

Journal of
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Editorial Policies

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Policy on Authorship	2
Policy on Conflict of Interest.....	3
Policy on Duplicate Publication.....	5
Policy on Plagiarism	8
Policy on Protection of Research Participants and Patients.....	10
Policy on Publication of Public Health Program Evaluations	12
Policy on Publication of Survey Research with ACNM Members as Participants	14

INTRODUCTION

Authors, peer reviewers, and editors must follow an ethical process when conducting research, writing manuscripts, and reviewing submissions to ensure the integrity of every published manuscript. The following policies have been adopted by the *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health (JMWH)* in concert with recommendations from the International Committee of Medical Editors (ICMJE),¹ World Association of Medical Editors (WAME),² *AMA Manual of Style*,³ Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE),⁴ and Council of Science Editors.⁵ More in-depth discussion of ethical considerations for authors, peer reviewers, and editors can be found in the references listed.

References

1. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals. http://www.icmje.org/urm_main.html. Updated April 2010. Accessed July 24, 2010.
2. World Association of Medical Editors Web Site. <http://www.wame.org/>. Accessed July 25, 2010.
3. Iverson C, Christiansen S, Flanagan A, et al. *AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors*. 10th ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2007.
4. Committee on Publication Ethics Web Site. <http://publicationethics.org/>. Accessed July 25, 2010.
5. Council of Science Editors Web Site. <http://www.councilscienceeditors.org>. Accessed July 25, 2010.

POLICY ON AUTHORSHIP

An “author” is someone who has made substantive intellectual contributions to a manuscript.¹ The *Journal of Midwifery & Women’s Health (JMWH)* authorship requirements are in accordance with the International Committee of Medical Editors (ICMJE) *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals*.¹ Individuals must meet all 3 of the following conditions to be included as an author:

1. substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data (for a manuscript that does not involve data analysis, substantial contributions include conceptualization of the manuscript, review of the literature, or synthesis of the literature);
2. drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and
3. final approval of the submitted manuscript and the version to be published.¹

Individuals who contributed to the manuscript but do not meet all 3 of these criteria should be listed in the acknowledgements section but cannot be an author.

Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content.¹ All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed.¹ Each author must sign an author disclosure form indicating she or he qualifies for authorship before submissions will be accepted for review.

The order of authorship on the byline should be a joint decision of the co-authors, and the corresponding author must be prepared to explain the order.¹⁻² Generally authors are listed in descending order according to their levels of contribution. However, some groups choose to list the most senior author last, irrespective of the amount of his or her contribution, and other groups may choose alphabetical order when all authors have contributed equally.²⁻³ Authors should make decisions about the order of authorship as early as possible, ideally before the manuscript is written.³

Changes in authorship (order, additions, and deletion of authors) during manuscript review, revision, or acceptance must be accompanied by a written request and explanation from all of the original authors.²⁻³

References

1. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals. http://www.icmje.org/urm_main.html. Updated April 2010. Accessed July 24, 2010.
2. World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) Editorial Policy Committee. Authorship Policy Statement. <http://www.wame.org/resources/policies#authorship>. Updated January 2007. Accessed July 24, 2010.
3. Iverson C, Christiansen S, Flanagin A, Fontanarosa PB, Glass RM, Gregoline B, Lurie SJ, Meyer HS, Winker MA, Young RK. *AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors*. 10th ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2007.

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Revised: October 14, 2010

POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Definitions

A conflict of interest refers to a conflict between the private interests and official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust.¹ Conflicts of interest may be actual, potential, or perceived.

Conflicts of interest occur in publishing, where an author, reviewer, or editor may have competing interests that could lead to biased information being presented in, or biased decisions made about, a manuscript. *Actual* conflicts of interest are difficult to determine, and there may be disagreement as to whether they exist. *Potential* conflicts of interest, or the perception of conflicts of interest, can often be identified and are important to address, regardless of the individual's belief that such perceived conflict would not affect his or her judgment. Having a competing interest does not equal wrongdoing, but all involved should be comfortable that the publication is unbiased and the process transparent.

