



Ethical Policy: *Neurogastroenterology & Motility*

Neurogastroenterology & Motility follows guidelines on publication ethics and editorial independence produced by the [World Association of Medical Editors](#), the [Committee on Publication Ethics](#), and the [EQUATOR network](#). This Ethical policy of *Neurogastroenterology and Motility* has been adapted (with permission) from the guidelines published by Blackwell Publishing Ltd¹ and the guidelines adopted by the British Medical Association.² Submitted work must comply with these policies.

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.

In the Acknowledgments section of the paper all authors must indicate their specific contributions to the work described in the manuscript. Some examples include

- X performed the research
- Y designed the research study
- Z contributed essential reagents or tools
- A analysed the data
- B wrote the paper.

An author may list more than one contribution, and more than one author may have contributed to the same element of the work. E.g. 'A performed the research, A and C analysed the data and wrote the paper, E contributed the knockout mice for the study and G designed the research study and wrote the paper'.

Professional medical writers must be cited among the list of contributors to any article for *Neurogastroenterology & Motility*.

EDITORS' DUTY TO AUTHORS

The Editors of *Neurogastroenterology & Motility* treat all submitted manuscripts as confidential documents, which means 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:

- Editors and editorial staff at *Neurogastroenterology & Motility*.
- 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).
- Third parties invited to write an Editorial Commentary on a paper.

ETHICS APPROVAL FOR PAPERS SUBMITTED TO NEUROGASTROENTEROLOGY & MOTILITY

The Editors aim to ensure that all articles published in *Neurogastroenterology & Motility* (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.

Manuscripts concerned with human studies must contain statements indicating that informed, written consent has been obtained, and that studies have been performed according to the [Declaration of Helsinki](#) and the BMJ guidelines on patient consent to publication: <http://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/forms-policies-and-checklists/ethics-approval-research>.

Procedures must be approved by a local ethics committee, and authors submitting a paper must 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 follow [COPE guidelines](#). 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 the information will be passed to the authors' institution(s).

Editorial appraisal of ethical issues goes beyond simply deciding whether human subjects in a study gave fully informed consent, although this is one very important issue to consider. The Editors will judge whether the overall design and conduct of each piece of work is morally justifiable. If a study is deemed unethical, it will be rejected whether or not the findings were judged to be of importance.

Patient confidentiality

If individuals might be identified from a publication (e.g. from images or from details within the article) authors must obtain explicit written consent from the individual.

Animal studies

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.

The Journal endorses [the ARRIVE guidelines for conduct of animal experiments](#). These guidelines ensure accurate and complete reporting and experimental design and protocols. Adherence to these guidelines will increase the reproducibility by other investigators of work published in *Neurogastroenterology and Motility*.

Defining Ethnicity

Ethnicity and culture are socially determined variables of limited use in biological research, though they are useful in health services research. All the variables are confounded by socioeconomic status. Try to use accurate descriptions of race, ethnicity and culture rather than catch all terms in common use. In the Methods section of research papers, describe the logic behind any ethnic groupings used. It is best to present a range of information including the following:

- Genetic differences.
- Self assigned ethnicity, using nationally agreed guidelines.
- Observer assigned ethnicity.
- Country or area of birth (participant's own, or parents' or grandparents', if applicable).
- Years in country of residence.
- Religion.

Reporting Clinical Trials

Clinical trials should be registered and publications must include the registration number and name of the trial register. If these are not available, an explanation must be presented to the Editors on submission. Papers reporting Randomised Clinical Trials (RCTs) should follow the [CONSORT](#) (Consolidating Standards of Reporting [Randomised Controlled] Trials) guidelines. A recent Cochrane Review, *Consolidated standards of reporting trials (CONSORT) and the completeness of reporting of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) published in medical journals*,³ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.MR000030.pub2/abstract>, confirms this but concluded that "while most RCTs are incompletely reported, the CONSORT Statement beneficially influences their reporting quality."

Reporting Clinical Trials Conducted by Pharmaceutical Companies

Clinical trials sponsored by pharmaceutical companies must follow the [guidelines on good publication practice](#) (GPP2). These guidelines aim to ensure that such trials are published in a responsible and ethical manner. The guidelines cover companies' responsibility to endeavour to publish results of all studies, companies' relations with investigators, measures to prevent redundant or premature publication, methods to improve trial identification and the role of professional medical writers.

Role of professional medical writers

Please ensure that you follow the guidelines by the [WAME](#) 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 *Neurogastroenterology & Motility* (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 OF COMPETING INTERESTS

For all article types, 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 *Neurogastroenterology & Motility* 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.
- **Funding:** Research support from organisations that might gain or lose financially through publication of the paper.
- **Employment:** Recent, present or anticipated employment of you or a family member by any organization that may gain or lose financially through publication of the paper. Any such competing interest that authors may have should be declared. The aim of the statement is

not to eradicate competing interests, as they are almost inevitable. Papers will not be rejected because there is a competing interest, but a declaration on whether or not there are competing interests will be added to the paper.

- **Patent rights**
- **Consultancy work.**

All authors must complete a Conflicts of Interest form, available only from, and (once completed) uploaded to, the Journal's [ScholarOne Manuscripts](#) website.

