:911-2

17. PubMed Central: http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/ WWW.PUBLICATIONETHICS.ORG