

PUBLICATION ETHICS AND PUBLICATION MALPRACTICE

1. Research and Publication Ethics

The Karbala JM demands and maintains ethical publication practices in all its activities. The editor-in-chief and editorial board will investigate any potential breaches of the policies detailed here as per the [Committee on Publication Ethics](#) (COPE) guidelines. The editors of the Karbala JM take the responsibility to ensure high-quality scientific publications that meet academic excellence standards and to enforce a rigorous peer review together with strict ethical policies and standards in the field of scholarly publication. In case of an ethical issue, all requisite action is taken.

When appropriate, the Karbala JM will submit disagreements regarding authorship, data ownership, author misbehavior, etc. to external bodies like a university ethics committee. Authors are urged to address any claims that have been made against them with evidence. Contact the editorial office for further details or to raise any issues and concerns.

The Karbala JM does not tolerate abusive behavior or correspondence towards either its staff or academic editors. Any author, editor, or referee who engages in abusive behavior or correspondence relating to a submission will be withdrawn from the publication process. In the case of an author, their submission will no longer be considered, in the case of an editor or referee, their services will no longer be solicited. In all cases, future submissions from an individual in breach of this policy will be considered only at the discretion of the editor-in-chief.

1.2. Duties of Editor

1.2.1. General responsibilities of the Editor and Editorial Board of the Karbala JM

Our editors comply with the code of conduct and COPE guidelines to advance knowledge within the journal's fields of research. The editor and the editorial board of Karbala JM are responsible for the following:

1. Deciding which of the manuscripts submitted to the journal should be published. In making these decisions, they are guided by the policies of the Karbala MJ and by legal requirements regarding libel, copyright infringement and plagiarism.
2. Providing guidance to guest editors, authors, and reviewers on everything that is expected of them and also a description of peer review processes.
3. Providing new editorial board members with guidelines on everything that is expected of them and keeping existing members updated on new policies and developments.
4. evaluating manuscripts exclusively on the basis of their academic and intellectual merit, without regard to the author(s)' race, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, religious belief, citizenship, political orientation or social class.

5. Ensuring a fair and unbiased double-blind peer review of the manuscripts and that all information related to them is kept confidential. They also ensure that both authors' and peer reviewers' identities are protected.
6. Ensuring that appropriate reviewers are selected.
7. Developing and maintaining a database of suitable reviewers and updating it based on reviewer performance.
8. Ensuring that unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript are not used in an editor's own research without the express written consent of the author.
9. Taking reasonable responsive measures when ethical complaints are presented concerning a submitted or published manuscript.
10. Publishing corrections, clarifications, retractions, and apologies whenever needed.

1.2.2. Publication Decisions

The editor is responsible for deciding which of the papers submitted to the journal will be published. The editor will evaluate manuscripts without regard to the author's race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy. The decision will be based on the paper's importance, originality, and clarity, and the study's validity and relevance to the journal's scope. Current legal requirements regarding libel, copyright infringement, and plagiarism should also be considered.

1.2.3. Confidentiality

The editor and any editorial staff must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in an editor's own research without the express written consent of the author. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage.

1.2.4. Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest

Any potential editorial conflicts of interest will be declared to the publisher in writing prior to the appointment of the editor and then updated if and when new conflicts arise. The publisher may publish such declarations in the journal.

The editor must not be involved in decisions about papers which s/he has written him/herself or have been written by family members or colleagues or which relate to products or services in which the editor has an interest. Further, any such submission must be subject to all of the journal's usual procedures, peer review must be handled independently of the relevant author/editor and their research groups, and there should be a clear statement to this effect on any such paper that is published.

1.2.5. Journal metrics

The editor does not attempt to influence the journal's ranking by artificially increasing any journal metric. In particular, the editor shall not require that references to that (or any other) journal's articles be included except for genuine scholarly reasons. Authors should not be required to include references to the editor's own articles or products and services in which the editor has an interest.

1.2.6. Vigilance over the published record

The editor should work to safeguard the integrity of the published record by reviewing and assessing reported or suspected misconduct (research, publication, reviewer, and editorial), in conjunction with the College of Medicine.

Such measures will generally include contacting the author of the manuscript or paper and giving due consideration to the respective complaint or claims made, but may also include further communications to the relevant institutions and research bodies. The editor shall further make appropriate use of the publisher's systems for the detection of misconduct, such as plagiarism.

An editor presented with convincing evidence of misconduct should coordinate with the College of Medicine to arrange the prompt publication of a correction, retraction, expression of concern, or other correction to the record, as may be relevant.

