

Ethical Policy of the

British Journal of Pharmacology



All work submitted to the British Journal of Pharmacology (**BJP**) must comply with this policy, which should be read in conjunction with the journal's [Author Guidelines](#), and follows guidelines on publication ethics and editorial independence produced by the **Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)**, the World Association of Medical Editors, the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#), and other bodies.

This Ethical Policy has been adapted from *Best Practice Guidelines on Publishing Ethics: A Publisher's Perspective. Second Edition*.

ORIGINALITY OF MATERIAL

Submission of a manuscript to BJP will be taken to indicate that

- the content of the manuscript is original and that it has not been published or accepted for publication, either in whole or in part, other than as short abstracts, communications or conference proceedings;
- no part of the manuscript is currently under consideration for publication elsewhere;
- all authors have seen and approved the final version of the submitted paper;
- authors have, if necessary, obtained permission to publish from their employers or institutions;
- approvals are held from any persons acknowledged, or cited as having provided personal communication;
- permission has been obtained to use any copyrighted material, such as reproducing a figure from another article, in print and electronic forms, and that the source of the material has been acknowledged; and
- images have not been manipulated outside the [CLIP principles](#).

Submissions are scanned for plagiarism through the [iThenticate®](#) anti-plagiarism software. Please see more on Research Misconduct below.

EDITORIAL REPORTING STANDARDS

Please see the Author Guidelines for a full description of the journal's reporting standards. In essence, BJP subscribes to the principles of the ARRIVE guidelines and all studies involving animals must [comply with these principles](#). As part of the submission process, authors **must** agree to adhere to the [Declaration of Transparency and Scientific Rigour](#).

AUTHORSHIP

All authors **of research articles only must** indicate their specific contributions to the work presented, and they must do so in an Authorship Contribution Statement. Authors **must** fulfil all four of the following criteria:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Authors of review articles need not submit an Authorship Contribution Statement, nor state their specific contributions.

All authors should be able to attest to the accuracy and integrity of any part of the work. The journal understands that this might not be possible for multi-authored papers, but all authors should still be able to stand accountable for ensuring the integrity of the published work.

Role of professional medical ('ghost') writers

Please ensure that you follow the guidelines set by the [European Medical Writers Association on the role of medical writers](#). The role of professional medical writers must be transparent, and any professional medical writer must be included in the Author contribution Statement (in all articles). The Acknowledgements and/or the Conflicts of interest statement should state if there was funding provided for this. (Please see more on this below.)

Authorship disputes

To manage authorship disputes, editors should refer to the [flowcharts from COPE](#) and *How to spot authorship problems*.

Change of author affiliation

Occasionally an author will move institutions between the time the work within a paper was carried out and submission and/or publication. In this case, the title page of the BJP article should identify the author's affiliation at the time the work was carried out. This could be listed in the Acknowledgements. The author should identify their present address if this is different from their affiliation when the work was carried out.

FUNDING

Authors must declare all forms of funding via a Funding Statement in the Acknowledgements section of their manuscript.

Examples:

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

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Authors must declare any potential conflicts of interest.

Papers will not be rejected because there is a competing interest: the aim of funding and conflicts of interest statements is not to eradicate conflicts of interest (they are common); it is so that BJP articles are fully transparent and ethical.

A conflict of interest exists when a primary interest (such as 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 BJP 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 or speaker fees; other forms of remuneration from organisations that may gain or lose financially; patents or patent applications whose value may be affected by publication.
- **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.
- **Gifted drugs, materials or devices not commercially available**
- **Patent rights**
- **Consultancy work** (past or present).

For papers where no conflicts of interest or funding are declared, a default statement is added to that paper.

Reviewers and conflicts of interest

We also ask reviewers to provide a conflicts of interest statement.

THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

The journal operates a single-blind peer-review process using a body of expert peer reviewers; papers are normally reviewed by one Senior Editor, one Editor and three reviewers. All substantive papers — ie original research, reviews (commissioned and non-commissioned), including those published under our open access programme OnlineOpen — undergo the same rigorous and consistent peer review process.

EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

Editors judge all submissions on their scholarly merit and on their potential importance to the community that the journal serves, and these decisions are not influenced by any third party, including the Publisher or any commercial body.

Editorial decisions are not influenced by payment of an open-access-article publication charge or other type of payment made by authors.

HANDLING EDITORS' CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND PUBLICATIONS BY THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Members of the editorial team (including peer reviewers) are never involved in editorial decisions about their own work. 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.

EDITORS' DUTY OF CONFIDENTIALITY TO AUTHORS

BJP treats all submitted manuscripts as confidential documents, which means that all individuals involved in publication of an article, including the peer review process, will not divulge information about a manuscript to anyone without the authors' permission and will not use the information within an article to further their own work.