All sources of funding must be disclosed in the Acknowledgments section of **all research papers**. 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, the following statement will be added to the manuscript: *'Disclosure: no competing interests declared.'* **If in doubt, however, disclose.**

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

SERIOUS RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Very rarely, the Editors may have cause to suspect serious research misconduct, and the COPE Code of Conduct states that editors have a responsibility for pursuing cases of suspected misconduct even in submissions they do not intend to publish. The editors view investigating suspected research misconduct as a responsible action to safeguard the scientific record.

In cases of suspected research misconduct, the article in question will be held in abeyance until this matter is resolved. The Editors will follow [COPE flowcharts](#) to establish which action to take. They will contact authors and any appropriate third party to ascertain whether the grounds for investigation are justified. If serious research misconduct is discovered, the Editors 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. They will be free access, cite the original article and be linked to it, so that indexing and abstracting services are able to identify and link to both the retraction and the original paper. Reasons for publishing the retraction are clearly stated.

In any case of serious research misconduct, the Editors will consider placing a temporary ban on all authors publishing in *Neurogastroenterology & Motility*.

Plagiarism and falsification

The Journal carefully scrutinises all papers for evidence of plagiarism and falsified data using specialised software. 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))
- 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.

If authors want to pre-check their papers for plagiarism, there are several software options available:

- Article checker (www.articlechecker.com)
- CrossCheck (www.ithenticate.com/)
- CrossRefMe (www.crossrefme.com)
- Doc Cop (www.doccop.com)
- Dupli Checker (www.duplichecker.com)
- Plagiarisma (www.plagiarisma.net)
- Plagiarism Checker (www.searchenginereports.net/articlecheck.aspx)
- The Plagiarism Checker (www.Dustball.com/cs/plagiarism.checker).

Manipulation of images

Manipulation of images is an increasing cause of retractions in journals. The Journal follows the [guidelines and procedures](#) established by the Council of Science Editors for digital imaging data.

Please note the following in particular:

- Images cannot be modified to change the overall appearance or appearance of any specific feature.
- 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.
- Images will be examined for any indication of improper modifications. The final acceptance of all manuscripts is contingent on any concerns raised in our review of the figures being resolved.

If the Editors determine that there has been manipulation of images in a publication, the paper will be retracted.

Responding to institutions and research integrity bodies (eg the ORI)

The Journal will follow [COPE guidelines](#) on cooperation with the US Office of Research Integrity (ORI), and other research integrity bodies. If the ORI request that the Journals publishes a correction or retraction resulting from scientific misconduct cases, the Editors will consider this request carefully. If the retraction is accepted by the Editors, the usual procedure for Retractions will be followed (see above).

HANDLING APPEALS AGAINST EDITORIAL DECISIONS

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, contact the Chair of the Editorial Board, who will be given full access to the submitted materials and all correspondence. He will conduct an inquiry independent of the Editors and render a final binding decision. For appeals on ethical issues, contact the Chair of the Journal Management Committee, [David Grundy](#), who will be given full access to the submitted materials and all correspondence. He will conduct an inquiry independent of the Editors and Editorial Board and render a final binding decision.

HONEST ERRORS – PUBLICATION OF CORRECTIONS (ERRATA and CORRIGENDA)

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

The title of the Erratum/Corrigenda will include the words 'Erratum:'/'Corrigendum:'. 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 publishing and erratum or corrigendum are clearly stated.

HANDLING EDITORS' CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PUBLICATIONS BY THE EDITORS OR EDITORIAL BOARD

Editors, Editorial Board members, Journal Management Committee members and other editorial staff (including peer reviewers) withdraw from discussions about submissions where any circumstances might prevent him/her offering unbiased editorial decisions and are not involved in the publication decision. When editors are presented with papers where their own interests may impair their ability to make an unbiased editorial decision, he/she deputises decisions about the paper to a suitably qualified individual.

[The Editorial Team](#) disclose their competing interests on an annual basis.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS ABOUT JOURNAL PROCESSES

Complaints about journal processes should be sent in the first instance to [David Grundy](#).

The journal will consider appointing an independent ombudsman to advise on complaints that cannot be resolved internally (<http://publicationethics.org/annualreport/ombudsmansreports>).

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 on 22 January 2013).
3. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.MR000030.pub2/abstract> (Accessed on 22 January 2013)
4. Jacobs A, Wager E. European Medical Writers Association (EMWA) guidelines on the role of medical writers in developing peer-reviewed publications. *Curr Med Res Opin* 2005; 21: 317–321.

FURTHER READING

For detailed guidelines on reporting health research studies, please see the EQUATOR website: <http://www.equator-network.org/>.

There are many reporting guidelines available, and *Neurogastroenterology & Motility* endorses a subgroup of the most widely recognised guidelines:

- [CONSORT](#) (Consolidating Standards of Reporting [Randomised Controlled] Trials)
- [TREND](#) (Transparent Reporting of Evaluations with Nonrandomised Design)
- [STARD](#) (Standards for the Reporting of Diagnostic Accuracy Studies)
- [STROBE](#) (Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology; [Checklists](#))

- [PRISMA](#) (Preferred Reporting of Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses; replaced QUOROM; [Checklists](#))
- [MOOSE](#) (Meta-analyses of Observational Studies: A Proposal for Reporting)
- [SQUIRE](#) (reporting quality improvements in healthcare)
- [COREQ](#) (Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research; [Checklist](#))
- [REMARK](#) (Reporting Recommendations for Tumour Marker Prognostic Studies).