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## **Publication Ethics**

The key features of the open access (OA) publishing model, namely free access to articles and author payment, have brought about many new challenges to publishers. Since our publishing philosophy at the Baishideng Publishing Group (BPG) is to discover and disseminate salient and timely knowledge, we only accept manuscripts that adhere to the ethical guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and which pass strict single-blind peer review. In order to avoid authors' academic misconduct, we do not allow the authors to recommend the reviewers for their papers and instead we select reviewers with expertise in the relevant field from our database of editorial board members and highly influential scientists. As a publisher of OA journals, it is our duty and responsibility to: (1) follow the code of conduct for publishers; (2) publish articles in a more standardized, open and transparent manner; (3) disclose important publishing information; (4) establish and implement a reasonable publishing expenditure and pricing system as well as a comprehensive academic quality management system and an efficient management system to avoid plagiarism and citation manipulation; and (5) to proclaim and demonstrate our determination and dedication to controlling editing and publishing quality.

### **1 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PUBLISHERS**

**1.1 Following the COPE code of conduct for publishers:** The manuscript publishing process of the BPG is founded upon a clear definition of the relationship between authors, peer reviewers and our staff. That foundation is strengthened by consistent respect for the privacy of the authors and peer reviewers, protection of intellectual property and copyright, and fostering of editorial independence. For more information

on our guidelines for the manuscript publishing process, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/193>.

**1.2 Following the COPE code of conduct for journal editors:** The manuscript editing process of the BPG begins with ensuring that editors understand their general duties and responsibilities, so that they may efficiently and effectively recognize manuscripts that fit the views and scope of the journal that they represent. This knowledge will also promote their activities and motivations to meet the needs of readers and authors, to constantly improve the journal they represent. The manuscript editing process has systematic steps in place to assure the quality of the material selected for publication. Each step is rooted in the core values of championing freedom of expression, maintaining integrity of the academic record, ensuring the business needs do not compromise intellectual and ethical standards, and publishing corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when needed. For more information on our guidelines for the manuscript publishing process, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/193>.

**1.3 Following the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) criteria for journal indexing:** All of our 43 journals, which include 1 Chinese-language journal and 42 English-language journals, meet the basic requirements for indexing by the DOAJ. These basic requirements include aims, scope, editorial board members, instructions for authors, description of article quality control, open access statement, policy of dealing with plagiarism, and permission statement.

**1.4 Following the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) best practices:** All of our 43 journals are published according to the basic guide to best practices in licensing and attribution in open access publishing developed by the OASPA. For information on permissions for the *World Journal of Gastroenterology (WJG)*, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/1007-9327/Nav/456>.

**1.5 Following the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) editing criteria:** All of our 42 English-language journals are edited according to the policies and recommendations of best practices for medical journal editors developed by the WAME.

**1.6 Following the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recommendations:** All of our 42 English-language journals are edited according to the recommendations for conduct, reporting, editing and publication of scholarly work in medical journals developed by the ICMJE. For information on our 42 journals indexed in ICMJE, please visit the website at <http://www.icmje.org/journals-following-the-icmje-recommendations/>.

**1.7 Following the academic rules and norms:** All of our 42 English-language journals follow the academic rules and norms. Authors must provide human and animal rights statement, institutional review board statement, informed consent statement, clinical trial registration statement, institutional animal care and use committee statement, animal care and use statement, biostatistics statement, conflict-of-interest statement, and data sharing statement. These statements (and confirmatory documents, where applicable) are published online together with the manuscript. For information on the academic rules and norms, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/GerInfo/243>.

## **2 TRANSPARENCY OF ACADEMIC PUBLISHING**

**2.1 Peer review process:** All of our 42 English-language journals use single-blind peer review. The manuscript peer review process consists of the following steps: the science editor previews the manuscript; the science editor sends the manuscript for peer review; the science editor urges peer reviewers to facilitate the peer review or finds new reviewer(s) who can do so in an expeditious but careful manner; the science editor reviews each peer reviewer's comments; upon resubmission, the science editor confirms

whether the authors have revised the manuscript according to the peer reviewer's comments; the editorial director reviews the peer reviewer's comments; upon resubmission, the editorial director confirms whether the authors have revised the manuscript according to each peer reviewer's comments; finally, the journal editor-in-chief and company editor-in-chief review the science editor-approved and editorial director-approved resubmission and each of the peer reviewer's comments, and confirm whether the authors have revised the manuscript according to the peer reviewer's comments. For detailed information on the manuscript peer review process, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/GerInfo/241>.

