

## POLICY

### Editor's Responsibilities and Code of Conduct

PEDIATRIC ETHICS SCOPE has adopted two positions published by the World Association of Medical Editors that relate to the conduct and responsibilities of journal editors. The first is the *Professionalism Code of Conduct*,<sup>1</sup> which is as follows:

Medical journal editors are accountable and responsible for what they publish and should:

- Use rigorous evaluation and peer review in publishing scholarly work that has been ethically conducted, is methodologically sound and clearly and completely reported. Editors should correct or retract publications as needed to ensure the integrity of the scientific record and pursue any allegations of misconduct relating to the research, the reviewer, or editor until the matter is resolved.
- Pursue lifelong learning and teaching, both formal and informal, and recognize the need to remedy knowledge deficits in themselves and their coeditors.
- Establish and disseminate clear and transparent policies for editors, authors, and reviewers; identify potential conflicts of interest for editors and reviewers; and prevent conflicts of interest from affecting journal decision-making. Editors should maintain respectful relationships with other individuals, maintain their integrity in all professional relationships, and not misuse their positions for personal gain. Editors should preserve the reputation of their journals through their ethical behavior.
- Ensure the journal is editorially independent from publishers, owners, corporations, industry, and other groups that could present potential conflicts of interest.
- Publish the best journal they can through careful editing and attention to detail; evaluating journal procedures, reviewing journal manuscript and publication metrics, engaging in regular quality improvement, assessing journal and article impact, responding to author and reader feedback, ensuring the preservation of journal content, and maintaining author, reviewer, and editorial board relationships with experts in fields relevant to their journal.
- Address medicine and health-related problems, concerns, and injustices that are relevant to the journal's readers; make the journal accessible to as many readers as possible; and seek representation of authors, reviewers, and editorial board members from low and middle-income countries.

The second position is *The Responsibilities of Medical Editors*,<sup>2</sup> which consists of four main points, and reiterates some of the intent of the first position:

Editors should:

1. Respect their journal's constituents (readers, authors, reviewers, and human subjects of research) by:

- Making the journal's processes (e.g., governance, editorial staff members, number of reviewers, review times, acceptance rate) transparent;
- Thanking reviewers for their work;
- Protecting the confidentiality of human subjects.

2. Promote self-correction in science and participate in efforts to improve the practice of scientific investigation by:

- publishing corrections, retractions, and critiques of published articles;
- Take responsibility for improving the level of scientific investigation and medical writing in the larger community of potential authors and readers.

3. Assure honesty and integrity of the content of their journal and minimize bias by:

- Managing conflicts of interest;
- Maintaining confidentiality of information;
- Separating the editorial and business functions of the journal.

4. Improve the quality of their journal by:

- Becoming familiar with the best practice in editing, peer review, research ethics, methods of investigation, and the rationale and evidence base supporting them;
- Establishing appropriate programs to monitor journals' performance;
- Soliciting external evaluations of the journal's effectiveness.

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1. World Association of Medical Editors. Professionalism Code of Conduct. <http://www.wame.org/wame-professionalism-code-of-conduct>. Posted 12 May 2016. Accessed 22 June 2017.

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2. World Association of Medical Editors. Responsibilities of Medical Editors. <http://www.wame.org/about/policy-statements#Responsibility%20of%20Editors>. Posted 5 August 2003. Accessed 22 June 2017.