

Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement

The publication of an article in a peer-reviewed journal constitutes an essential contributor to the development of knowledge. It also reflects the quality of work of the authors and the institutions they represent. Peer-reviewed articles support and embody the scientific method. Thus, there is an urgent need to set the standards of an expected ethical behavior of all parties involved in the process of publishing: the author, the editor, the reviewer, the publisher and the society concentrated around scientific journals.

The Statement of the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**” regarding Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice has been issued based on the guidelines developed by the [Committee on Publications Ethics \(COPE\)](#) and [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\)](#).

It is the Journal’s consistent policy to improve the journal constantly through publishing the highest quality original scientific articles using a fair and ethical selection and peer-reviewing of submitted manuscripts.

1. Editors’, Authors’ and Reviewers’ Duties

1.1. Editors’ Duties

Decision Regarding Publishing

The final decision as to whether a given paper will be peer-reviewed and then published in the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**” lies with the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal. Once the Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editors have determined that the submitted manuscript is suitable for review (in particular that it meets the requirements provided in [Instructions for Authors](#), a double-blind review model is applied, i.e. the identity of the reviewers is not revealed to the authors and vice versa – the reviewers do not know the identity of the authors and the remaining reviewers.

The single most important criterion for acceptance is the originality of the work. However, a decision to approve a manuscript for publication is not based solely on the scientific validity of its content. Other factors such as the extent and importance of new information included in the paper compared to that in other papers being considered, the journal’s need to represent a wide range of topics, and the overall suitability for the target journal may also influence the editorial decision. The decision is made once all potential concerns regarding possible breach of copyright, libel or plagiarism have been dispelled. The decision, communicated to the authors without delay, involves opinions from Associate Editors, peer reviewers and, if necessary, consultation with the Journal’s [Editorial Board](#).

Editors shall be willing to publish corrections, clarifications and apologies, and to withdraw (retract) an article if its authors are in breach of copyright, have committed libel or plagiarism.

“Fair Play” Principle

Race, gender, sexual orientation, origin, citizenship, political or religious beliefs of the authors of the papers submitted for publication shall not have any effect on their evaluation by the Editor-in-Chief and Associate Editors.

Confidentiality

Editors shall keep all information regarding the manuscripts provided by their authors confidential. Manuscript-specific information must not be discussed or revealed in any way to a third party – it will remain known only to the Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editors, Managing Editors and the reviewers selected for the review of the given manuscript.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Editors shall remain objective and not allow personal beliefs or professional or institutional interests to influence their opinion whether a given manuscript is suitable for publishing or not. Also, they must not use the information included in the submitted articles for personal research purposes without a prior expressed consent of the authors. In case of a conflict of interest arising from competition, cooperation or any other relations with either of the authors or institutions related to a given manuscript, an Associate Editor or other member of the Journal's [Editorial Board](#) shall assume the competence of the Editor-in-Chief in deciding whether the paper will be published or not. Editors shall be obliged to disclose any such conflict of interest and to publish a respective post-factum explanation in case when such conflict has been found to exist. Other actions are also possible, namely publishing a correction or a retraction.

Appeals Process

If an author decides to appeal the decision to not publish their manuscript, the final decision in this respect rests with the Editor-in-Chief. Having consulted the Associate Editors and the reviewers involved with the review of a given manuscript, the Editor-in-Chief may change the original decision to reject the manuscript for publication.

Overlapping, duplicate, redundant publication

The editors of the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**” take seriously all cases of a covert redundant publication (including auto-plagiarism, and particularly so called “salami slicing” where many papers are published based on the same research, and so called “shotgunning” where similar manuscripts are sent for publication to a number of journals). These will be handled as per the COPE guidelines, and the editors may contact the authors' institution for this matter.

Corrections and Retraction

The online version of the paper may be corrected by editors, yet the date of correction must be provided. If following publication a significant error is found in the paper or its substantial portions are deemed invalid, the article should be retracted with an explanation of the reason for the retraction (fraud, error, plagiarism or so called “redundant publication”). Such retraction may also be considered if the published article is found to contain confidential information acquired by the author from a third party and unfairly used in the paper.

The decision to retract a paper rests with the Editor-in-Chief after consultations with other editors (Associate Editors, the [Editorial Board](#) of the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**”) as well as the reviewers involved in the review.

1.2. Authors' Duties

Requirements Regarding Submission of Manuscripts

When submitting a paper to the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**,” authors shall enclose the [Cover Letter](#), in which they represent that their manuscript does not breach copyright of any person and that it has not been published or is being considered for publication elsewhere. They are also to provide precise information regarding the contribution of particular coauthors to the manuscript.

For previously published graphic elements submitted to editors (tables, figures), authors must provide permission to republish from the owner of copyright.

Instructions for authors regarding the preparation and the submission of a manuscript are available in the hard copy form and on the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**” [website](#). Submitting a manuscript for publication obliges the authors to participate actively in the reviewing process and to comply with the expectations of the reviewers/editors that are aimed at the optimization of the submitted content.

Note: The Journal does not charge any fees for submitting, processing or publication of the papers.