**2.2 Editorial board members:** The editorial board members of our 42 English-language journals consist of a total 16,695 experts in the relevant fields. These experts come from 123 countries or regions across the globe. The greatest number of experts is from the United States (3,750), who account for 21.2% of our total experts. For more information on the editorial board members based on country or region, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/memberstatistics>. For example, the editorial board of the *WJG* in particular consists of 1,514 members; for more information on each *WJG* editorial board member, including academic degree, professional title, affiliations and personal profile, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/1007-9327/editorialboard.htm>.

**2.3 Editorial team/contact:** BPG possesses a professional editing and publishing team consisting of 22 full-time employees, including president, editor-in-chief, chief financial officer, vice editor-in-chief, vice general manager, editorial directors, assistant editors, science editors, language editors, and electronic editors. For more information on BPG staff, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/members.htm>. For contact, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/contact.htm>.

**2.4 Article processing charge:** Information on the article processing charge (APC) for articles published by BPG and on waiving of the APC are provided on the journal's

home page. For information on the APC for articles published in the WJG in particular, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/1007-9327/Nav/452>.

**2.5 Copyright:** For all articles published by BPG, the copyright is owned by the article's authors. All HTML or PDF articles published by BPG specifically state the following copyright information: "©The Author(s) 2017. Published by Baishideng Publishing Group Inc. All rights reserved." For information on copyright of articles published in the WJG in particular, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/1007-9327/full/v23/i6/931.htm>.

**2.6 Publication misconduct:** Publication misconduct includes plagiarism, citation manipulation, and data falsification. Immediately upon identification of any form of publication misconduct, BPG directly addresses it according to the COPE code of conduct (or equivalent). For more information on our policy of dealing with publication misconduct, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/208>.

**2.7 Ownership and management:** All 43 journals published by BPG, including 1 Chinese-language journal and 42 English-language journals, are owned by BPG. All of these journals are now published in the United States and registered in the United States National Library of Medicine. The editing and publishing of the 43 journals are managed by BPG. For more information on the 43 journals, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/journals.htm>.

**2.8 Journal website:** The website home pages of the 43 BPG journals display important information on copyright transfer, editorial board members, publication misconduct, the current issue, E-bound journals, E-journals, high impact articles, journal scope and aims (i.e. 'about the journal'), all issues, open access, the peer-review process, guidelines for authors, article processing charge, permissions, submission of a manuscript, and senior scholars/peer reviewers. For more information on the 43 journals, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/journals.htm>.

**2.9 Journal name:** The names of the 43 journals published by BPG are registered at issn.org [the website of the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) International Centre], with ISSN numbers obtained. For the list of the 43 journals, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/journals.htm>.

**2.10 Conflict-of-interest:** BPG has formulated a policy for managing conflicts of interest for authors, editorial board members, peer reviewers, and our staff. A conflict-of-interest statement is required for all article and study types. Once any conflict of interest is found by reviewers, the manuscript is required to be sent back to the editorial office immediately. For more information on the conflict-of-interest statement, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/GerInfo/236>.

**2.11 Online access to articles:** All of the 43 journals published by BPG are published as OA Journals. Readers can read and download all of the articles for free. For example, for the current issue of the *WJG*, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/1007-9327/journal/v23/i6/index.htm>.

**2.12 Revenue sources:** All of the 43 journals published by BPG adopt the OA publishing model. The revenue sources are the APC, exclusive journal database cooperation agreement, copyright permission, and reprints. For more information on the revenue sources, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/265>.

**2.13 Advertising:** All of the 42 English-language journals published by BPG are so-called green journals, which reject any advertising.

**2.14 Publication frequency:** All of the 43 journals published by BPG indicate the publication frequency on the respective journal's website home page. Taking the *World Journal of Hepatology* as an example, a total of 36 issues are published each year, with 3 issues published on the 8th, 18th, and 28th of each month, respectively. For information on publication frequency, please visit our website at <https://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/GerInfo/271>.

**2.15 Archiving:** All of the 43 journals published by BPG are archived by the BPG itself, and 23 are also archived in PubMed.