Financial Conflicts exist when the author, reviewer, or editor might benefit financially from, or has benefited in the past from, a commercial or educational product being reviewed, evaluated, or recommended in a manuscript. Examples include being a shareholder in, employed by, or receiving consultant or speaking fees from, the company that produces the product. Current financial interests and financial interests within the past 3 years are considered potential conflicts. Financial support for publications must be acknowledged in the manuscript. Any agreement with the funder that limits an investigator's access to data, ability to collect or conduct analyses of data, or freedom to publish without approval of the funder must be identified when the manuscript is submitted. The editor will decide whether any pertinent information should be included if the manuscript is published.

Non-financial Conflicts can include political, academic, intellectual, professional, or other relationships or activities that prevent an unbiased presentation of material, review of a manuscript, or decision to publish an article. Personal or professional relationships or beliefs may create a conflict. For example, an editor with strong personal beliefs about abortion might not be willing to consider a manuscript that covers the management of medication abortion. An editor or reviewer may have strong professional beliefs that there is only one way to manage a controversial clinical issue, and thus might not be able to be objective and systematic in reviewing a manuscript on that topic. A reviewer who recognizes the author of a manuscript as the head of the department where the reviewer is applying for a position may not be able to provide an objective critical review of the manuscript.

Unpaid Decision-making Positions such as membership on the board of directors of an organization or being a peer reviewer for several journals set the stage for potential conflicts but may or may not create a conflict of interest, depending on whether or not decisions about manuscripts are affected by perceived needs of the competing organization or journal.

Disclosure

Disclosure maintains confidence in the integrity of the system. Disclosure allows editors to estimate the extent of any potential conflict of interest before making a decision about the manuscript. Author disclosure of a potential conflict of interest does not necessarily mean a

manuscript will be rejected for publication; rather, disclosure offers readers the opportunity to make a decision about possible bias in the published article. Disclosure applies to all types of articles: original research, review articles, editorials, commentaries, and columns.

Authors should disclose any actual or potential financial conflicts of interest when submitting a manuscript for consideration. If there are no conflicts, this too should be explicitly stated by the authors. The *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health (JMWH)* requires authors to do so in the author disclosure form that is submitted with a manuscript. This information will be published with the manuscript, should it be positively reviewed and accepted for publication.

Reviewers should disclose any financial or other issues (eg, philosophical beliefs, professional competition) to the editor as soon as they recognize the potential for a conflict. A perceived conflict does not mean there is an actual problem. A conflict exists only if it would limit the reviewer's ability to give a fair and impartial review. It is also important to remember that until published, a manuscript is the confidential property of the author. Therefore, reviewers cannot use, cite, or discuss the content of unpublished manuscripts in any personal or professional activities, or use the content for financial gain.

Editors will disqualify themselves from a decision-making role on a manuscript if there is a potential conflict of interest for financial, professional, personal, or other reasons. For example, an editor may request that another editor read the reviews and make a decision on a manuscript submitted by a close colleague. It is also important to remember that until published, a manuscript is the confidential property of the author. Therefore, editors cannot use, cite, or discuss the content of unpublished manuscripts in any personal or professional activities, or use the content for financial gain.

Undisclosed conflicts are sometimes identified during the review process. If the reviewer or editor identifies a potential conflict on the part of the author, the manuscript will be returned with a request that the author describe how the concern is or is not a conflict of interest. If the conflict is on the part of a reviewer, the manuscript will be re-assigned to another reviewer.

Undisclosed financial conflicts are sometimes identified after publication. In this case, *JMWH* will publish a "Notice of Failure to Disclose Financial Interest."

Reference

1. Conflict of interest. Merriam-Webster's online dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conflict%20of%20interest>. Accessed July 20, 2010.

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POLICY ON DUPLICATE PUBLICATION

Duplication publication is “the simultaneous or subsequent reporting of essentially the same information, article, or major components of an article 2 or more times in one or more forms of media (either print or electronic format).”¹ Duplicate publication is also called redundant or overlapping publication and is a form of self-plagiarism.