1.2.7. Editorial Process

1.2.7.1. Pre-check

The managing editor of Karbala JM will conduct an initial inspection immediately after submission to determine including overall manuscript suitability for the journal, section, or special issue; and the high academic requirements of rigor that must be met by the manuscript to be eligible for additional review. The academic editor, who will be notified of the submission and invited to conduct a check and recommend reviewers, will be the Editor-in-Chief in the case of regular submissions, the Guest Editor in the case of submissions for Special Issues, or an Editorial Board member in the case of a conflict of interest and of regular submissions if the Editor-in-Chief permits.

The editor-in-chief has the discretion to seek amendments before peer review, reject a submission, or continue with the peer review process.

The only capacity in which the Guest Editor may participate in the review process is that of an author. Similarly, any of the Editorial Office are not permitted to observe the review of their manuscripts other than in their capacity as authors.

1.2.7.2. Peer Review

1.2.7.2.1. General Guidelines for Peer Review and Editing

All submissions to be considered for publication in Karbala JM are expected to meet standards of academic excellence and are subject to rigorous, well-established, fair, and unbiased double-blind peer review performed by professionals. Upon arrival, the

paper will undergo an initial review by the journal's managing editor to determine its acceptability and compliance with journal guidelines. Editors may discuss with experts before deciding on appropriate actions, including but not limited to recruiting reviewers with specific expertise, assessment by additional editors, and declining to further consider a submission.

The Editor-in-chief will then plan the independent experts' peer-review process and gather at least two review reports for each submission. Peer reviewers' identities will remain anonymous to the authors. Before making a judgment, the editors will require sufficient modifications from the authors (and, if necessary, a second round of peer review).

The Editor-in-Chief makes the final choice. We only publish articles that have been approved by highly qualified reviewers with expertise in a field appropriate for the article. The articles that have been accepted are copy- and English-edited.

1.2.7.2.2. Peer-review Process

All submitted manuscripts are expected to meet standards of academic excellence and are subject to initial appraisal by the Editor and, if found suitable for further consideration, to peer review by independent, anonymous expert referees. Authors are required to present their scientific findings clearly and inspire a broad academic debate on the subject explored in the paper.

The Karbala JM journal operates a double-blind peer-review, where in addition to the author not knowing the identity of the reviewer, the reviewer is unaware of the author's identity.

The conference journals operate a different peer review standard. For conference volumes, the peer review process is handled by the conference committee, and the review method as well as reports number are decided by the conference organizers' requirements; For standalone papers, the procedure is conducted by academics and researchers as a single-blind evaluation with at least one independent reviewer, with an Advisory Board Member making the final acceptance/rejection decision.

For every article that is submitted, at least two review reports are gathered. The editor-in-chief has the option to suggest reviewers during pre-check. In addition, qualified members of the Editorial Board, qualified reviewers from our database, or fresh reviewers found through online searches for similar articles will all be used by the Karbala JM editorial team.

Potential reviewers may be recommended by authors. The Karbala JM staff checks for any conflicts of interest and disqualifies people who may have them. During the initial submission of their paper, authors have the option to provide the names of potential peer-reviewers they do not want to be considered for the manuscript's peer review. As long as they do not obstruct the editorial team's ability to conduct an unbiased and complete evaluation of the submission, the editorial team will abide by these requirements.

All reviewers undergo the following checks:

- have no financial ties to any of the authors;
- should not be affiliated with the authors' institution;
- should not have co-authored a publication within the last three years with the authors;
- possess appropriate expertise and a track record of publications in the topic represented by the submitted article (Scopus, ORCID);
- are seasoned academics in the subject matter of the research submitted;
- own a recognized and approved academic affiliation.

Reviewers who agree to examine a paper should:

- have no ties to any of the authors;
- possess the required knowledge to assess the level of a paper;
- throughout peer review, deliver high-quality review reports, and show responsiveness;
- uphold moral and professional norms.

After accepting a review invitation, reviewers have 7 days to complete their reviews on our online platform. Requests for extensions will be considered.

Reviewers are asked to provide their report for the evaluation of a revised article within seven days. On request, extensions may also be given.

The editor-in-chief may consult experts and the academic editor before deciding on appropriate actions, including but not limited to recruiting reviewers with specific expertise, assessment by additional editors, and declining to further consider a submission.

From submission to final decision or publication, one dedicated (Karbala JM) staff member coordinates the review process and serves as the main point of contact for authors, academic editors, and reviewers.

1.2.7.3. Revision

The editor-in-chief of the Karbala JM will ask the author to modify the article if only minor or large changes are needed. Before deciding whether to offer adjustments to authors when there are conflicting review reports or when there are one or more rejection recommendations, the editor requests input. Editors may at this point ask for more reviewers or more review reports.

