



St. George Association
Teslina 10, 10000 Zagreb
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CODE OF ETHICS

FOR AUTHORS, EDITORS, AND REVIEWERS OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE FUTURE JOURNAL AND OTHER JOURNALS THAT ST. GEORGE ASSOCIATION IS PUBLISHER OF

TERMINOLOGY

Author

An author is a creator who participates sufficiently in the research and reporting of results. According to the widely accepted definition of authorship by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), authorship is based on four fundamental criteria:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work.
2. Drafting the work or reviewing it critically for important intellectual content.
3. Final approval of the version to be published.
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

All authors should meet all four criteria. Those not meeting these criteria should be acknowledged as contributors in the acknowledgment section.

Editor

An editor is an expert in the scientific field in which they operate, responsible for the content or a part of the content of the publication they edit.

Editorial Board

The editorial board is a group of experts in the scientific field in which they operate, assigned specific tasks in the publication editing process. Their common goal is to ensure the excellence of the publication.



Reviewer

A reviewer is an expert in the scientific field who performs tasks of objective and critical evaluation, or peer review, of the work proposed for publication.

Publisher

A publisher is a legal entity that initiates and prepares the issuance of a publication.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use and/or appropriation of others' ideas and/or works while presenting those ideas/works as one's own. It is a form of academic dishonesty that is entirely unacceptable in the academic community.

Open Access

Open access is the free, unrestricted online access to digital scientific information, allowing for reading, storing, distribution, searching, retrieving, indexing, and/or other lawful use. Free in this context means permanently free from any restrictions and conditions for access and use (Croatian Declaration on Open Access).

Originality of the Manuscript

The manuscript's originality primarily refers to three elements of the work: the hypothesis and/or research questions, the methods used, and the collected results.

Peer Review

Peer review is a process in which the work of a particular author or group of authors is subjected to an objective, critical evaluation by two or more experts of the same or higher level of competence within a specific scientific field.

I. INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS

This Code of Ethics for Authors, Reviewers, and Editors of St. George Association publications such as NSF (hereinafter: Code) is designed to ensure a set of minimum standards that authors, reviewers, and editors should adhere to.

This Code establishes general ethical guidelines aimed at protecting, guiding, and promoting responsible and ethically grounded behavior and actions of participants in publishing activities of St. George Association, in accordance with fundamental ethical principles and the highest ethical standards of scientific and professional work.



II. GENERAL PROVISIONS

AUTHORS

Article 1

Authors reporting on scientific research are obliged to present their work correctly in accordance with the norms of scientific and academic communication and in the context of previous research, as well as to offer an objective discussion of its significance and importance. Authors are also required to describe their methods and to present their findings clearly and unambiguously. The work should contain sufficient details and references to enable others to verify the work. Deceptive or intentionally inaccurate claims constitute unethical behavior and are not acceptable. Reviews and expert articles should also be precise and objective and works encompassing the views of the editorial board should be clearly indicated.

Article 2

Authors may be requested to provide data related to their work for editorial review purposes, and they should enable access to such data (for example, in an institutional repository) and preserve them even after publication.

Article 3

As a rule, authors should publish the results of their scientific research, and if they have used the work and/or words of others, they should accurately cite/reference them. The method of citation/reference of borrowed text or graphic materials should be in accordance with the rules of the field or NSF journal. Plagiarism in all forms constitutes unethical behavior that is not acceptable.

Article 4

Authors commit to obtaining permission from the copyright holders to publish graphic materials (illustrations, photographs, tables, maps, diagrams, and similar materials protected by copyright laws). Materials protected by copyright may only be reproduced with appropriate permission.

Article 5

Simultaneous submission of the same manuscript, or manuscripts that largely overlap in content, to multiple journals or primary publications constitutes unethical behavior in publishing and is not acceptable. An author should not submit a previously published work to another journal for consideration. Publishing certain types of articles (e.g., translations) in more than one journal is sometimes justified, provided that the primary publication is referenced in the re-publication. Authors and editors of the respective journals must consent to secondary publication based on the same data and interpretation of the primary document.



