



MTI - KHYBER MEDICAL COLLEGE (KMC), PESHWAR

Institutional Policy

Editorial policy of Journal of Medical Sciences
(JMS)



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Institutional Policy Editorial policy of Journal of Medical Sciences (JMS)

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Reviewed By:

Approved By:

Chief Editor JMS

Managing Editor JMS

Patron in Chief (Dean KMC), JMS

Date: 16-08-2024

1. PURPOSE

This document highlights JMS's mission, objectives, and editorial policy regarding the publication process by adhering to the guidelines of COPE (Committee in Publication Ethics) and ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journals Editors). Each component of the editorial policy is explained in the next sections.

A) **Mission of JMS**

To publish relevant, scientific, and accessible material to help medical students and health professionals in their practice, teaching and learning, and career development

B) **Objectives of JMS**

- C) To publish clinical, epidemiological, public health, educational, translational, and allied sciences research to enable scientists, clinicians, and researchers to learn about developments and innovations in these disciplines
- D) To publish high-quality descriptive and experimental research, review articles, editorials, letters to the Editors, and case reports to enhance the understanding of the scientific community regarding clinical practice and education
- E) To provide a platform for the scientific community to promote their career development through publishing quality research

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the authors, reviewers, and readers of the JMS inside and outside the institution.

3. PROCESS / POLICY DESCRIPTION

1- **Open access**

JMS is an Open-access scholarly literature source that is free of charge and often carries less restrictive copyright and licensing barriers than traditionally published works, for both the users and the authors. However, it complies with well-established peer review processes and tries to maintain high publishing standards.

2- **Peer review process**

The review process of JMS follows a “triage approach”. Upon submission of a manuscript, either online or physical, the document undergoes a preliminary open (un-blinded) review by the Editorial team. The document is either accepted for further review, sent for revision back to

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the authors, or rejected at that time mentioning the reasons for rejection/declining. Further review of JMS follows a blinded approach, where the article is sent to 2 reviewers, local and international who are already registered on the JMS website. During this process, the confidentiality of the authors and reviewers is ensured. While authors have the right to recommend potential reviewers for the peer review process, all potential reviewers will have their credentials and potential conflicts of interest carefully examined before they are invited for review.

The editorial board has the authority to retract an article if a serious violation of credibility or quality of research is found any time before publication, including after acceptance or after the article is published if concerns arise about the integrity of the work. (See also the section on 'Correction and retraction of articles").

3- Authorship

According to the ICMJE criteria, authorship is based on 4 criteria; (1) conceptualization and designing, (2) AND, data collection, (3) AND, writing and critical review, (4) AND, taking responsibility for the authenticity and integrity of all the research process. All those designated as authors should meet all these 4 criteria. The co-authors should declare their roles and contributions in the research process explicitly. Those who do not meet all 4 criteria should be ACKNOWLEDGED only. If agreement cannot be reached about who qualifies for authorship, the institution(s) where the work was performed, not the journal editor, should be asked to investigate. The journal editor should seek an explanation and signed statement of the agreement if a corresponding author requests the removal, addition, or changes in the sequence of a co-author after manuscript submission and processing mentioning the approval of all listed authors and the author concerned. The corresponding author is the one individual who takes primary responsibility for communication with the journal during the manuscript submission, peer review, and publication process. The corresponding author typically ensures that all the journal's administrative requirements, such as providing details of authorship, ethics committee approval, clinical trial registration documentation, and disclosures of relationships and activities, are properly completed and reported. The maximum number of authors for any manuscript must not exceed 6, except in some cases where the rationale must be provided by the corresponding author that will need the approval of a committee comprising the Chief, Executive, and managing editors.

4- Submission of manuscript

The manuscript should be submitted through the journal's website, which uses the Online Journal System (OJS) along with the Institution's Research and Ethics Board (IREB) certificate and other requirements as mentioned during the submission process. The article should have the following format:

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1: The abstract should be structured with a word count of not more than 250 words. The whole document should be between 2500 and 3500 words (excluding references and appendices) for an original article. The case report and case series should be between 500-1500 words excluding references. A letter to the editor should not be more than 500 words and a review article (including meta-analysis and systematic reviews should be between 3000-5000 words excluding references and other documents. A short communication should be between 1500 to 2500 words excluding references.