**2.16 Direct marketing:** All of the 43 journals published by BPG propagandize themselves or invite manuscripts through important international congresses in the relevant field or the BPG highly influential scientists database.

### **3 DISCLOSURE OF IMPORTANT PUBLISHING INFORMATION**

**3.1 Peer review report:** All peer review reports, including the journal editor-in-chief's peer review report, are released online together with the manuscript. The names of peer reviewers and the peer review report classifications for academic quality and language quality are released as footnotes in the HTML version. Taking the *WJG* as an example, for information on the names of peer reviewers and the peer review report classifications for academic quality and language quality, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/1007-9327/full/v23/i6/935.htm>.

**3.2 Response to the reviewer's comments:** The authors' response to the reviewer's comments is released online together with the manuscript.

**3.3 Study approval report for studies involving human participants or animals:** The documents confirming the institutional review board statement, institutional animal care and use committee statement, and animal care and use statement provided by the authors' institution are released online together with the manuscript.

**3.3 Clinical trial registration:** The clinical trial registration statement provided by the authors' institution is released online together with the manuscript.

**3.4 Biostatistics statement:** The biostatistics statement provided by the authors is released online together with the manuscript.

**3.5 Source of funding:** The documentation confirming the funding source provided by the authors' institution is released online together with the manuscript.

**3.6 Conflict-of-interest statement:** The conflict-of-interest statement provided by the authors is released in the footnote.

**3.7 Author contributions statement:** The author contributions statement provided by authors is released as footnotes in the article.

**3.8 Copyright transfer letter:** The copyright transfer letter provided by the authors is released online together with the manuscript.

**3.9 Language editing certificate:** The language editing certificate provided by non-native speakers of English is released online together with the manuscript.

**3.10 Academic misconduct detection report:** Screenshots of the results obtained from Google search and iThenticate (CrossCheck) detection reports are released online together with the manuscript.

**3.11 Guidelines for the manuscript publishing process:** All the information on our guidelines for the manuscript publishing process is freely accessible to all authors, including about the BPG, criteria for manuscript submission by authors, criteria for manuscript revision by authors, academic rules and norms, criteria for academic misconduct detection, criteria for manuscript final acceptance, manuscript publishing process, manuscript registration process, manuscript peer-review process, scientific editing process for manuscripts, manuscript evaluation process, work flow of journal editor-in-chief, work flow of company editor-in-chief for initial and final acceptance of a manuscript, work flow for language editing of manuscripts submitted by non-native speakers of English, and manuscript production process for electronic editors. For more information on our guidelines for the manuscript publishing process, please visit our website at <http://www.wjgnet.com/bpg/gerinfo/193>.

**3.12 Manuscript publishing process:** All the information on the manuscript publishing process is freely accessible to all authors and readers, including the date when peer-review was started, date of first decision, date when the manuscript was accepted by the journal editor-in-chief and date when the manuscript was accepted by the company

editor-in-chief, and all related documents are published together with the manuscript. Taking a manuscript (No. 30182) published in the *World Journal of Orthopedics* as an example, for information on the manuscript publishing process for this particular manuscript, please visit our website at <https://www.f6publishing.com/PublishedArticleProcessDetail/3018>.

#### **4 PUBLISHING EXPENDITURE AND PRICING SYSTEM**

Reasonable APC can be calculated based on the following expenditures:

- 4.1 Renting an office.
- 4.2 Purchasing server and broadband service.
- 4.3 Employing the general manager, editor-in-chief, assistant editors, science editors, language editors, and electronic editors.
- 4.4 Training of all staff.
- 4.5 Creating all edited and published documents, including guidelines for authors and guidelines for manuscript preparation and the editing and publishing process.
- 4.6 Developing and maintaining the electronic system for manuscript submission, peer review, and production.
- 4.7 Developing and maintaining the journal website and the publication release system.
- 4.8 Creating the editorial board members database.
- 4.9 Creating the highly influential scientists database.
- 4.10 Costs for science editors to attend important international academic conferences and publishing industry conferences.
- 4.11 Wages of all staff and employees.