Submissions that contain information that has already been reported in large part in a published article or is contained in another manuscript that has been submitted or accepted for publication elsewhere, in print or in electronic media, will not be accepted for publication in the *Journal of Midwifery & Women’s Health (JMWH)*. The bases for this position are international copyright laws, ethical conduct, and cost-effective use of resources.²

When submitting a manuscript to *JMWH*, the author must make a full statement to the editor about all submissions and previous reports that might have duplicate content or very similar content to the manuscript that is being submitted to *JMWH*. The author must notify the editor of any manuscripts in press or under review with another journal that include text or data that overlaps with the manuscript submitted to *JMWH*. In addition, any publication that addresses the same content or research must be referred to and referenced in the manuscript under consideration by *JMWH*. Copies of all related manuscripts should be included with the submission to *JMWH*.² “Duplicate submission or publication is not necessarily unethical, but failure to disclose the existence of duplicate articles, manuscripts, or other related material to editors and readers (covert duplication) is unethical and may represent a violation of copyright law.”¹

In some instances, previous publication is not considered duplicate publication. The editor will make a decision about accepting the following types of manuscripts on a case-by-case basis.²

1. Oral presentations:
 - a. A body of work that has been presented at a scientific meeting and published in the conference proceedings, or
 - b. An abstract of an oral presentation that is published as only an abstract in another peer-reviewed journal.
2. Dissertations:
 - a. A traditional dissertation may be cleanly divided into multiple manuscripts, as long as each of these has a different focus. These might include a literature review, a methods article (assuming a new instrument was designed and validated), and an article describing the results of the research. Authors usually submit these manuscripts to different journals.
 - b. Some dissertations are formatted as multiple (typically 2 -3) publishable manuscripts as a degree requirement. Authors usually submit these manuscripts to different journals.
 - c. The author is required to:
 - i. Notify the editor about other articles that have been published from the same body of research,
 - ii. Notify the editor about other manuscripts from the same body of research that are in submission to another journal,

- iii. Notify the editor about any related published articles or submitted manuscripts, and
 - iv. Reference the related published articles or submitted manuscripts in the manuscript submitted to *JMWH*.
3. Sequential reports of studies
- a. Some studies that have several research questions can be appropriately formatted into several different manuscripts. The study objective(s) and findings for each manuscript must be clearly distinct. The review of the literature should also vary based on the particular focus of each manuscript.
 - b. The author is required to:
 - i. Notify the editor about other articles that have been published from the same body of research,
 - ii. Notify the editor about other manuscripts from the same body of research that are in submission to another journal,
 - iii. Notify the editor about any related published articles or submitted manuscripts, and
 - iv. Reference the related published articles or submitted manuscripts in the manuscript submitted to *JMWH*.
4. Republication of an article previously published in another language is acceptable if there is full disclosure of the original source at the time of submission and if the editors determine that the information is of value to the readers.
5. Derivative works:
- a. An author who publishes an article in *JMWH* and later wants to publish a book chapter on the same topic or someone who writes a book chapter and later wants to write a journal article would be publishing a derivative work.
 - b. According to the US Copyright Office, “to be copyrightable, a derivative work must be different enough from the original to be regarded as a new work” or must contain a substantial amount of new material. Making minor changes or additions of little substance to a preexisting work will not qualify the work as a new version for copyright purposes. The new material must be original and copyrightable in itself.”³
 - c. The copyright holder has the legal right to produce derivative works. The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) is the copyright holder for all articles published in *JMWH*. ACNM has granted the right to produce derivative works back to all authors who publish in *JMWH*.
6. Simultaneous joint publication of a manuscript may occur if the editors of both journals mutually consent.

References

1. Iverson C, Christiansen S, Flanagan A, et al. *AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors*. 10th ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2007.
2. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals. http://www.icmje.org/urm_main.html. Updated April 2010. Accessed September 18, 2010.

3. US Copyright Office. Circular 14: copyright registration for derivative works.
<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ14.pdf>. Updated May 2010. Accessed September 18, 2010.

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POLICY ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is “the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial unattributed textual copying of another’s work... The theft or misappropriation of intellectual property includes the unauthorized use of ideas or unique methods obtained by a privileged communication, such as a grant or manuscript review. Substantial unattributed textual copying of another’s work means the unattributed verbatim or nearly verbatim copying of sentences or paragraphs which materially mislead the ordinary reader regarding the contributions of the author.”¹

Plagiarism ranges from unreferenced use of others’ published or unpublished work to verbatim copying of passages of text without appropriate use of quotation marks. Plagiarized phrases or sentences can be taken from any publication format, including abstracts, unpublished or published manuscripts, book chapters, or Web sites. Plagiarism is scientific misconduct, increasing in frequency, and sometimes difficult to identify. The US Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Research Integrity provides an online tutorial that includes examples and guidelines for avoiding plagiarism.² An ethical author “always acknowledges the contributions of others and the source of his/her ideas.”²

Types of plagiarism and how to avoid them include:

Plagiarism of ideas: All ideas (eg, explanations, theories, conclusions, hypotheses, metaphors) must be attributed to their originator.² All statements of fact obtained from previously published work must be referenced.