Article 6

It is always necessary to accurately cite the work of others. Authors should cite sources that have significantly influenced the content of the research and manuscript. Information obtained privately, such as in conversation, correspondence, or discussion with third parties, must not be used or conveyed without explicit written permission from the source, or authorization. Information obtained during the provision of confidential services, such as manuscript reviewing or project funding applications, must not be used without the explicit written consent of the author of the work that was the subject of those services.

Article 7

Authorship should be limited to individuals who have significantly contributed to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the research. All individuals who have significantly contributed should be listed as co-authors. If other individuals have participated in some significant aspects of the research project, they should be acknowledged or listed as contributors. The submitting author should ensure that all actual co-authors are listed and that those who have not truly participated in drafting the paper are not listed, and that all co-authors have seen and approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication.

Article 8

Authors are expected to respond professionally and promptly to editorial and reviewer comments. If an author decides to withdraw a manuscript that has already been submitted for the review process or is not prepared to accept reviewer suggestions, they should immediately inform the editorial board/publisher.

Article 9

Authors should disclose in their manuscripts any financial or other significant conflicts of interest that could influence the results or interpretation of their manuscripts. Manuscripts should clearly state all organizations that have supported the research and all sources of funding, as well as their potential role in conducting the research and processing and publishing its results. If the source of funding is not clearly stated, it is assumed that the author bears the financial costs of the research and manuscript preparation. Examples of possible conflicts of interest that should be disclosed include employment, consultations, stock ownership, fees, paid expert testimony, patent application and registration, and donations or other sources of funding. Potential conflicts of interest should be disclosed at the earliest possible stage.

Article 10

When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in their published work, they must promptly notify the editorial board or publisher and cooperate with the editorial board to retract



or correct the paper. If the editorial board learns from a third party that a published paper contains a significant error, the author must promptly retract or correct the paper, or provide the editorial board with evidence of the correctness of the original work.

EDITORS

Article 11

Editors are responsible for the overall content published in the publication, which means they should strive to meet the needs of readers and authors, have well-defined editorial processes that ensure the quality of published materials, and promote freedom of expression. The editorial board should refrain from considering manuscripts when it is in a conflict of interest due to competition, collaboration, or other relationship or affiliation with any of the authors, companies, or institutions associated with the manuscript. Editors should ensure the integrity of academic records and publish corrections, explanations, retractions, or apologies when necessary.

Article 12

Editorial boards should actively seek opinions from authors, readers, reviewers, and members of the editorial board on ways to improve the publication. It is the duty of the editorial board to support initiatives that will lead to full compliance with scientific and publishing integrity and to inform and educate researchers about publishing ethics provisions. Editorial policies should be modified as needed, considering new professional and scientific insights into peer review, editing, and publishing, as well as the effects of editorial policy on the behavior of authors and reviewers.

Editorial boards should timely inform the publisher of the need to ensure adequate resources, including occasional engagement of other experts (e.g., designers, lawyers, etc.). Editors should systematically evaluate the effects of their author and reviewer guidelines and revise them as necessary, encouraging responsible behavior and discouraging misconduct.

Article 13

Editorial boards should take all appropriate steps to ensure the quality of published material. Editorial boards should have systems in place to detect falsified data (e.g., inappropriate manipulation of graphic materials or copying and paraphrasing text without citing the source) that they can use regularly or in case of suspicion. The use of standard citation styles for literature and other data sources and other reporting standards established in the international community of the relevant scientific field is encouraged. The editorial board should not require authors to cite a publication for which the paper has been proposed.



Article 14

Editorial boards are obligated to protect the confidentiality of information obtained during research or professional interaction. Disclosure of personal data without explicit consent may be permitted only when the public interest outweighs potential harm, when obtaining consent is impossible, and when it is unlikely that a reasonable individual would object to the publication. The policy for publishing personal data should be publicly disclosed and clearly explained to authors.

Article 15

Editorial boards should strive to ensure that research is conducted and published in accordance with appropriate internationally recognized guidelines.

