

Requiring disclosure of potential conflicts of interest from authors, reviewers, and editorial staff is crucial for maintaining transparency, integrity, and trustworthiness in scholarly publishing. Conflicts of interest can stem from various factors, including financial interests, institutional affiliations, funding sources, personal relationships, and professional obligations, all of which may influence or be perceived to influence the objectivity and impartiality of research or editorial decisions.

1. Authors' Disclosure:

- Authors should disclose any financial interests, affiliations, or relationships that may be perceived as potential conflicts of interest related to the research presented in their manuscript.
- Disclosures should encompass financial relationships with commercial entities (e.g., pharmaceutical companies, biomedical device manufacturers, or other industry partners), consulting fees, honoraria, stock ownership, patents, or funding sources that could influence the interpretation or presentation of research findings.
- Non-financial conflicts of interest, such as personal relationships, professional affiliations, or institutional biases that may affect objectivity or impartiality, should also be disclosed.

2. Reviewers' Disclosure:

- Reviewers should disclose potential conflicts of interest that could compromise their ability to provide an unbiased evaluation of the manuscript.
- They should refrain from accepting assignments for manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest, such as collaborations with the authors, competitive relationships, or personal biases.
- Editors should consider reviewers' disclosures when selecting appropriate reviewers for manuscript evaluation and may exclude reviewers with significant conflicts of interest from the peer review process.

3. Editorial Staff Disclosure:

- Editorial staff, including editors-in-chief, associate editors, and editorial assistants, should disclose conflicts of interest arising from their editorial roles or professional affiliations.
- They should abstain from involvement in editorial decisions or handling of manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest, ensuring impartiality and fairness in the editorial process.
- Clear policies and procedures for handling conflicts of interest among editorial staff should be established, including mechanisms for disclosure, review, and resolution.

4. Disclosure Requirements:

- Written disclosures of potential conflicts of interest should be provided by authors, reviewers, and editorial staff at the time of manuscript submission, peer review, or editorial decision-making.
- Disclosures should be comprehensive, transparent, and updated as necessary throughout the publication process to reflect any changes in financial interests, affiliations, or relationships.
- Journals should include specific instructions and guidelines for authors, reviewers, and editorial staff regarding conflict of interest disclosure requirements in their submission guidelines, reviewer instructions, and editorial policies.

5. Management of Conflicts of Interest:

- Editors should assess disclosed conflicts of interest and take appropriate actions to mitigate potential biases or undue influence on editorial or publishing decisions.
- Depending on the severity and nature of conflicts of interest, actions may include recusal from editorial duties, appointment of alternative reviewers or editors, disclosure of conflicts in published articles, or editorial statements regarding conflicts of interest.

By implementing a robust conflict of interest disclosure policy and promoting transparency and accountability among authors, reviewers, and editorial staff, journals can uphold the integrity, credibility, and impartiality of the scholarly publishing process. Transparent disclosure of conflicts of interest enhances trust, promotes responsible conduct, and safeguards the interests of readers, authors, and the research community.