

## **Ethical Oversight Policy**

### **Purpose**

This policy outlines our commitment to upholding ethical standards in every aspect of the publication process. It covers consent to publication, research involving vulnerable populations, ethical conduct of research using animals and human subjects, handling of confidential data, and ethical business and marketing practices.

### **Consent to Publication**

Authors must ensure that any individual mentioned in their manuscript — including research participants, patients, or other subjects — has provided informed consent for publication. When obtaining consent, authors should follow recognized ethical guidelines such as the Declaration of Helsinki.

### **Research on Vulnerable Populations**

Research involving vulnerable groups — including children, prisoners, individuals with diminished capacity, marginalized communities, and minorities — requires heightened ethical scrutiny. Authors must demonstrate that appropriate measures were taken to protect the rights and welfare of these participants, and that their participation was voluntary and informed.

### **Respectful Public Health Research**

We encourage research exploring the psychosocial and cultural determinants of public health and their implications. However, authors must ensure that their work does not malign, stereotype, or present any social group in a negative light. Any research that undermines the dignity of a community will be rejected.

### **Animal Research and Reporting Policy**

Authors conducting research involving animals must ensure that all experimental procedures comply with recognized ethical standards and relevant national or institutional regulations. Studies should adhere to local guidelines governing the care, use, and welfare of animals — such as the NACLAR Guidelines (Singapore), the NIH Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (U.S.), or other equivalent frameworks.

Before beginning the study, approval must be obtained from an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or an equivalent ethics committee. The name of the approving body and the approval reference number must be clearly stated in the manuscript.

For publication, authors are required to report animal research in accordance with the ARRIVE (Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments) Guidelines, which promote transparency, completeness, and reproducibility.

The Editorial Board reserves the right to request documentation of ethical approval and compliance with relevant animal welfare and reporting standards at any stage of the review or publication process. Failure to provide such documentation may result in rejection of the manuscript.

### **Ethical Conduct of Research Using Human Subjects**

Authors conducting research involving human subjects must follow recognized ethical principles, such as those outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. This includes obtaining informed consent,

ensuring confidentiality, minimizing risk to participants, and securing approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or equivalent ethics committee.

### **Handling Confidential Data**

Authors, editors, and reviewers must handle confidential data with the utmost care and discretion. Information obtained during the review process must not be disclosed, shared, or used for personal benefit. Any breach of confidentiality must be promptly reported to the editorial office.

### **Ethical Business and Marketing Practices**

The editorial office and publisher are committed to maintaining transparent and ethical business and marketing practices. This includes clear disclosure of publication fees, avoidance of predatory behavior, and adherence to established industry standards for advertising and promotion.

### **Appeals and Retraction Process**

In cases of suspected ethical violations or concerns raised by readers, authors, or other stakeholders, the journal has an established appeals and retraction process. Authors have the right to appeal editorial decisions or contest allegations of misconduct. The editorial office will conduct a thorough investigation, consulting relevant experts or committees as necessary.

If ethical violations are confirmed, appropriate actions — including article retraction or sanctions — will be taken. The journal also reserves the right to inform legal or institutional authorities when warranted.

### **Policy Review**

This Ethical Oversight Policy will be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure it remains aligned with evolving standards and best practices in research ethics and publishing.