Depending on whether the reviewer requested to see the revised version, revised versions of manuscripts may or may not be supplied to reviewers.

1.2.7.4. Editor's final decision

After peer review, the editor-in-chief can decide whether to accept a manuscript after receiving at least two review reports. The Editor-in-Chief will look at the following before deciding:

- The appropriateness of the chosen reviewers' criticisms and the author's answer, as well as the paper's overall scientific quality.
- The Editor-in-Chief has the choice of accepting the work in its present form, accepting it with minor changes, rejecting it and declining resubmission, rejecting it but encouraging resubmission, asking the author to make improvements, or asking for a second reviewer.
- The editor-in-chief is free to disagree with the reviewers' recommendations. If they do, they ought to include an explanation of why for the benefit of the authors and reviewers. Sometimes a decision to accept a manuscript is supported by an editor despite a reviewer's suggestion to reject it. Before sending a final decision to the authors, the Editor-in-Chief of the Karbala JM will request a second, independent opinion from an Editorial Board member.
- The editor-in-chief is the only person who can approve an article for publication.

1.3. Duties of author

1.3.1. Ethics of author (s)

Only those who have significantly contributed to the manuscript and claim authorship should be included as authors. The corresponding author is the main responsible for any requirements from the journal in behalf of other authors. Authors are asked to read the following instructions carefully. All types of manuscripts must:

- **Be written in excellent English**, in a clear, easy-to-understand, precise, and concise way.
- **Provide new, engaging, and valid information** that improves clinical care or guides future research.
- The author(s) stated shall be **solely responsible for this work**.
- **The manuscript has not been previously published elsewhere** and is not currently under consideration by another journal.

1.3.2. General author's responsibilities

1. Authors of reports of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the manuscript. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.
2. Authors should not submit the same manuscript simultaneously to more than one publication at a time. This constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.
3. Authors must ensure that they have written original works and that any work or words of other authors, contributors, or sources have been appropriately credited and referenced.
4. Authors submitting their works to the Karbala MJ for publication as original articles confirm that the submitted works represent their own contributions and have not been copied or plagiarized in whole or in part from other works without clearly citing the source. Authors should cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work.

5. Authors must ensure that the manuscript has not been published elsewhere.
6. Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors. Others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project should be acknowledged or listed as contributors.
7. The corresponding author with the journal should ensure that all appropriate co-authors are included in the author list of the manuscript and that there is a full consensus of all co-authors in approving the final version of the paper and its submission for publication.
8. Authors should disclose financial or other conflicts of interest that might influence the results or interpretation of their manuscript. All sources of financial support should be disclosed.
9. When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published work, it is the author's obligation to promptly notify the journal editors and cooperate with them to retract or correct the manuscript.

1.3.3. Reporting Standards

Authors of original research reports should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the paper. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

1.3.4. Data Access and Retention

Authors could be asked to provide the raw data of their study together with the paper for editorial review and should be prepared to make the data publicly available if practicable. In any event, authors should ensure accessibility of such data to other competent professionals for at least ten years after publication (preferably via an institutional or subject-based data repository or other data Centre), provided that the confidentiality of the participants can be protected and legal rights concerning proprietary data do not preclude their release.

1.3.5. Plagiarism Policy

The Karbala JM publishes only original peer-reviewed articles. Plagiarism is not acceptable. In case of plagiarism, the manuscript is rejected, and necessary action is taken in line with the Publication Ethics Guidelines. All articles submitted to the Karbala JM will be checked for plagiarism. The plagiarism check is the second step after the editor-in-chief assigns the article. Another check will be by any editorial board member, reviewer, editor, etc., in any stage of the article process- before or after acceptance, during editing, or at a page proof stage.

Plagiarism can occur in three forms:

1. Copying or paraphrasing substantial parts of another's paper (without attribution),
2. Claiming results from research conducted by others, or
3. Authors copy her or their own previously published material either in full or in part, without providing appropriate references – also called “self-plagiarism” or “duplicate publication”.

The Karbala JM will judge any case of plagiarism on its own merits. If plagiarism is detected, either by the editors, peer reviewers, or editorial staff at any stage before publication of a manuscript –before or after acceptance, during editing, or at the page proof stage, the editor-in-chief will alert the author(s), asking her/him to either rewrite the text or quote the text exactly and to cite the original source. If the plagiarism is extensive - that is, if at least 20% of the original submission is plagiarized - the article may be rejected, and the author's institution/employer notified.

Every manuscript submitted for publication is checked for plagiarism after submission and before being sent to an editor for editorial review. The Karbala JM uses Turnitin to detect instances of overlapping and similar text in the submitted manuscript.

