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[International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research](#)

The ethical policies of *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* have been adapted (with permission) from guidelines published by Wiley-Blackwell¹ and those adopted by the British Medical Association.²

Submitted work must comply with these policies, which are based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines on good publication and comply with their [Code of Conduct](#).

This statement of ethics acknowledges that justice and fairness are necessary to the pursuit of this goal. Readers, potential authors, reviewers and editors should experience fairness in all their interactions with *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*.

The Editor uses the work of reviewers to select the highest-quality articles for publication, without bias. The Editor publishes a statement of his potential competing interests on the website of the journal. Reviewers report their potential competing interests to the editors with each review performed.

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Authors can submit their work to review at *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* with the knowledge that all correspondence will be confidential and concluded as rapidly as feasible. During the process of manuscript review, only the following will have access to the manuscripts:

- Editor and editorial staff at *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*,
- External reviewers including statisticians and experts in trial methods, and
- Third parties as necessary to investigate potential serious misconduct.

There are ethical standards that must be met on the part of authors submitting their work to this journal for potential publication.

Ethical Responsibilities of Authors

RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research requires that authors use the [BMJ guidelines on patient consent to publication](#). Research conducted with human subjects must be conducted with acknowledgement of the dignity and autonomy of individuals and special protection for vulnerable populations such as infants and children. Benefits must be maximised and potential harm minimised. There should be no systematic selection of subjects to exclude certain classes of people without scientific reasons.³

Manuscripts concerned with human studies must contain statements indicating that informed, written consent has been obtained, that studies have been performed according to the [Declaration of Helsinki](#), and that the procedures have been approved by a local ethics committee. The name of the ethics committee, the date of approval and the approval number or code must be reported to *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* before the study is considered by the editor of the journal. If individuals might be identified from a publication (e.g. from images) authors must obtain explicit consent from the individual.

If ethical concerns are raised about the design and execution of a study, the editor, at his discretion, may conduct a formal or informal review of ethical issues. The results of such a review may be shared with the authors, and with responsible officials at the authors' institution(s). If a study is deemed unethical it will not be published by *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*.

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Please ensure that clinical trials sponsored by pharmaceutical companies follow the guidelines on good publication practice: <http://www.gpp-guidelines.org>. Clinical trials should be registered in a clinical trials register. Publications should include the registration number and name of the trial register (see <http://www.who.int/ictrp/en/>).

Reports of clinical trials should adhere to the tenets of the CONSORT statement (JAMA 2001; 285: 1987-1991).

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Manuscripts describing studies involving animals should comply with local/national guidelines governing the use of experimental animals and must contain a statement indicating that the procedures have been approved by the appropriate regulatory body.'

SERIOUS RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Very rarely, the Editor may have cause to suspect serious research misconduct, based on comments received or his/her own review of a paper. In this case, the article in question will be held in abeyance until this matter is resolved. When such behaviour is suspected, the editor will contact the authors and any appropriate third party to ascertain if further investigation is warranted. If serious misconduct is confirmed the editor will reject the paper and contact the authors' institution(s). In this case, no submissions from these authors will be accepted for review at *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* in the future.

Despite vigorous peer review, it is possible that a paper that is fraudulent in some manner may be published. If this is discovered and shown to be so, following COPE guidelines, 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. The reason for the retraction will be clearly stated.

If the authors are unable to produce a retraction for publication within the time period requested, the journal editor will do so.

In any case of serious research misconduct, no submissions from all authors will be accepted for review at *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* in the future.

Plagiarism and falsification of data

Plagiarism can comprise the following:

- multiple submission (i.e. to several journals at the same time)
- redundant publication — i.e. when the same data are published repeatedly, especially when articles contain an unacceptable degree of overlap but some original data, or in the case of the first time data are published (followed by subsequent redundant publications) when retraction would deprive readers of potentially useful data

- self-plagiarism
- reviewer misconduct (e.g. a reviewer making use of material obtained during review)
- changes to authorship after publication due to discovery of guest or ghost authors
- deliberate omission of funding or competing interest information.

Responding to institutions and research integrity bodies (e.g. the ORI)

Where the US Office of Research Integrity (ORI), and other research integrity bodies, request that the Journal publishes a correction or retraction resulting from scientific misconduct cases, the Editor will consider this request carefully. If the retraction is accepted by the Editor, the usual procedure for Retractions will be followed (see above).

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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 scientific record straight.

The title of the Erratum will include the words 'Erratum'. They are published on a numbered page (print and electronic) and are listed in the Journal's table of contents. They will cite the original article and be linked to it, so that indexing and abstracting services are able to identify and link to both the erratum and the original paper. Reasons for erratum will be clearly stated.

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Decisions on manuscripts or on ethical misconduct are regarded as final; however, we recognise the right of an individual to challenge our decisions and seek an appeal. For appeals on manuscripts, please contact the Editor in the first instance, who will review all relevant materials and all correspondence. If necessary, he will then initiate an inquiry independent of the Editor and Editorial Board and render a final binding decision.

ETHNICITY

When race or ethnicity is described in the methods section, the logic behind the distinctions made should be presented. It might be useful to describe genetic differences, self-assigned

ethnicity, observer-assigned ethnicity, place of birth, years in the country of residence or religion.

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 an *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* 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:

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- **Consultancy work.**

On submission, **all** authors must declare any conflict of interests. All sources of funding must be disclosed. 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. If there is nothing to declare, a simple statement will be added to the Acknowledgement section of published manuscripts saying 'Conflicts of interest: None declared.'

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.

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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, the affected editor or staff members exclude themselves and are not involved in the publication decision. When the editor is presented with a paper 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.

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.

Role of professional medical writers in peer-reviewed publications

Please ensure that the guidelines by the [European Medical Writers Association](#) on the role of medical writers are followed.³ 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 *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research* (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.

REFERENCES

- 1) Graf C, Wagner E, Bowman A, Fiack S, Scott-Lichter D, Robinson A. Best Practice Guidelines on Publication Ethics: a Publisher's Perspective. *Int J Clin Pract* 2007; 61(Suppl. 152): 1-26.
- 2) <http://resources.bmj.com/bmj/authors/editorial-policies> (accessed 13 May 2010)
The Belmont Report <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.htm> (accessed 13 May 2010)
- 3) Jacobs A, Wagner E. European Medical Writers Association (EMWA) guidelines on the role of medical writers in developing peer-reviewed publications. *Curr Med Res Opin* 2005; 21: 317-21.

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