Originality

Only the authors’ proper original manuscripts may be submitted for publication, otherwise being rejected or retracted (based on an unethical behavior of the authors following publishing). Any form of plagiarism is unacceptable, including claiming the work, words, data, theoretical concepts and conclusions of others or self-plagiarism – republishing portions of the author’s previous works in order to present them as new ideas. Submitting a paper for publication in more than one journal at once shall be deemed unethical and damnable.

The work and words of other authors must be properly cited. Authors should also reference all sources of their inspiration, including the published articles that contributed to the creation of the manuscript.

Exceptionally, it is possible to reprint or translate a previously published article, yet such work must be properly marked and the consent of the owner of copyright is required.

Authorship of Manuscripts

✓ **Authorship**

As stipulated in the [recommendations of the ICMJE](#), only this person can be deemed an author of a manuscript who:

- has made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the paper; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data required for the paper, and
- has drafted the article or revised it critically for intellectual content, and
- has approved the final version for publication, and
- has taken full accountability for all aspects of the work in ensuring that issues related to the accuracy and integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Authorship implies a significant and creative intellectual contribution to the work, assistance in writing the manuscript and reviewing its final draft; yet authorship roles can vary. The decision regarding co-authorship and the participation of others in the manuscript, and the resulting

sequence in which their names appear, must be taken early in the research process, to avoid disputes and misunderstandings which could delay or prevent the publication of a paper.

On submitting a manuscript for publication in the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**,” the corresponding author is bound to provide information on the specific contributions each author has made to the article (since authors may express different views regarding the nature and magnitude of contributions, each author may be asked to describe their own). Although all authors are responsible for the quality, accuracy, and ethics of the submitted manuscript, one author must be identified who will reply if questions arise or more information is needed, and who will take responsibility for the whole paper (referred to as the corresponding author). The respective contributions in the work must be determined in the [Cover Letter](#) attached to the manuscript. If any of the authors have links to a sponsoring/funding institution or corporation, the nature of the relationship must be provided in the relevant section of the [Cover Letter](#) or in the final part of the manuscript in the following sections: Conflict of Interest, Funding/Support and role of the sponsor, Acknowledgments. Those data points will be published in the article along with the scope of contributions.

The “**Journal of Ultrasonography**” undertakes to publicize and condemn all disclosed cases of “ghost-writing” where the contribution of a particular person has not been revealed, as well as “quest authorship” (“guest” or “gift” author) where a person whose contribution to the manuscript has been close to none or none at all has been declared its author. As stipulated in the *Code of Ethics for Scientific Researcher* of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the major responsibility for handling the revealed misconduct lies with the parties employing scientific researchers, namely universities and high schools, scientific institutions and state or private research centers.

✓ **Acknowledgments**

All contributors to the work who cannot be considered its authors (as they do not meet the aforementioned criteria for authorship) should be listed in the “Acknowledgements” section. Examples of activities that do not qualify a contributor for authorship (as they are insufficient to fall under the legal definition of authorship) are: acquisition of funding, data collection, general supervision of a research group or general administrative support, and writing assistance, statistical calculation, technical editing, language editing, and proofreading (by an author’s editor or a translator). Those whose contributions do not justify authorship may be acknowledged individually or together as a group under a single heading (e.g. “Clinical Investigators” or “Participating Investigators”). In such case their contributions should be specified (e.g. “served as scientific advisors,” “critically reviewed the study proposal,” “collected data,” “provided and cared for human subjects,” “participated in writing or technical editing of the manuscript”) ([ICMJE](#)).

✓ **Changes in Authorship**

In accordance with the guidelines of COPE, the editors of the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**” require that all authors provide a written consent to any proposed changes in authorship of both the submitted and published articles. This applies to additions, deletions, a change of order to the authors’ names or a change to the attribution of contributions. The written consent must be sent via direct email by each of the authors. It is the corresponding author’s responsibility to ensure that all authors express their consent to the proposed changes. In case of a disagreement

amongst the authors over authorship and a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached, the authors must contact their institution(s) for a resolution. It is not the editor's responsibility to resolve any disputes regarding authorship. A change in authorship of a published article can only be made via publication of an Erratum.

Source Citations

Authors must acknowledge sources of all provided data and reference in the article text all relevant prior work.

Scientific Fraud

Authors shall be obliged to present their results in a transparent, accurate and fair manner – submitted manuscripts must contain only the data, statistical analysis and results that are believed to be accurate. Premeditated publication of inaccurate or unverified results is considered unethical and unacceptable.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Authors are expected to disclose – in the [Cover Letter](#) – and in the final part of the article, any potential conflict of interest (financial or of a different nature) that might affect the results or their interpretation. Authors should also ensure that no contractual relations or proprietary considerations exist that would compromise the publication of a submitted manuscript.

Errors after Publication

If authors become aware of an error or inaccuracy after the manuscript has been published, they should immediately notify editors so that a correction/retraction can be made.

Confidentiality

It is the Journal's understanding that all submitted manuscripts and all communication with authors and peer reviewers remains confidential. Authors are also bound to approach communication with the editors of the "**Journal of Ultrasonography**" in this manner: correspondence with the editors, peer review reports and other confidential material must not be posted with any website or otherwise publicized without a prior consent from the editors, regardless of whether or not the submission will eventually be published.

