

## Ethical Oversight Policy

**Purpose:** This policy outlines our commitment to upholding ethical standards in all aspects of the publication process, including but not limited to consent to publication, publication on vulnerable populations, ethical conduct of research using animals, ethical conduct of research using human subjects, handling confidential data, and ethical business/marketing practices.

**Consent to Publication:** Authors must ensure that individuals mentioned in their manuscripts, including research participants, patients, or other subjects, have given their informed consent for publication. Authors should adhere to recognized ethical guidelines, such as the Declaration of Helsinki or the Belmont Report, when obtaining consent.

**Research on Vulnerable Populations:** Research involving vulnerable populations, including children, prisoners, or individuals with diminished capacity, marginalized communities and/or minorities must adhere to heightened ethical scrutiny. Authors must demonstrate that appropriate measures were taken to protect the rights and welfare of these populations, and that their participation was voluntary and informed.

**Respectful Public Health Research-** We encourage research on the psycho-social and cultural determinants of public health diseases and their implications. However, authors must ensure that their narratives do not malign or present any social group in a negative light. Any research that undermines the dignity of any community will be rejected.

**Ethical Conduct of Research Using Animals:** Authors conducting research involving animals must comply with relevant ethical guidelines, such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals or the Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments (ARRIVE) guidelines. This includes obtaining approval from institutional animal care and use committees (IACUCs) or equivalent regulatory bodies.

**Ethical Conduct of Research Using Human Subjects:** Authors conducting research involving human subjects must adhere to recognized ethical principles, such as those outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki or the Belmont Report. This includes obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, minimizing risks, and obtaining approval from institutional review boards (IRBs) or equivalent ethical review committees.

**Handling Confidential Data:** Authors, editors, and reviewers must handle confidential data with the utmost care and discretion. Confidential information obtained during the review process must not be disclosed or used for personal gain. Editors and reviewers should promptly report any breaches of confidentiality to the editorial office.

**Ethical Business/Marketing Practices:** The editorial office and publisher of Editorial Office are committed to maintaining ethical business and marketing practices. This includes transparent disclosure of publication fees, avoidance of predatory practices, and adherence to industry standards for advertising and promotion.

**Appeals and Retraction Process:** In case of suspected ethical violations or concerns raised by readers, authors, or other stakeholders, Editorial Office has established an appeals and retraction process. Authors have the right to appeal editorial decisions or contest allegations of ethical misconduct. The editorial office will thoroughly investigate appeals and complaints, consulting relevant experts or committees as needed. If ethical violations are confirmed, appropriate actions

will be taken, including retractions of published articles and sanctions against responsible parties. Editorial Office holds the right to inform legal and institutional bodies in case of ethical misconduct if warranted.

**Policy Review:** This Ethical Oversight Policy will be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure alignment with evolving standards and best practices in research ethics and publishing.