

Realms of publication ethics

“Every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end.”
– Seneca

As Indian Journal of Ophthalmology (IJO) scales greater heights, it is time to revisit the realms of publication ethics. Publication ethics encompasses the guidelines on ethical standards set to define the intricacies of published scientific research.^[1] It is imperative for authors and editors to follow an ethical code of conduct and best practice guidelines that define publication ethics^[2] and advise editors on how to handle cases of research and publication misconduct. It is desirable for authors submitting various formats of research communication to checklist their work through the requirements criteria of appropriate approvals and consent, precision of research data, plagiarism, submission malpractice, authorship ethics, and conflict of interest.^[2,3]

A peer-reviewed publication goes beyond being a simple research communication by being representative of the eminence and impact of the authors and the institutions they hail from. Therefore, maintaining the ethical morale of research publishing is of prime importance. Publication ethics involves both aspects of the publication process – research writing submission and review process. Good conduct in publication review process involves the editorial team members and reviewers resorting to good practice ethics, while treading through the process of assessing the suitability of a submission for publication. For all those standing tall on the editorial board, it also comes along with the commitment to shoulder the responsibility by contributing time and good intellect.

Good conduct in publication submission process involves all authors to honor a good conscience in research conduct and writing. Ignoring requisite approvals and consents while performing research work, fabricating research data, plagiarism (clear plagiarism, minor copying, self-plagiarism), salami slicing, duplicate publication, inappropriate self-citation, authorship malpractice (ghost, gift, and guest authorship), and competing interests still constitute some of the common misconducts in publication ethics. Publication ethics standard-setting bodies, such as the Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE), International Council of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), and Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT), detail the ethical behavior expected from submitting authors and consequences of misconduct. Rather than the consequences to publication misconduct serving as the deterrent to committing misconduct in publication submissions, it is desirable that the high morale of contributing authors be the stimulus to conform to good publication ethics. The onus lies on the submitting academic team to avoid such malpractice or misconduct. Where editorial teams are required to act as publication police for research misconduct, it speaks of poor moral standards of contributing authors, with resultant ruination of the image of the journal publishing their work. Authors need to realize that ethical responsibilities encompass not only the conduct of research, but also that which involves research writing and submission.

With the advent of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technologies (such as Large Language Models [LLMs], chatbots,

and image creators) which are increasingly put to use in the production of submitted work, it is the responsibility of human authors to be able to confirm the absence of plagiarism in all parts of their submission, both in text and images produced by AI.

Every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end. This beginning’s end witnessed the epic journey of India’s research publication touching new statistics metrics,^[4] under the phenomenal leadership of Dr. Santosh Honavar and his team, that has stood in good stead for Indian research matrix. Let our adoption of good ethics practice in research review, research writing submission, and research reading not tarnish the glowing hue of IJO in the years to come. Let us all stand tall, not just in the surge in statistics in our published research, but also in its quality, standard, and morale, being of the highest order.

As I stand at the helm of this new beginning, in eternal gratitude for this responsibility entrusted to me, we, the new team, seek the steadfast support of all the members of All India Ophthalmological Society in steering forward the renaissance of IJO to newer horizons.

There is no end to learning, but there are many beginnings.
-Tim Johnson

M Vanathi

Cornea & Ocular Surface, Cataract & Refractive Services,
Dr R P Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, All India Institute of Medical
Sciences, New Delhi 110029, India.
Email: mvanathi.rpc@gmail.com

References

1. Sengupta S, Honavar SG. Publication ethics. Indian J Ophthalmol 2017;65:429-32.
2. COPE Guidelines: Ethics toolkit for a successful editorial office. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.24318/AkFpEBd1>.
3. Available from: <https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>.
4. Honavar, Santosh G. Embracing vision and empowering change: My unforgettable journey as the Editor of the Indian Journal of Ophthalmology. Indian J Ophthalmol 2023;71:2635-7.

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code:	Website: https://journals.lww.com/ijo
	DOI: 10.4103/IJO.IJO_1901_23

Cite this article as: Vanathi M. Realms of publication ethics. Indian J Ophthalmol 2023;71:2929.