Article 16

If editors suspect or are alerted to scientific misconduct by an author or reviewer, they have an obligation to act, regardless of whether the work has been published or not. Editorial boards must not simply reject manuscripts that raise concerns or suspicions of possible scientific misconduct. Ethical standards dictate the investigation of such cases whenever possible and regardless of the demanding nature of the process and effort involved, with a recommendation to follow the guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (hereinafter: COPE) https://publicationethics.org/files/Best_Practice.pdf, flowcharts <https://publicationethics.org/guidance/Flowcharts>, <https://publicationethics.org/resources/translated-resources/croatian-all-flowcharts>, <https://publicationethics.org/sites/default/files/Full%20set%20of%20flowcharts%20%28CRO%29.pdf>). Editorial boards should primarily seek responses from those whose behavior is in question. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should refer the matter to the relevant employer, institution, or appropriate body, endeavoring to thoroughly investigate the alleged scientific misconduct.

Article 17

Incorrect, inaccurate, or misleading statements must be promptly corrected with due prominence. Editorial boards should follow international guidelines on retractions, such as COPE guidelines. Editorial boards should take steps to reduce the possibility of publishing duplicate publications as well as the presentation of unregistered clinical trials.

Article 18

Editorial boards should encourage the publication of scientific research in open access, for example, by depositing it in institutional, national, and international repositories.



Article 19

Regarding intellectual property issues, editorial boards should collaborate with the publisher in considering potential violations of intellectual property laws and conventions. This can be facilitated using plagiarism detection tools for submitted manuscripts (e.g., computer programs and/or applications that detect textual similarity), as part of the regular editorial process. Editorial boards should support authors whose copyright has been infringed upon or who have been victims of plagiarism.

Article 20

Editorial boards should encourage and be willing to consider reasoned critiques of published work, providing the author of the criticized material with an opportunity to respond. Papers reporting negative results should not be excluded. Editorial boards should also remain open to research that challenges the results of previously published work.

Article 21

Editorial boards should promptly respond to complaints and provide a means for dissatisfied complainants to submit their grievances. This mechanism should be clearly outlined in documents and should include information on how unresolved issues are forwarded to COPE. It is recommended that editorial boards follow the procedures outlined in COPE flowcharts when processing complaints.

Article 22

Editorial decisions should not be influenced by commercial interests. Editorial boards should define any advertising rules regarding the content of the publication and the publication of sponsored supplements (e.g., conference proceedings, etc.). To this end, it is advisable to disclose the sources of income used to finance the publication, including sponsored supplements, additional page fees, etc. Sponsored supplements should undergo the same review process as other works. Acceptance of publishing sponsored supplements should be based on academic quality and reader interest, and the decision should not result from commercial considerations. Reprints should be published as they appear in the publication unless a correction needs to be included in which case it should be clearly identified.

Article 23

Editorial boards should have developed systems for managing their conflicts of interest and those of employees in editorial roles, authors, reviewers, and others. There should be a declared procedure for handling manuscripts by the editor-in-chief, staff, or editorial board members to ensure an unbiased review process. To this end, any conflicts of interest (financial, academic, familial, etc.) in the editor-editorial board-reviewer-author relationship should be avoided.



AUTHOR-EDITOR RELATIONS

Article 24

Every journal should contain instructions for authors (such as at NSF (<https://www.nsf-journal.hr/Guidelines>)). In the instructions, editorial boards should clearly state and explain to authors everything that is expected of them, including criteria for authorship and collaborators on the work, following standards applied within the scientific field.

Article 25

Authors should have access to criteria, flowcharts, and a description of the peer review process, and editorial boards should be prepared to justify any deviation from it. Editorial boards must not alter decisions on the acceptance or rejection of a paper, except in cases of serious issues identified with the submitted work.

Article 26

Editorial boards should ensure that appropriate reviewers are selected for submitted works, i.e., individuals who can assess the work and are free from conflicts of interest. Editorial boards should respect authors' requests for the exclusion of certain individuals if the request is clearly justified and applicable.

Article 27

The editorial board's decisions on the acceptance or rejection of a paper should be based on the importance, originality, and clarity of the paper, the validity of the research, and its relevance to the field of the publication, regardless of the author's gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, nationality, citizenship, political beliefs, etc.