2: The fonts should be in Calibri, with a size of 12, and spacing of 1.5, with justified margins in the MS Office format.

3: No article in any form should contain more than 4 figures and more than 5 tables.

4: Copied pictures and tables from other sources will not be entertained unless written approval from the original researcher and publisher is provided and properly captioned with the source.

5- Institutional Research and Ethics Board (IREB) certificate

Under no circumstances, an article will be processed if approval from the relevant ethical board/committee for Ethical approval is not presented at the time of article submission. The Ethical approval certificate **MUST** have been availed before the start of the research and must include the **participants` consent forms** as follows (annexures attached at the end):

- a) Baseline data
- b) Introduction
- c) Purpose of the research
- d) Type of research intervention
- e) Voluntary participation
- f) Information about the trial drug/device/test (if an experimental study)
- g) Procedures and protocols
- h) Description of the process
- i) Side effects and risks
- j) Benefits
- k) Reimbursements
- l) Confidentiality
- m) Sharing the results
- n) Right to refuse or withdraw from the study
- o) Contact person
- p) Undertaking of the participant and the researcher

6- Conflict of interest

The authors, peer reviewers, and editors must declare conflicts of interest about the financial aspects, academic competitions, and relationships during the writing, reviewing, and publishing of the manuscripts. This will ensure transparency in the research conduction, writing, and publication. The authors should clearly state the details of sponsors along with their roles and access to data.

7- Confidentiality

The editorial board in no way should publicize the work of a researcher in any form unless it is published. They should not publicize the comments and critiques given by reviewers. Similarly, the reviewers are bound to keep the confidentiality of the work of researchers during and after the review. The work of researchers and the critique should never be discussed or exemplified in forums. The confidentiality of the researchers should be maintained in every possible way when the documents are sent for review. However, our review process is open (non-blinded) in the first phase, as per policy of the journal. In this case, the policy is displayed on the journal's website for the researchers. Reviewers must not retain the manuscript for their personal use and should destroy paper copies of manuscripts and delete electronic copies after submitting their reviews. If a manuscript is rejected, it should be deleted from the editorial system. If an article is published, the manuscript along with its reviews and other relevant documents should be retained for 3 years and then deleted. The only situation where confidentiality needs to be breached is when a situation of fraud or misconduct is found during the review process or after publication. Still, the authors and sometimes the reviewers, have to be notified.

9- Correspondence

Correspondence for submitting an article in JMS will be through a corresponding author. The duties of a corresponding author have already been presented in a previous section. Correspondence regarding debating an article is given high value and a separate page for letters to the editors has been allocated. Derogatory and demeaning letters are screened and letters that promote debates and critique are encouraged to be published. However, correspondence about the articles published in the last 1 year will be included only.

10- The fee submission process

A processing and publication fee of Rs. 15,000/- (Pakistani) for local authors and \$ 250 (US) for international authors has been approved by the competent authority. The fee should be submitted as bank draft/online payment through the account (IBAN) no: PK56NBPA0388004048685170 (Branch code: 0388 / National Bank of Pakistan, University campus branch, Peshawar, Pakistan) as follows:

- 1) Article processing fee of 5000/- PKR at the time of submission of the article. This amount will be non-refundable.

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- 2) Article publication fee of 10000/- PKR at the time of acceptance of article after external review. This amount will be refundable if the article is rejected for any reason.
- 3) For international authors, the amount of 250 US dollars will be accepted after both internal and external review. Researchers belonging to countries other than Pakistan are advised to submit the fee after the whole process of review is completed and the article is accepted for publication.
- 4) There will be no fee exemption in any circumstances, including members of the editorial board.