APPEALLING EDITORIAL DECISIONS

An author may appeal an editorial decision by directly contacting the Editor-in-Chief through the Editorial office.

- An appeal will override an earlier decision only when new information becomes available (for example, additional factual input by the authors, revisions, extra material in the manuscript, or appeals about conflicts of interest and concerns about biased peer review).
- The Editor-in-Chief will mediate all exchanges between authors and peer reviewers during the appeal.
- The Editor-in-Chief's decision following an appeal is final.
- If the Editor-in-Chief has a conflict of interest and cannot review the appeal, this will be delegated to an independent Senior Editor.

ANIMALS IN RESEARCH

Research involving animals should be conducted with rigour, and BJP authors must implement the 3Rs principles, as defined by the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3R). BJP subscribes to the principles of the ARRIVE guidelines and all studies involving animals must comply with these principles. As part of the submission process, authors **must** agree to adhere to the [Declaration of Transparency and Scientific Rigour](#).

Ethical approval

Authors must confirm that ethical and legal approval was obtained before the start of the study, and state the name of the approving body. Authors should also state whether experiments were performed in accordance with relevant institutional and national guidelines and regulations:

- US authors should cite compliance with the US National Research Council's *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, the US Public Health Service's *Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, and *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*.
- All authors from EU member states should conform to EU Directive 2010/63 as transposed into local legislation (e.g. the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 Amendment Regulations in the UK).

HUMANS IN RESEARCH

For manuscripts reporting medical studies involving human participants, authors must provide a statement identifying the ethics committee that approved the study, and that the study conforms to recognised standards as described in the [Declaration of Helsinki](#).

BJP only publishes information about and images of individuals where the authors have obtained that individual's informed consent in advance of publication. BJP follows the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#) guidance, which says that 'Non-essential 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'.

Editorial appraisal of ethical issues goes beyond simply deciding whether human subjects in a study gave fully informed consent; however, 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.

Registering clinical trials

We require that clinical trials are prospectively registered in a publicly accessible database. Please include the name of the trial register and your clinical trial registration number at the end of your abstract. If your trial is not registered, or was registered retrospectively, please explain the reasons for this.

PUBLISHING COMPANY-SPONSORED RESEARCH

Publication of clinical trials sponsored by pharmaceutical companies follow the [Guidelines on Good Publication Practice](#).

LIBEL AND DEFAMATION

Authors should avoid language that could give rise to legal action for defamation or negligent misstatement. Such language, which can be directed at corporate entities and associations as well as individuals, should not appear within published articles. Such language is also removed from any peer review report or correspondence that is passed on to the author.

HONEST ERRORS – PUBLICATION OF CORRECTIONS

BJP has a duty to publish a correction (erratum or corrigendum) when errors could affect the interpretation of data or information in order to maintain the accuracy of the public record.

The title of the Erratum will include the word 'Erratum' and it will be published on a numbered page and listed in the Journal's table of contents. It 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.

WITHDRAWAL OF ARTICLES

Published articles

Removal or deletion of an article or redaction of part of an article is extremely rare and is strictly limited to circumstances such as legal infringements, defamation or other legal limitations, or where a publication contains false or inaccurate data.

Withdrawal of an article will be accompanied by a retraction statement, to ensure that bibliographic information about the removed article is retained for the scientific record, and a statement is published regarding the circumstances of removal or withdrawal.

During submission

The editorial team reserves the right to investigate withdrawal of submitted articles involving suspected research misconduct (please see more below).

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

"Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results."

US Federal Policy on Research Misconduct

On occasion, the Editor-in-Chief may have cause to suspect serious research misconduct during the peer review process. In this case, the article in question will be held in abeyance until this matter is resolved. The Editor-in-Chief will contact authors and any appropriate third party to ascertain whether the grounds for investigation are justified. If there is clear evidence of research misconduct, the Editor-in-Chief will reject the paper and contact the authors' co-authors and their institutions.

Despite BJP's vigorous peer-review, it is possible that a paper that is fraudulent in some manner may be published. If this is discovered, [COPE](#) guidance/flowcharts will be followed: it may be retracted and appropriate steps will be taken to notify readers of the journal, all co-authors and the authors' institution. Retractions will be entitled 'Retraction of: Full title of article' and will comprise a full and transparent retraction statement. The retraction notice will be made free to access and will be linked to the original articles so that it can be identified as retracted on indexing systems (eg PubMed).

Investigations may also lead to expressions of concern, or other sanctions. In cases of proven research misconduct, the future work of all authors of such an article will be carefully scrutinised.

All cases of suspected research misconduct are handled in a timely manner but at a speed that allows appropriate care to be taken.