Article 28

In scientific journals, the dates of submission and acceptance of the paper should be published alongside the article.

Article 29

The instructions for authors should have a declared mechanism for authors to appeal against editorial decisions.



EDITOR-REVIEWER RELATIONS

Article 30

The editorial board selects two or more individuals with appropriate expertise to review manuscripts, provides them with clear instructions for conducting the review process, and is responsible for ensuring its objectivity and timeliness.

Article 31

Instructions for reviewers should be regularly updated and should include links to relevant documents (e.g., COPE guidelines). It is not recommended that the instructions for reviewers consist solely of forms for reviewers to enter their evaluations of the manuscript and propose its classification. Instead, it is recommended that the instructions contain detailed descriptions of the criteria for publishing papers. If reviewers are expected to fill out a form, the instructions should explain each element of the review, including the criteria for categorizing papers.

Article 32

The editorial board should provide clear guidelines to reviewers, outlining all expectations, including the confidentiality of the materials sent for review. Before agreeing to review, reviewers should disclose any potential conflicts of interest. Privileged information or ideas obtained through the review process must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage.

Article 33

Editors are encouraged to conduct a preliminary review of submissions to assess their thematic alignment with the journal, verify the scientific relevance of the manuscripts, and check for originality using tools for detecting related publications.

Article 34

Editorial boards should ensure the protection of the reviewers' identities, except in the case of open review, where the reviewer chooses whether their identity will be disclosed or not.

Article 35

Reviewers are encouraged to comment on various ethical issues related to the possibility of unethical research presented in the manuscript. Reviewers are also encouraged to comment on the originality of the manuscript and to exercise caution regarding redundant publication or plagiarism.



Article 36

Authors receive reviewers' comments in full, except for the part intended exclusively for the editorial board.

Article 37

Editorial boards recognize and disclose the contributions of reviewers in numerous ways and encourage academic and scientific institutions to recognize the activities of reviewers and acknowledge peer review as an important part of scientific contribution.

Article 38

Editorial boards should ensure fair, impartial, and timely review and confidentiality of submitted manuscripts during the peer-review process and publication. To this end, editors and reviewers will be continuously educated on the latest guidelines, recommendations, and examples of best practices in review procedures and journal management and will systematically monitor research in the field of scientific publishing and technological development. Peer-review methods that are most suitable for scientific publications and the scientific community that the respective scientific publication serves will be adopted, respecting existing practices of more advanced environments whose implementation could enhance existing peer review. Problematic cases will be reported to COPE, especially in cases where they are not included in COPE flowcharts or when there are suspicions of new instances of scientific misconduct.

Article 39

Editorial boards should act appropriately in the case of ethical complaints regarding a submitted manuscript or published work. These measures involve contacting the authors of the manuscript or published work and addressing the complaints or allegations with due diligence. If there is no response to the complaint, further actions may include reaching out to relevant institutions and the academic community, as well as issuing corrections, retractions, expressions of concern, or other appropriate responses. Every reported case of unethical behavior must be investigated, even if it is discovered several years after publication.

EDITOR-READER RELATIONS

Article 40

Readers should be informed about who funded the research or other scientific engagement and whether the investors had any role in the research and publication, and if so, what role. Unreviewed parts of the publication should be clearly marked.



Article 41

Editorial boards should systematically adopt processes that promote accuracy, completeness, and clarity of research reporting, including technical editing and the use of appropriate guidelines and regulations.

Article 42

Editorial boards should request a signed statement from all authors confirming their acceptance of authorship and responsibility for the work. Additionally, they may inform readers about the contributions of individual authors and contributors to the work (authorship and contributorship), transparently stating contributions and discouraging inappropriate behavior in authorship attribution. This includes situations where authors significantly contribute to the work but are not listed as authors (ghost authorship) or where authors are listed but did not contribute to the work to a degree sufficient for authorship (guest authorship).