11- Roles of the editorial board, editors, and members

The editorial board of JMS is following the Higher Education Commission (HEC) policy for research journals. The roles of the editorial board for JMS are mentioned below:

1: The roles of the Editorial Board are:

- i: To offer expertise in their specialist area
- ii: To review submitted manuscripts
- iii: To advise on journal policy and scope
- iv: To work with the Editor to ensure ongoing development of the journal
- v: To identify topics for special issues of the journal or recommend a Conference that would promote the journal, which they might also help to organize and/or guest edit
- vi: To attract new and established authors and articles
- vii: To submit some of their work for consideration, ensuring that they adhere to Conflict of Interest rules and stating their relationship to the journal. This is very important as the journal cannot be seen to publish only papers from members of the Editorial Board.
- viii: It is important that Editorial Boards have a regular communication forum with other boards of a similar nature, either face-to-face in person (depending on their country of origin, funding availability, etc.) or as more journals are doing today, communicating by teleconference, Skype or other web platforms.

2: The Patron:

The Patron is usually the Dean of the institute and is overall incharge of the journal, who needs to be kept informed of the decisions taken by the editorial board. The patron is the final authority to approve the decisions and policies of the editorial board.

3: The Chief Editor:

The criteria for selection of Chief Editor are:

- i) Expertise and experience in the specialist field related to the journal
- ii) Publication record of several articles and /or books (usually in / related to the specialist field)
- iii) Being a reviewer for an international peer-reviewed journal

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- iv) Senior research position with equivalent experience in research and scholarship
- v) Enthusiasm to undertake the Editor role
- vi) Preferably a diploma, master or doctoral degree in Education and Research

It is not necessary to fulfill all the criteria to become a chief editor.

The roles of the Chief Editor are:

- i. The key role of a journal's chief editor is to promote scholarship in the specialist field associated with the journal, whilst also promoting the journal as the best journal to publish in. For any journal, the editor will need to encourage new and established authors to submit articles and set up a reliable panel of expert reviewers. Editors are also responsible for offering feedback to reviewers when required and ensure that any feedback to authors is constructive.
- ii. An editor should also familiarize him/herself with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) 'Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors'.
- iii. Depending on how the journal is managed and how it is structured, an Editor may have to make all the decisions regarding which articles to accept or reject for publication.

4: Managing editor:

The roles of the managing editor are:

- i. To help the chief editor achieve the above-mentioned goals
- ii. To communicate with the authors, reviewers, publishers, and other agencies for the smooth running of the journal
- iii. To regularly evaluate the research work
- iv. To communicate with funding and regulating agencies (HEC and others) for grants and accreditations.

5: Executive editor:

The roles of the executive editor are:

- i. To evaluate the research articles presented for publication
- ii. To help the editorial board in policymaking
- iii. To help the editorial board in smooth publishing
- iv. To communicate with reviewers and collaborate with external agencies for relevant purposes

6: Section editors:

Section editors are allotted different responsibilities. Some of these are mentioned below:

- i. Bibliography
- ii. Proof-reading
- iii. Academic writing reviewing, grammar, and spell-checking

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- iv. Dissemination of articles for review
- v. Contact with publishers under the supervision of senior editorial team
- vi. Training of future reviewers, young members, and other faculty members
- vii. others

7: Editorial Advisory Board:

Editorial advisory board members consist of national and international senior academicians, researchers, clinicians, and others to help the current editorial board in designing, implementing, and evaluating policies regarding upgrading the quality of research work. These people also share best practices to help the editorial team to refine their research work.

12- Policy regarding recruitment and continuation of editorial board

The policy for recruitment and continuation of the editorial board is based on the guidelines discussed in the previous section. The chief editor, managing editor, and executive editors are recruited by the patron in-Chief. Members are then selected by them from amongst the faculty who have an aptitude for research, and their names are endorsed by the patron. The tenure of the editorial board is decided by the Patron after 3 years whether to continue or recruit a new team or member. The editorial advisory board members are recruited for an indefinite period by the editorial team of JMS.

13- Allegations of Research Misconduct and Plagiarism policy

The policies of the COPE, WAME, and ICMJE serve as the foundation for the policy of research misconduct for our Journal.

A) Definitions

The following constitutes research misconduct: Fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism in research proposals, projects, analyses, and reports. It does not include sincere mistakes or disagreements.

Misconduct is defined as a marked departure from customary behavior, deliberate or careless acts, and corroborated claims.

Fabrication is the process of fabricating and publishing false information. Falsification is the act of altering research materials, procedures, information, or outcomes while also fabricating a study report.