Because timely handling of allegations is essential, where an allegation is deferred to an author's institution BJP is willing to wait for the results of those investigations for 6 months after notification to that institution has been given. BJP is entitled to protect its integrity and reserves the right to make a decision if there is a delay longer than 6 months.

BJP recognises that for older articles it is sometimes impossible to collect the original material to refute or confirm an allegation. Where this is the case but concern over the original findings remains, BJP may publish an expression of concern.

BJP recognises that for older papers, it would be unjust to apply today's ethical regulations on that publication; thus, where possible the regulations pertaining to the time of publication will apply.

Fabrication, falsification and manipulation of images

Changes to images can create misleading results when research data are collected as images. It may, however, be legitimate and even necessary to edit images on occasion.

BJP follows the six [CLIP \(Clinical and Laboratory Images in Publications\) principles](#) for documenting and publishing clinical and laboratory images, and follows the principles discussed by the Council of Science Editors in its white paper on research integrity.

Authors should declare where manipulations have been made and should be mindful of the following guidance:

- Specific features within an image should not be enhanced, obscured, removed, moved, or introduced.
- Original unprocessed images must be provided by authors should any indication of enhancement be identified. It may be helpful for journals to suggest that original unprocessed images should be submitted alongside any images that have been processed.
- Adjustments to brightness or contrast are only acceptable if they apply equally across the entire image and are applied equally to controls, and as long as they do not obscure, eliminate, or misrepresent any information present in the information originally captured.
- Excessive manipulations, such as processing to emphasize one region in the image at the expense of others, are inappropriate, as is emphasizing experimental data relative to the control.
- Nonlinear adjustments or deleting portions of a recording must be disclosed in a figure legend.
- Constructing figures from different gels, fields, exposures, and experimental series is discouraged. When this is necessary the component parts of composite images should be indicated by dividing lines clearly demarcated in the figure, and described in the legend.

These recommendations are based on guidance developed at the *Journal of Cell Biology* and Rossner and Yamada's discussion. Cromey discusses image manipulation in *Avoiding twisted pixels: ethical guidelines for the appropriate use and manipulation of scientific digital images*.

For allegations of image manipulation, BJP will apply best practice and use forensic tools such as those provided by ORI, and Microsoft Photoshop®, to investigate vigorously.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own' and ORI considers plagiarism to include 'both the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial **unattributed** textual copying of another's work. It does *not* include authorship or credit disputes'.

All BJP submissions are screened for plagiarism through the iThenticate® anti-plagiarism software, which detects instances of overlapping and similar text in submitted manuscripts.

Plagiarism can comprise the following:

- multiple submission (i.e. to several journals at the same time)
- **self**-plagiarism (including text recycling)
- duplicate and 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).
 - Previously published results, including numerical information and figures or images, are labelled to make it clear where they were previously reported.

- Papers that present new analyses of results that have already been published (for example, subgroup analyses) should identify the primary data source, and include a full reference to the related primary publications.
- Duplicate information published in translations. (Appropriate permissions are required.)

The following types of prior publication do not present cause for concerns about duplicate or redundant publication:

- Abstracts and posters presented during sessions at conferences.
- Results presented at meetings (for example, to inform investigators or participants about findings).
- Results in databases and clinical trials registries (data without interpretation, discussion, context or conclusions in the form of tables and text to describe data/information).
- Dissertations and theses in university archives.

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

Where research integrity bodies such as the US Office of Research Integrity (ORI) request that BJP publishes a correction or retraction resulting from scientific misconduct cases, the Editor-in-Chief will consider this request carefully. If a paper is subsequently retracted, the usual procedure for Retractions will be followed.

Responding to blog discussions

Our current policy at BJP is that the Editor in Chief does not follow blog discussions on data manipulation because we cannot consistently and comprehensively monitor the ongoing discourse. We investigate allegations of misconduct when we receive a formal notification of concern directly and where those concerns are presented clearly.

WHISTLEBLOWERS

Allegations of suspected research misconduct that have specific, detailed evidence to support the claim will be investigated appropriately, whether they are raised anonymously or by named whistleblowers.

BJP expects, however, for a whistleblower to express their concerns clearly and precisely, so that the journal is able to understand the allegation in full and to then investigate thoroughly. Only when the allegation is clear can it be fully possible to achieve the objective of protecting the integrity of the scientific record. BJP expects whistle blowers to mirror this objective.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR RETRACTIONS

If an author's paper is retracted and the author is dissatisfied with the process leading to this outcome, the author can invoke the formal complaints procedure, either through the editor in chief, the journal manager or COPE. This is outlined under 'Additional Policies' on the following webpage <http://olabout.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-828023.html>.

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