4.12 Expenses associated with waiving the publication fee for some articles.

## 5 ACADEMIC PUBLISHING QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

**5.1 Academic quality management by the assistant editor:** The assistant editor controls the academic quality according to the work flow of the manuscript's registration set forth for the assistant editor. The work flow of this manuscript registration for the assistant editor includes manuscript submission, retrieval of the authors' submission histories, detection of duplicate publication, manuscript check, check of the registered manuscript information, and confirmation of manuscript receipt. To protect against instances of academic misconduct, the authors of manuscripts reporting basic and clinical studies must submit documentation regarding the academic rules and norms; these include the institutional review board statement, clinical trial registration statement, informed consent statement, biostatistics statement, and conflict-of-interest statement. In 2016, we received a total of 8,115 invited or submitted manuscripts for our 42 English-language journals, of which 455 (5.6%) were rejected and not sent for peer-review due to not following the academic rules and norms. For example, we received a total of 4,638 manuscripts for the *WJG* in 2016, and 296 (6.4%) were rejected and not sent for peer-review due to not following the academic rules and norms; these included 292 (98.6%) original articles, 1 review article, and 3 case reports. The authors of these rejected manuscripts came from 39 countries or regions. Authors from China had the highest number of rejected manuscripts ( $n = 164$ ; 55.4%), followed by those from Turkey ( $n = 22$ ; 7.4%), Italy ( $n = 17$ ; 5.7%), Taiwan ( $n = 10$ ; 3.4%), Brazil ( $n = 7$ ; 2.4%), and South Korea ( $n = 7$ ; 2.4%).

**5.2 Academic quality management by the peer reviewers:** The peer reviewers control academic quality through their participation in and adherence to the manuscript peer review process. The manuscript peer review process includes the following steps: the science editor previews the manuscript; the science editor sends the manuscript for peer

review; the peer review is initiated by the peer reviewer(s); the science editor urges the peer reviewers to complete the peer review in a timely and meaningful manner, or finds new reviewer(s); the science editor reviews the peer reviewer's comments; upon article resubmission, the science editor confirms whether the authors have revised the manuscript according to the peer reviewer's comments; the editorial director reviews the peer reviewer's comments; upon article resubmission, the editorial director confirms whether the authors have revised the manuscript according to the peer reviewer's comments; finally, the journal and company editor-in-chief check the science editor-approved and editorial director-approved resubmission and confirm that each of the peer reviewer's comments were addressed appropriately and adequately.

**5.3 Academic quality management by the science editor:** The science editor controls the academic quality and editing quality according to the manuscript scientific editing process. The manuscript scientific editing process includes the following steps: the science editor conducts the first CrossCheck screening for detection of plagiarism in the manuscript; the science editor checks whether the language of the manuscript meets the standard; the science editor sequentially checks the title, author information, author contributions, funding information, corresponding author information, academic rules and norms, abstract, key words, core tip, main headings of the text, references, line drawings, images, tables, abbreviations, and units and statistical expressions in the manuscript; the science editor returns the manuscript to the authors for revision; the science editor urges the authors to return the manuscript in a timely and complete manner; upon resubmission, the science editor checks the returned revised manuscript; the science editor conducts the second CrossCheck screening for detection of plagiarism in the revised manuscript; the science editor processes the manuscript; the science editor returns the processed manuscript to the authors for confirmation; the science editor conducts electronic screenings to detect duplicate publications using Google Scholar and according to the BPG Articles Published Processes; the science editor

checks all the files submitted; the science editor sends the manuscript and all its related documents to the editorial director for further review.

**5.4 Academic quality management by the editorial director:** The editorial director controls academic quality and editing quality according to the manuscript finalization process. The manuscript finalization process includes the following steps: the editorial director checks the task list for manuscript finalization that has been submitted by the science editor; the editorial director summons all science editors to discuss the manuscript; the editorial director assigns the manuscript to the corresponding science editor; upon resubmission, the science editor submits the revised manuscript to the editorial director; upon resubmission, the editorial director reviews the revised manuscript; the editorial director assigns the manuscript to the journal editor-in-chief for evaluation of the academic quality and language quality and then to the company editor-in-chief for evaluation of the editing quality and publishing quality.

**5.5 Academic quality management by the journal editor-in-chief:** The journal editor-in-chief controls the academic quality according to the work flow set forth for the journal editor-in-chief. The work flow for the journal editor-in-chief includes the following steps: the journal editor-in-chief reviews all the documents relevant to the academic rules and norms; the journal editor-in-chief reviews the peer review report; upon resubmission, the journal editor-in-chief reviews the authors' response to the reviewers' comments; the journal editor-in-chief reviews the academic misconduct detection report; the journal editor-in-chief checks the language editing certificate provided by non-native speakers of English; the journal editor-in-chief evaluates the academic and language quality of the manuscript and completes the peer review report to be delivered to the company editor-in-chief.