Plagiarism of text: All verbatim text copied from another source must be placed in quotation marks with the source referenced.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words in a sentence or passage of text is still considered plagiarism. Authors must state their ideas in their own words, which means the passage is restated or altered enough to be considered a new piece of writing. When paraphrasing and summarizing, the source of information must be identified.²

Self-plagiarism: Self-plagiarism “occurs when authors reuse their own previously written work or data in a ‘new’ written product without letting the reader know this material has appeared elsewhere.”² Self-plagiarism is often a component of duplicate publication, which is addressed in a separate policy. The keys to avoiding inappropriate self-plagiarism are full disclosure, careful referencing, and obtaining permission from the copyright holder of previous works. Authors who wish to use previously published passages of text in manuscripts submitted to *Journal of Midwifery & Women’s Health* should cite their previous work in the appropriate places in the text and provide copies of the previously published work. The decision to accept a manuscript that is a derivative work from previously published material will be made on an individual basis.

References

1. Office of Research Integrity. ORI policy on plagiarism. *ORI Newsletter*. 1994;3(1):5-6. <http://ori.dhhs.gov/policies/plagiarism.shtml>. Accessed September 18, 2010.
2. Office of Research Integrity. Avoiding plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and other questionable writing practices: a guide to ethical writing. <http://ori.dhhs.gov/education/products/plagiarism/index.shtml>. Updated December 6, 2009. Accessed September 18, 2010.

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POLICY ON PROTECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND PATIENTS

Ethical Review of Studies and Informed Consent

Any research utilizing human participants or data obtained from human participants (eg, medical records) requires approval or exemption from an institutional review board (IRB) or independent ethics review committee. Research is “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.”¹ A human research participant is, “a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) identifiable private information.”¹

When reporting research that utilized human participants, authors should state in the methods section of the manuscript that an IRB or ethics committee approved the study or determined the study was exempt from approval.² State why the exemption was granted if the study was determined to be exempt. The *Journal of Midwifery & Women’s Health (JMWH)* may request documentation of IRB or ethics committee approval or exemption prior to accepting submissions. If the author is unable to provide evidence of IRB or ethics committee approval or exemption, the submission will be rejected.

When reporting research that utilized human participants, authors should indicate in the methods section of the manuscript that informed consent was obtained all from participants and how this consent was obtained.² If informed consent was not required by the IRB or ethics committee, the author should provide an explanation for the waiver.²

Privacy and Confidentiality

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals*,³ which *JMWH* follows, includes the following statement on the privacy and confidentiality of patients and study participants:

*Patients have a right to privacy that should not be violated without informed consent. Identifying information, including names, initials, or hospital numbers, should not be published in written descriptions, photographs, or pedigrees unless the information is essential for scientific purposes and the patient (or parent or guardian) gives written informed consent for publication. Informed consent for this purpose requires that an identifiable patient be shown the manuscript to be published. Authors should disclose to these patients whether any potential identifiable material might be available via the Internet as well as in print after publication. Patient consent should be written and archived with the journal, the authors, or both, as dictated by local regulations or laws...Nonessential identifying details should be omitted. Informed consent should be obtained if there is any doubt that anonymity can be maintained. For example, masking the eye region in photographs of patients is inadequate protection of anonymity. If identifying characteristics are altered to protect anonymity, such as in genetic pedigrees, authors should provide assurance, and editors should so note, that such alterations do not distort scientific meaning.*³

The *AMA Manual of Style*² provides additional clarification for case descriptions and case reports:

*Case descriptions and case reports serve as important contributions to the medical literature...Traditionally, such reports have included specific details about patients....Only those details essential for understanding and interpreting a specific case report or case series should be provided. In most instances, the description can be more general than specific to ensure anonymity, without loss of meaning...Although the degree of specificity needed will depend on the context of what is being reported, specific ages, race/ethnicity, and other sociodemographic details should be presented only if clinically or scientifically relevant and important.*²

Do not include identifying information (eg, name, address, medical record number) in manuscripts submitted to *JMWH*. Sociodemographic details (eg, age, race/ethnicity) should be reported only if their inclusion is clinically or scientifically relevant and important.² Manuscripts should not include the initials of patients or research participants. Use a pseudonym or some other designator that does not hint at the person's identity. If a manuscript includes detailed case descriptions or photographs that might permit a patient to be identified, the author must obtain written permission from the patient to publish the information and provide *JMWH* with a copy of the permission.