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words, ideas, methods, or outcomes without giving due credit.

Breach of Confidentiality: Disregarding the conditions of confidentiality that have been agreed upon for research records.

All information about research facts, including proposals, reports, articles, and materials for submitting manuscripts or enquiring about them, is included in the research record.

Management of a case of misconduct:

Reporting: Written or electronic reports of misbehavior should be sent to the journal's Managing editor through email (contact@jmedsci.com).

Confidentiality: Depending on legal restrictions, the complainant's identity may stay secret.

Initial Assessment: Based on an initial examination, the editor decides if an allegation merits further investigation.

Investigation Procedure: Claims are looked at following journal policy, which is derived from COPE Guidelines. There is assurance of proper recording and custody of research records.

Results:

Unsubstantiated Allegations: Claims that lack supporting evidence are rejected without further action.

Supported complaints: Depending on the seriousness of the wrongdoing and COPE guidelines, suitable measures are implemented if complaints are verified.

Reporting: Completed investigative reports are delivered to the appropriate committees, and possible consequences include censure, publishing retraction, and reporting to outside organizations. In our organization, the matter is forwarded to the plagiarism and research misconduct review committee which follows its policies based on the Higher Education Commission Plagiarism and Research Misconduct policy and COPE guidelines for Research misconduct.

Appeal: Accused individuals have the right to appeal decisions within 30 days of notification.

Appeals are reviewed and resolved per established regulations.

B) The management of articles involved in misconduct:

If misconduct, on the part of the authors, is found, the editorial team after contacting the corresponding author will take the following steps:

- i) In the case of published articles, retraction will be considered.
- ii) In the case of unpublished articles, the review process will stop or continue depending upon the changes suggested to the corresponding author.
- iii) If the corresponding author does not satisfy the editorial team, the article may be declined or retracted.

- iv) Before reaching any conclusion, in case of retraction of an already published article, the editorial team might consult the experts within and outside the institution.
- v) The incharge editor may ask the corresponding author about the roles of the authors if, during the review process, suspicion of gifted authorship or other such issues are identified, The Journal has the right to remove any author at any time during the editorial process if such issues are found and are not clarified by the corresponding author. Moreover, the editor has the right to stop the review process or decline the article altogether if issues with the authorship are not clarified.
- vi) The authors may appeal to the managing editor about the status of the article, and reasons of delay and rejection.
- vii) If an author wants to withdraw an article after the submission, he/she may write a request to the editor for retraction. However, no author is allowed to submit an article that is already submitted to another journal.

C) Retraction of articles

The guidelines for correction and retraction of articles are as follows:

1: A specific page is allocated in the journal (both electronic and printed) that will be used for news related to corrections in articles published in previous journals.

2: The editor should also post a new article version in the journal with details of the changes from the original version and the date(s) on which the changes were made.

3: Previous electronic versions will prominently note that there are more recent versions of the article (that will be placed at the end of the abstract). Similarly, the more recent version should be cited by the authors or others.

4: If the error is judged to be unintentional, the underlying science appears valid, and the changed version of the paper survives further review and editorial scrutiny, then retraction with republication of the changed paper, with an explanation, allows full correction of that research paper.

5: If a serious violation of credibility or quality of a research paper is found after the publication, the article has to be retracted after approval of at least 3 members of the editorial board in consultation with the chief editor. The whole process will follow the guidelines presented by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

6: The retracted article should be noted on the website and the word “retracted” should be mentioned along with the title of the article.

This policy is supplemented by various COPE flowcharts and guidelines, which provide detailed procedures for different types of suspected misconduct.

14- Copyright Policy

All articles published in the Journal of Medical Sciences (JMS) are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0). Under the CC BY 4.0 license, author(s) retain the ownership of the copyright publishing rights without restrictions for their content, and allow others to copy, use, print, share, modify, and distribute

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15- Data Repository

The real-time data backup and parallel Mirror imaging (PMI) for the JMS is created on the remote VPS (Virtual Private Server) of the official website of the Khyber Medical College Peshawar (KMC) website (www.kmc.edu.pk).

16- Contact information

The office of managing editor or chief editor should be contacted anytime during working hours or can be contacted through their emails for correspondence.

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