PUBLICATION ETHICS AND MALPRACTICE STATEMENT

DUTIES OF EDITORS

Fair play and editorial independence

Editors evaluate submitted manuscripts exclusively on the basis of their academic merit (importance, originality, study's validity, clarity) and its relevance to the journal's scope, without regard to the authors' race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, citizenship, religious belief, political philosophy or institutional affiliation. Decisions to edit and publish are not determined by the policies of governments or any other agencies outside of the journal itself. The Editors has full authority over the entire editorial content of the journal and the timing of publication of that content.

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Editors and editorial staff will not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

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The Editors ensure that all submitted manuscripts being considered for publication undergo peer-review by at least two reviewers who are expert in the field. The Editors are responsible for deciding which of the manuscripts submitted to the journal will be published, based on the validation of the work in question, its importance to researchers and readers, the reviewers' comments, and such legal requirements as are currently in force regarding libel, copyright infringement and plagiarism. The Editors may confer with other editors or reviewers in making this decision.

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Editors (in conjunction with the publisher and/or society) will take responsive measures when ethical concerns are raised with regard to a submitted manuscript or published paper. Every reported act of unethical publishing behavior will be looked into, even if it is discovered years after publication. AP-SMART editors follow the COPE Flowcharts when dealing with cases of suspected misconduct. If, on investigation, the ethical concern is well-founded, a correction, retraction, expression of concern or another note as may be relevant, will be published in the journal.

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Contribution to editorial decisions

Peer review assists Editors in making editorial decisions and, through editorial communications with authors, may assist authors in improving their manuscripts. Peer review is an essential component of formal scholarly communication and lies at the heart of scientific endeavor.

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Any invited referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should immediately notify the Editors and decline the invitation to review so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

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Any manuscripts received for review are confidential documents and must be treated as such; they must not be shown to or discussed with others except if authorized by the Editors (who would only do so under exceptional and specific circumstances). This applies also to invited reviewers who decline the review invitation.

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Authors of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed and the results, followed by an objective discussion of the significance of the work. The manuscript should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Review articles should be accurate, objective and comprehensive, while editorial 'opinion' or perspective pieces should be clearly identified as such. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

Data access and retention
Authors may be asked to provide the raw data of their study together with the manuscript for editorial review and should be prepared to make the data publicly available if practicable. In any event, authors should ensure accessibility of such data to other competent professionals for at least 10 years after publication (preferably via an institutional or subject-based data repository or other data center), provided that the confidentiality of the participants can be protected and legal rights concerning proprietary data do not preclude their release.

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Authorship of the manuscript

Only persons who meet these authorship criteria should be listed as authors in the manuscript as they must be able to take public responsibility for the content: (i) made significant contributions to the conception, design, execution, data acquisition, or analysis/interpretation of the study; and (ii) drafted the manuscript or revised it critically for important intellectual content; and (iii) have seen and approved the final version of the paper and agreed to its submission for publication. All persons who made substantial contributions to the work reported in the manuscript (such as technical help, writing and editing assistance, general support) but who do not meet the criteria for authorship must not be listed as an author, but should be acknowledged in the "Acknowledgements" section after their written permission to be named as been obtained. The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate coauthors (according to the above definition) and no inappropriate coauthors are included in the author list and verify that all coauthors have seen and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to its submission for publication.

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- Authors should consult the updated CONsolidated Standards Of Reporting Trials (**CONSORT Statement**): Schulz KF, Altman DG, Moher D, CONSORT Group (2010). CONSORT 2010 Statement: updated guidelines for reporting parallel group randomised trials. PLoS Med 7(3): e1000251. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000251. http://www.consort-statement.org

• **Systematic review or metaanalysis**. Authors should consult the **PRISMA Statement**: Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, and the PRISMA Group. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses: the PRISMA Statement. Ann Intern Med 2009;151:264-9. http://www.prisma-statement.org

• **Metaanalysis or systematic review of observational studies**. Authors should consult the MOOSE Statement: Stroup DF, Berlin JA, Morton SC, et al, for the Meta-analysis Of Observational Studies in Epidemiology [MOOSE] group. Metaanalysis Of Observational Studies in Epidemiology: a proposal for reporting. JAMA 2000;283:2008-12. http://www.consort-statement.org/resources/downloads/other-instruments

• **Diagnostic test(s)**. Authors should consult STAndards for the Reporting of Diagnostic accuracy studies (STARD Statement): Bossuyt PM, Reitsma JB, Bruns DE, et al, for the STARD Group. Towards complete and accurate reporting of studies of diagnostic accuracy: the STARD Initiative. Clin Chem 2003;49:1-6. http://www.stard-statement.org

• **Observational study in epidemiology**. Authors should consult the **STROBE Statement**: von Elm E, Altman DG, Egger M, Pocock SJ, Gøtzsche PC, Vandenbroucke JP; STROBE Initiative. The STrengthening the Reporting of OBservational studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) statement: guidelines for reporting observational studies. J Clin Epidemiol 2008;61:344-9. http://www.strobe-statement.org or PLoS Med. 2007 Oct 16;4(10):e296. PMID: 17941714

• **Health economics**. In addition to the general instructions for authors and other guidelines applicable to the study reported in a submitted manuscript (i.e. CONSORT guidelines for a randomized controlled trial), authors of health economics manuscripts should consider address them in the manuscript. http://cdn.elsevier.com/promis_misc/ajoghealth.pdf

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Translational Science

The only type of non-clinical research considered must be translational in nature and contain biological implications for obstetrics and gynecology. Additionally, the direct clinical relevance of every submission is considered when an editorial decision is made. Basic science without direct clinical relevance will not be considered.

As many definitions of basic and translational science abound, please see the following translational science examples to assist you in differentiating study types. If uncertain, authors may email an abstract to either editorial office with an inquiry as to whether or not the submission is encouraged. However, this does not guarantee acceptance.

Translational science examples

Ectopic Pregnancy

Clinical Study: an observational cohort study which shows that patients with a subnormal increase in hCG maternal serum concentration are at increased risk for ectopic pregnancy.

Translational Science: proteomic analysis of maternal plasma shows differentially-expressed proteins in patients with ectopic vs. normal pregnancy.

Translational Science: analysis of techniques to enhance the adoption of best practices in caring for women with ectopic pregnancy.

Basic Science: a description of the glycosylation of protein structure of hCG (even if it is based on the purification of hCG from patients with ectopic pregnancies).

Preterm birth

Clinical Study: an observational study in which a particular biomarker measured in the mid-trimester increases or decreases the risk for spontaneous preterm labor and delivery.

Translational Science: the transcriptome, proteome, genome, or metabolome of patients who subsequently have spontaneous preterm labor and delivery

Basic Science: protein sequence of a particular biomarker.

Peer review

Authors are obliged to participate in the peer review process and cooperate fully by responding promptly to Editors' requests for raw data, clarifications, and proof of ethics approval, patient consents and copyright permissions. In the case of a first decision of "revisions necessary", authors should respond to the reviewers' comments systematically, point by point, and in a timely manner, revising and re-submitting their manuscript to the journal by the deadline given.

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