Article 43

Editorial boards should inform readers about the steps taken to ensure that the published works of editorial board members and other individuals involved in the publication process are objectively and impartially evaluated.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

Article 44

The editor-in-chief should provide new editorial board members with guidelines on everything that is expected of them and should keep existing members updated on new policies and developments.

Article 45

Members of the editorial board should have clear guidelines regarding their expected functions and duties, which may include roles such as promoting the journal, supporting and promoting publications, pre-reviewing and reviewing manuscripts, seeking the best authors and works, actively encouraging manuscript submissions, reviewing manuscripts, accepting writing introductory articles, reviewing and commenting on works within their specific scientific field, as well as participating in and contributing to editorial board meetings. At least once a year, editorial board members should be invited to evaluate management, provide comments and suggestions for improving the publication or the editorial board's work, and be informed about any changes in the journal's/publication's policy as well as future challenges.



EDITOR-PUBLISHER RELATIONS

Article 46

The relationship between the editorial board and publishers is often complex but should be firmly based on the principle of editorial independence. Editors should make decisions about the works they will publish based on quality and suitability without interference from publishers.

Article 47

Editors should regularly communicate with the St. George Association Board.

REVIEWERS

Article 48

The task of the reviewer is to critically, yet constructively, evaluate the received manuscript and provide detailed and reasoned comments and suggestions related to the conducted research and the way it is presented in the paper.

Article 49

The reviewer assists the editor in making editorial decisions and through the editorial communications with the author may also assist the author in improving the paper. Peer review is an essential part of formal scientific communication and is at the heart of the scientific method.

Article 50

A selected reviewer who believes they are not qualified, who for other reasons believes they should not review the manuscript, or who knows they will not be able to complete the review on time, should inform the editor and withdraw from the review process.

Article 51

Considering the increasing use of new research methods in scientific research, editorial boards should ensure that reviewers are competent to assess the manuscript and research methods contained therein.

Article 52

Every manuscript submitted for review and the review itself should be treated as confidential documents. They should not be shown, published, or discussed with other individuals without the approval of the editorial board.



Article 53

Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate.

Article 54

Reviewers should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.

Article 55

Reviewers should recognize important published works that the authors have not cited. Any claim that observations, derivation, or argument has been previously published should be accompanied by a citation. Reviewers should also alert the editor to significant similarities or overlaps between the manuscript under consideration and any published work of which they have personal knowledge. Reviewers should not unduly suggest that authors include citations of the reviewer's work.

Article 56

Reviewers must not use unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted manuscript for their research without the explicit written consent of the author. Confidential information or ideas obtained through the review process must remain confidential and should not be used for personal gain.

Article 57

Reviewers should not agree to review manuscripts that may imply potential conflicts of interest (see Guidelines for Suggesting Reviewers).

Article 58

Reviewers are expected to adhere to the assigned deadline for the review.

III. FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 59

Compliance with the provisions of this Code is mandatory for all authors, editors, and reviewers collaborating on publications of the St. George Association.

Article 60

In order to uphold the fundamental principles of the Code, it is the right and responsibility of every participant engaged in the publishing activities of the St. George Association to acquaint themselves with this Code. Furthermore, every stakeholder involved in the publishing activities



of the St. George Association is obligated to notify the president and Board of St. George Association of any potential or actual breaches of this Code. Any unfounded report, if it is determined that the complainant was aware of the unfounded nature of the report, is considered a violation of the Code and is subject to sanctions.

Article 61

The terms used in this Code which denote gender are used neutrally and apply equally to both male and female genders.

Article 62

This Code of Ethics shall enter into force on the day of its adoption.

National Security and the Future Editor-in-Chief
Member of the Bord of St. George Association

Assist.Prof. Gordan Akrap

Note: This document is based, among other sources, on the 1999 COPE Guidelines, the 2003 COPE Code of Conduct, the 2007 COPE Best Practice Guidelines, the 2011 COPE Code of Conduct and Best Practice for Journal Editors, the 2014 Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing, Ethical Procedures and Editorial Guidelines for Journal Publishing (<http://www.librietliberi.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Eti%C4%8Dki-postupnik-LL-2015.pdf>); Ethical Code of the Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Croatia.