Reports of qualitative research frequently use personal quotations to highlight thematic findings. Quotations should not be altered, but individual names or other obvious personal identifiers should not be included. In addition, identification of the study participant who is being quoted should not be noted in the text following the quotation. Quotations from research participants can sometimes be traced because of the "story" that is told. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of the participant, and the researcher should be sensitive to these possibilities and make sure permission to present the story is obtained.

References

1. US Department of Health and Human Services. Code of Federal Regulations. Title 45 Public Welfare, Part 46 Protection of human subjects. <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>. Updated January 15, 2009. Accessed August 14, 2010.
2. Iverson C, Christiansen S, Flanagan A, Fontanarosa PB, Glass RM, Gregoline B, Lurie SJ, Meyer HS, Winker MA, Young RK. *AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors*. 10th ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2007.
3. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals. http://www.icmje.org/urm_main.html. Updated April 2010. Accessed July 24, 2010.

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POLICY ON PUBLICATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

The *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health (JMWH)* requires evidence that current standards for the protection of human research participants have been met before any manuscript reporting data from human participants will be considered for publication. Authors of these manuscripts must attest to institutional review board (IRB) or independent ethics review committee approval or exemption of the study.

Manuscripts addressing the results of public health program evaluations present some special issues. Some program evaluations are submitted to IRBs or ethics committees and are either approved or determined to be exempt from oversight. If this is the case, it should be stated in the manuscript. Note that the determination of exemption must be made by an IRB or ethics committee, not the individual evaluator.

In general, public health program evaluations that are only intended to evaluate and improve specific public health programs and not be published in peer-reviewed journals are not considered to be research and thus do not need IRB or ethics committee approval. Investigations and evaluations that are intended from the outset to produce generalizable knowledge and be disseminated via published articles in peer-reviewed journals are considered to be research. This is the contemporary distinction between research and non-research.¹

When a program evaluation produces some information that later is determined to be of general interest and potentially publishable, and individual participants were involved, the issue of research participant protection issue arises. In general, the research versus non-research distinction will still be based on the primary intent of the project. However, journal editors have the responsibility to see that authors who submit articles for publication are explicitly aware of standards for protection of human participants, and will generally consider projects that involve human participants to be research until proven otherwise.

In order to be responsive to international standards regarding research with human participants, *JMWH* requires the following for all manuscripts addressing public health program evaluations:

- A. An explicit statement in the introduction section of the manuscript that describes the original intent of the project: a) “in-house” program specific evaluation (non-research) versus b) generalizable knowledge that was intended to be disseminated (research). For projects originally intended to be non-research, the wording of the “purpose statement” should be along these lines: “Although the primary original intent of this project was a specific public health program evaluation intended only for the agencies involved, some of the findings that emerged from the evaluation might be of use to other programs. The purpose of this article is to present
- B. An explicit statement in the methods section of the manuscript describing approval or oversight of the project.
 1. If the project was originally intended to produce generalizable knowledge beyond just the internal evaluation, it is considered research, and the manuscript requires a statement about human participant oversight by an IRB or ethics committee.

2. If the manuscript is being positioned as non-research, it should explicitly address the entity or entities charged with approval or oversight of the project being evaluated. This is generally an entity or entities with an interest in the protection of the rights of any individuals involved, according to the laws or regulations of the country where the program being evaluated is situated, for example a Ministry of Health or other local government agency charged with protection of citizens, or the US agency or the non-governmental organization (NGO) funding or managing the project.

Reference

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for Defining Public Health Research and Public Health Non-Research.
<http://www.cdc.gov/od/science/regs/hrpp/researchdefinition.htm>. Updated October 4, 1999. Accessed August 15, 2010.

Additional Resources

Amoroso PJ, Middaugh JP. Research vs. public health practice: when does a study require IRB review? *Prev Med.* 2003;36(2):250-253.

MacQueen KM, Buehler JW. Ethics, practice, and research in public health. *Am J Public Health.* 2004;94(6):928-931.

