Ethical policies of Gerodontology

The Ethical policies of Gerodontology have been adapted (with permission) from the guidelines published by Blackwell Publishing Ltd\(^1\) and the guidelines adopted by the World Medical Association.\(^2\) In the opinion of the editor, these represent stringent and careful policies for a leading medical journal. Submitted work must comply with these policies, which are also based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines on good publication and comply with their Code of Conduct.

AUTHORSHIP

All authors must fulfil the following three criteria:

- Substantial contributions to research design, or the acquisition, analysis or interpretation of data,
- Drafting the paper or revising it critically, and
- Approval of the submitted and final versions

ETHICS APPROVAL FOR PAPERS SUBMITTED TO GERODONTOLOGY

The Editor aims to ensure that all articles published in Gerodontology (hereafter called ‘the journal’) meet internationally accepted ethical standards. To achieve this, we evaluate the ethical aspects of submitted work that involves human or animal subjects. Upon request we require that authors submitting a paper provide the date, approval number or code and or name of the approving committee on all work submitted to the journal.

If ethical concerns are raised, we will require full disclosure of ethical aspects of a study (such as copies of the consent forms or animal care certification) and we may, at our discretion conduct a formal or informal ethical review of the study whether or not it meets acceptable standards for publication. Results of this review may be shared with the authors, and if concerns are identified they will be passed along to the authors’ institution(s).
Patient confidentiality and consent to publication


Manuscripts concerned with human studies must contain statements indicating that informed, written consent has been obtained, that studies have been performed according to the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki [http://www.arvo.org/eweb/dynamicpage.aspx?site=arvo2&webcode=Helsinki](http://www.arvo.org/eweb/dynamicpage.aspx?site=arvo2&webcode=Helsinki), and that the procedures have been approved by a local ethics committee. If individuals might be identified from a publication (e.g. from images) authors must obtain explicit written consent from the individual.

Role of professional medical writers in peer-reviewed publications

Please ensure that you follow the guidelines by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors on the role of medical writers. The guidelines emphasise the importance of respecting widely recognised authorship criteria, and in particular of ensuring that all people listed as named authors have full control of the content of papers. The role of professional medical writers must be transparent. Please name any professional medical writer among the list of contributors to any article for *Gerodontology* (not only original research papers), and specify in the acknowledgements and statement of competing interests for the article who paid the writer. Writers and authors must have access to relevant data while writing papers. Medical writers have professional responsibilities to ensure that the papers they write are scientifically valid and are written in accordance with generally accepted ethical standards.

DISCLOSURE AND COMPETING INTERESTS STATEMENTS

Authors are required to disclose financial interests in any company or institution that might benefit from their publication. A competing interest exists when a primary interest (such as patients’ welfare or the validity of research) might be influenced by a secondary interest (such as financial gain or personal rivalry). It may arise for the authors of a *Gerodontology* article when they have a financial interest that may influence their interpretation of their results or those of others. Financial interests are the easiest to define and they have the greatest potential to influence the objectivity, integrity or perceived value of a publication. They may include any or all, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Personal financial interests:** Stocks or shares in companies that may gain or lose financially through publication; consultant fees or fees from speakers bureaus; other forms of remuneration from organisations that may gain or lose financially; patents or patent applications whose value may be affected by publication.

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• **Patent rights**

• **Consultancy work**

All sources of funding must be disclosed in the Acknowledgments section of the paper. List governmental, industrial, charitable, philanthropic and/or personal sources of funding used for the studies described in the manuscript. Attribution of these funding sources is preferred.

Examples:

• This work was supported by a grant from the National Institutes of Health, USA (DKxxxx to AB).

• This work was supported by the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of Canada (grant to AB and CD).

• This work was supported by a grant from Big Pharma Inc. (to AB) and equipment was donated by Small Pharma Inc. EF received a graduate studentship award from the University of xxxxx.

For papers where there are no competing interests, all authors must include the statement ‘Competing interests: the authors have no competing interests.’

We will also ask reviewers to provide a statement of competing interests.

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The Journal has a duty to publish corrections (errata) when errors could affect the interpretation of data or information, whatever the cause of the error (i.e. arising from author or publisher errors). It is important to set the record straight.

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**HANDLING THE EDITOR’S CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PUBLICATIONS BY THE EDITOR OR EDITORIAL BOARD**
The Editor or Editorial Board members are never involved in editorial decisions about their own work. The Journal editor, Editorial Board members and other editorial staff (including peer reviewers) withdraw from discussions about submissions where any circumstances might prevent him/her offering unbiased editorial decisions.

When making editorial decisions about peer reviewed articles where an editor is an author or is acknowledged as a contributor, affected editors or staff members exclude themselves and are not involved in the publication decision. When the editor is presented with papers where his own interests may impair his ability to make an unbiased editorial decision, he deputises decisions about the paper to a suitably qualified individual.

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The Editor of Gerodontology treats all submitted manuscripts as confidential documents, which mean they will not divulge information about a manuscript to anyone without the authors’ permission. During the process of manuscript review, the following people may also have access to manuscripts:

- Editor and editorial staff at Gerodontology
- External reviewers, including statisticians and experts in trial methods
- Third parties (the only occasion when details about a manuscript might be passed to a third party without the authors’ permission if there is reason to suggest serious research misconduct—see above)
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SERIOUS RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Very rarely, the Editor may have cause to suspect serious research misconduct, and if so, the paper will be held in abeyance until this matter is resolved. The Editor will contact authors and any appropriate third party to ascertain whether the grounds for investigation are justified. If serious research misconduct is discovered, the Editor will contact the authors’ institutions after rejecting the paper.

Despite vigorous peer-review, it is possible that a paper that is fraudulent in some manner may be published. If this is discovered, it will immediately be retracted and appropriate steps will be taken to notify readers of the journal, and the authors’ institution. Retractions will include the word ‘Retraction’ in the title, so that they are identified as such on indexing systems, for example, PubMed.

In any case of serious research misconduct, all authors of such an article may be banned from future publication in Gerodontology.

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The Journal carefully scrutinises all papers for evidence of plagiarism and falsified data using specialised software. Plagiarism or falsification can comprise the following:

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- redundant publication (i.e. when the same information is published repeatedly, especially when articles contain an unacceptable degree of overlap, even if there is some new information)
- reviewer misconduct (e.g. a reviewer making use of material obtained during review)
- deliberate omission of funding or competing interest information.

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- Adjustments of brightness and contrast or colour balance are acceptable but must be applied to the entire image.
- Features cannot be obscured and any rearrangements must be explicitly indicated by the insertion of dividing lines.
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Where the US Office of Research Integrity (ORI), or similar organizations, request that *Gerodontology* publishes a correction or retraction resulting from scientific misconduct, the Editor will consider this request, and, if applicable, the usual procedure for Retractions will be followed (see above).

**REFERENCES**