1.3. Reviewers' Duties

Confidentiality

Reviewers shall keep all unpublished manuscripts and related materials confidential. Manuscripts can only be made available to others upon the permission of editors or the publication staff.

Objectivity

During the review process reviewers shall do their utmost to assess the quality of the reviewed paper objectively and accurately. Comments and opinions provided by reviewers that are returned to authors should be impartial, clear and concise.

If a reviewer does not feel qualified enough to evaluate a given manuscript, they may decline to review it.

Timely Peer-Reviewing

Reviewers of manuscripts submitted to the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**” are volunteers believed to have other employment commitments. Therefore, prior to engaging themselves in the review process, they should make sure they will be able to complete the review within a specified time frame. Otherwise, they should decline to review the manuscript. They are expected by the Journal’s publication staff to submit the review within two weeks following the day of taking up the task. If reviewers need additional time, they should inform the Managing Editor or the Editor-in-Chief immediately about the delay. Reviewers may decline to review a manuscript without providing any reason.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

The author of an article and its reviewer should not maintain any close relations, either personal (family ties) or professional (hierarchy). If a reviewer finds that evaluating a given manuscript is in conflict with their interest, their obligation is to decline to review. The conflict of interest can be of a competitive, financial, or collaborative nature – on a personal, company, or institutional area. The reviewers must not use the information included in the manuscript they read for a personal gain.

Any interaction or relationship between author and reviewer that could be construed as a conflict of interest should be disclosed in writing to the Editor-in-Chief along with the refusal to review.

Originality

If during the reading of a manuscript the reviewer realizes that another author’s intellectual property has been infringed, they shall notify the Managing Editor who will in turn notify their superior. The Editor-in-Chief, either himself/herself or through his/her designee, shall make the final decision regarding the publication of the paper.

Source Citations

Reviewers should identify and show the authors all sources and published works they deem crucial that have not been mentioned and cited in the paper.

Comments to Authors

Reviewers shall at all times provide comments to authors and the publication staff keeping in mind that their common effort enhances the quality of the reviewed manuscript. It is their responsibility to provide authors, through the publication staff, with clear, constructive and detailed comments regarding the reviewed work. This principle also applies to manuscripts the reviewers find not suitable for publication. Providing authors only with the information on conclusions drawn from the review, and in particular the failure to inform them about essential drawbacks, even if their paper has been positively assessed, is reprehensible.

2. Procedures for Dealing with Unethical Behavior

2.1. Identification of Unethical Behavior

Misconduct and unethical behavior with respect to the submitted manuscript may be identified and brought to the attention of the editor and publisher at any time, by anyone. Misconduct and unethical behavior may include, but need not be limited to, examples as outlined above. Whoever informs the editor or publisher of such conduct should provide all the sufficient information and evidence in order for an investigation to be initiated. Upon the presentation of ethical allegations concerning a submitted or published manuscript, the editors shall initiate the relevant procedures (based, among others, on the [flowcharts of COPE](#)). All allegations shall be taken seriously and investigated with the utmost diligence, until a successful decision or conclusion is reached.

2.2. Investigation

An initial decision should be taken by the editor, who should consult with or seek advice from the publisher, if appropriate. Evidence should be gathered and treated as confidential, while avoiding spreading any allegations beyond those who need to know. The Editor-in-Chief shall be informed about the course of the procedure on an ongoing basis.

Minor misconduct might be dealt with without the need to consult more widely. In any event, the author should be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations. Having considered the explanations, the editor may make the decision independently, without the need for further consultations. Serious misconduct might require that the employers of the accused be notified. The editor, in consultation with the publisher or the Polish Ultrasound Society (of which the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**” is official publication) as appropriate, should make the decision whether or not to present the allegations to the employers or the person responsible for supervising research at the author’s institution, or to conduct further consultations with a limited number of experts.

Having considered the case, the editors may apply any or all of the following sanctions:

- informing or educating the author or reviewer where there appears to be a misunderstanding or misapplication of acceptable standards
- publication of a formal notice detailing the misconduct
- a formal letter to the supervisor of the author or reviewer
- formal retraction or withdrawal of a publication from the journal, in conjunction with informing the institution of the author or reviewer
- imposition of a formal embargo on contributions from an author or reviewer for a defined period

The sanctions shall be imposed at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief.

3. Copyrights/Intellectual Property Rights

All articles published in the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**” are made available to Readers free of charge.

Editors acknowledge the benefits resulting from making editorial content available to readers. An instant and effective presentation of the results of scientific work internationally, their visibility and a broad availability require the application of an open access model. Understanding global challenges in that matter, we have decided to open the archives of journals under the license Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>) – CC BY-NC-ND (some rights reserved for publishers and authors). Under the terms of the license, the material may be distributed, presented and used for non-commercial purposes only as well on the condition that it is maintained in its original form (no derivative works are allowed). Upon submitting their manuscripts for publication in the “**Journal of Ultrasonography**,” the authors give their consent to making their work available in accordance with the aforementioned rules and declare that their articles are not in breach of any third party rights.

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