National Bioethics Advisory Commission. *Ethical and Policy Issues in Research Involving Human Participants. Volume I: Report and Recommendations of the National Bioethics Advisory Commission.* Bethesda, MD: National Bioethics Advisory Commission; 2001.
<http://bioethics.georgetown.edu/nbac/human/overvol1.pdf>. Accessed August 15, 2010.

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POLICY ON PUBLICATION OF SURVEY RESEARCH WITH ACNM MEMBERS AS PARTICIPANTS

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) members are periodically asked to participate in survey research for the purpose of characterizing specific demographic or practice profiles. These survey results help guide policy, provide information for governmental agencies, and supply data for tracking national trends.

When the results of these surveys are of general interest to both the profession of midwifery and to persons interested in midwifery, they may be submitted for publication in the *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health (JMWH)*. *JMWH* is a peer-reviewed journal and all research published in *JMWH* that uses human participants must have either approval or exemption from an institutional review board (IRB) or independent ethics review committee. This policy reviews the types of survey research conducted with ACNM members as participants, and the *JMWH* requirements for publication of these survey results.

Manuscripts that include results of surveys of ACNM members fall into one of the following categories: (1) internal ACNM surveys that may be routine or episodic and (2) external survey research that uses ACNM members as participants.

Category 1—Membership surveys conducted under the auspices of ACNM

Category 1a—Surveys routinely conducted by the ACNM national office staff to collect a standard set of membership data. Some analyses of ACNM membership data will be compiled as official reports that are made available upon request. These data can be referred to in articles that are published in *JMWH*, and the reports will be cited as references.

There are some instances in which the results of surveys of ACNM members are both important to share publicly with the profession and of value to persons or agencies outside of the profession (eg, the results of the ACNM Core Data Survey). *JMWH* recognizes that ACNM is not an IRB. *JMWH* further recognizes that membership surveys are an important tool for collecting information about the profession that can be used for a number of important purposes. Nonetheless contemporary publication policies as well as overriding ethical concerns demand some statement that addresses how members' personal information was protected in the data collection process. Therefore, ACNM has a formal internal policy for how confidentiality is guaranteed in ACNM BOD approved surveys.

All manuscripts in this category that are submitted to *JMWH* must address the following:

1. *JMWH* requires evidence that the ACNM members surveyed for the research reported in the submitted manuscript were notified that their de-identified data might be used for survey research. This requirement will be waived for membership surveys conducted by the national office prior to January 1, 2009.
2. Description of how confidentiality and de-identified data were protected must be described in the text of submitted manuscripts. Example: “*data were stored in a secure database as per ACNM policy.*”
3. Description of why IRB approval or exemption was not required must appear in the methods section. Example: “*Because our membership database is considered an*

administrative database, data collection and the type of analyses we describe are waived from requirements for review by an institutional review board. Respondents are assured confidentiality because personal identifying information is not reported to authors or researchers using the data. Completion and return of the survey are considered evidence of agreement to participate. Surveys are returned directly to the ACNM national office where a staff member enters data into the membership database."

Category 1b—Episodic membership surveys for a specific purpose may be conducted by the ACNM national office staff or a division, committee, or task force within ACNM, such as the Division of Research (DOR) or the Division of Standards and Practice (DOSP). In these cases the persons responsible for conducting the survey need to seek protection of research participant oversight via the usual channels, generally by submitting the research proposal to an IRB at the home institution of a member of the research group. The policy for approval of solicitation of ACNM members for research purposes as developed by the DOR apply. These guidelines can be found at www.midwife.org/publications.cfm. *JMWH* reserves the right to verify that such approval was granted. *JMWH* suggests that it would be prudent to outline an agreement about ownership of the data and authorship of any publications prior to initiating an internal survey in order to avoid confusion.

Category 2—External survey research that uses ACNM members as participants. For external surveys that access ACNM members for research purposes, prior approval to solicit members for research per the guidelines developed by the DOR and the ACNM Senior Staff Researcher must be obtained and explicitly stated in the manuscript. These guidelines can be found at www.midwife.org/publications.cfm *JMWH* reserves the right to verify that such approval was granted.

In today's era of Web-based survey research, access to ACNM membership contact information can be obtained unofficially via various electronic mailing lists or the ACNM membership directory. *JMWH* will not accept manuscripts that have surveyed members of any e-mail discussion list or membership list without official approval via one of the mechanisms listed in this policy and explicit description of how the rights of the research participants were ensured.

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