Authors will submit only entirely original works and will appropriately cite or quote the work and/or words of others. Publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work should also be cited.

1.3.6. Data Fabrication, and Image Manipulation

Data presented and used in the research endeavor must be original and not anyhow fabricated. Image files must not be modified in any way that could cause misinterpretation of the information provided by the original image. In case such modification is detected, the manuscript is rejected. Authors should only use images and figures in their articles if they are relevant and valuable to the scholarly work reported.

1.3.7. Using Third-Party Material and Confidentiality

As a warranty authors must obtain the necessary written permission to include material in their article that is owned and held in copyright by a third party, including – but not limited to – any proprietary text, illustration, table, or other material, including data, audio, video, film stills, screenshots, and any supplemental material.

Information obtained in the course of confidential services, such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications, must not be used without the explicit written permission of the author of the work involved in these services.

1.3.8. Citation Policy

Where the text or image/illustration, table, or any other material is taken from other sources (including the author's previous published manuscripts) the source should be clearly indicated and cited, and that appropriate permission is obtained.

Authors must avoid excessive and inappropriate self-citation or prearrangements among author groups to inappropriately cite each other's work, as this can be considered a form of misconduct called citation manipulation. Please check the COPE guidance on citation manipulation.

The author(s) of a non-research article (e.g., a Review or Opinion) should ensure the references cited are relevant and provide a fair and balanced overview of the current state of research or scholarly work on the topic. References should not be unfairly biased toward a particular research group, organization, or journal.

1.3.9. Multiple, Redundant or Concurrent Publication

An author should not in general publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal of primary publication. Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently constitutes unethical behavior and is unacceptable.

In general, an author should not submit for consideration in another journal a paper that has been published previously, except in the form of an abstract as part of a published lecture or academic thesis or as an electronic preprint.

Publication of some kinds of articles (e.g. clinical guidelines, translations) in more than one journal is sometimes justifiable, provided certain conditions are met. The authors and editors of the journals concerned must agree to the secondary publication, which must reflect the same data and interpretation of the primary document. The primary reference must be cited in the secondary publication. Further details on acceptable forms of secondary publication can be found in the ICMJE.

1.4. Duties of Reviewers

1.4.1. Contribution to Editorial Decisions

The peer-reviewing process assists the editor and the editorial board in making editorial decisions and may also serve the author in improving the paper. Reviewers are asked generally to treat authors and their work as they would like to be treated themselves and to observe good reviewing etiquette.

1.4.2. Promptness

Any selected referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and withdraw from the review process.

1.4.3. Confidentiality

Any manuscript received for review must be treated as a confidential document. They must not be disclosed to or discussed with others except as authorized by the editor. Some editors encourage discussion with colleagues or co-reviewing exercises, but reviewers should first discuss this with the editor in order to ensure that confidentiality is observed and that participants receive suitable credit.

Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in a reviewer's own research without the express written consent of the author. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage.

1.4.4. Standards of Objectivity

Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate. Referees should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.

1.4.5. Acknowledgement of Sources

Reviewers should identify cases in which relevant published work referred to in the paper has not been cited in the reference section. They should point out whether observations or arguments derived from other publications are accompanied by the respective source. Reviewers will notify the editor of any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper of which they have personal knowledge.

1.4.6. Disclosure and Conflict of Interest

Reviewers should not consider manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions associated with the papers.

If a reviewer suggests that an author includes citations to the reviewer's (or their associates') work, this must be for genuine scientific reasons and not to increase the reviewer's citation count or enhance the visibility of their work (or that of their associates).

1.4.7. General Reviewer's responsibilities

1. Peer review assists the editor and executive editorial board of Karbala MJ in making editorial decisions and, through editorial communication with the author, may also assist the author in improving the manuscript.
2. Any invited referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its timely review will be impossible should immediately notify the editor so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.
4. Any manuscripts received for review must be treated as confidential documents.
5. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage.
6. Reviewers must report to the editor of the Karbala MJ if they are aware of copyright infringement and plagiarism on the author's part.
7. Reviews should be conducted objectively, and observations should be formulated clearly with supporting arguments so that authors can use them to improve the paper.

8. Reviewers evaluate manuscripts based on content without regard to the authors' race, age, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, religious belief, citizenship, political orientation, or social class.
 9. Reviewers should not consider manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions connected to the papers.
5. Duties of Publisher

As publisher of the Karbala MJ, the College of Medicine has a role to

- provide practical and financial support to the editor and editorial board of Karbala MJ so that they can follow the COPE Code of Conduct for the Journal;
- ensure the autonomy of editorial decisions;
- protect intellectual property and copyright;
- ensure that good practice is maintained to the standards defined above.