**5.6 Publishing quality management by the company editor-in-chief:** The company editor-in-chief controls the academic quality according to the work flow set forth for the company editor-in-chief. The work flow for the company editor-in-chief includes the following steps: the company editor-in-chief reviews all the documents relevant to the

academic rules and norms; the company editor-in-chief reviews the peer review report; the company editor-in-chief reviews the authors' response to the reviewers' comments; the company editor-in-chief reviews the academic misconduct detection report; the company editor-in-chief checks the language editing certificate provided by non-native speakers of English; the company editor-in-chief checks whether the manuscript's editing meets the quality standard and completes the task list to approve the manuscript's final acceptance.

**5.7 Publishing quality management by the language editor:** The language editor conducts language editing and controls the manuscript's language quality according to the work flow set forth for the manuscript language editing. The work flow for the manuscript language editing includes the following steps: the language editor confirms the manuscript's language quality classification that has been made by peer reviewers; the language editor confirms the manuscript's language quality classification that has been made by the journal editor-in-chief; the language editor checks the language editing certificate; the language editor revises the entire text. In general, the BPG expects manuscripts submitted by non-native English-speaking authors (for example, Chinese authors) should be edited by a native English-speaking editor and then confirmed by an editor with knowledge of the original language (for example, a Chinese-speaking English-language editor) to ensure the language quality.

**5.8 Publishing quality management by the electronic editor:** The electronic editor controls the publishing quality according to the work flow set forth for the electronic editor. The work flow for the electronic editor includes the following steps: the electronic editor receives the manuscript; the electronic editor checks the references; the electronic editor typesets the manuscript; the electronic editor prepares the figures and tables; the electronic editor prepares the electronic version of the manuscript; the electronic editor proofreads and revises the manuscript; the authors check the proof; the electronic editor revises the InDesign (Adobe) file according to the authors' comments on the PDF proof; the responsible electronic editor prepares and proofreads the

complete electronic version of the manuscript; the responsible science editor proofreads the electronic version of the manuscript and the authors check the proof; proofreading by Heima (Chinese proofreading software); the responsible electronic editor prepares the online version; the responsible electronic editor releases the online version; the responsible electronic editor prepares the online version for PubMed Central; the responsible electronic editor prepares the high quality reprint; the article is prepared for archiving.

**5.9 Publishing quality management by the responsible science editor:** The responsible science editor controls the publishing quality according to the work flow set forth for the responsible science editor. The work flow for the responsible science editor includes the following steps: the responsible science editor checks the journal cover, journal table of contents, and the text, tables, figures, references, and page numbers of the electronic version of each manuscript.

**5.10 Publishing quality management by the responsible editorial director:** The responsible editorial director controls the publishing quality according to the work flow set forth for the responsible editorial director. The work flow for the responsible editorial director includes the following steps: the responsible editorial director checks the journal cover, journal table of contents, and the text, tables, figures, references, and page numbers of the electronic version of each manuscript. Particularly, it is checked whether the information in the table of contents is consistent with that of the manuscript text, whether the order of tables and/or figures is consistent with the order of their appearance in the manuscript text, whether the starting page number of the current issue fits continuity of the last issue, and whether the page numbers of each article are continuous.

## **6 MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

For all of the 42 English-language journals edited and published by BPG, we strictly control academic misconduct from the time of manuscript submission. Academic

misconduct includes plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, duplicate submission/multiple submissions, overlapping publication, and inappropriate authorship. We take the following measures to control academic misconduct:

**6.1 Academic rules and norms:** For both basic and clinical studies, authors must provide the documents relevant to the academic rules and norms. For example, for basic studies, authors must provide the institutional review board statement, institutional animal care and use committee statement, animal care and use statement, biostatistics statement, and conflict-of-interest statement. If authors cannot provide these documents, the manuscript will be rejected.

**6.2 Google search of the manuscript title:** The science editor performs a Google search of the title of the manuscript before we send the manuscript for peer review. The purpose of this is to check whether there is duplicate publication or plagiarism. The search findings are recorded as a screenshot, which will be published online together with the manuscript.

**6.3 iThenticate (CrossCheck) detection of the complete manuscript:** Before the manuscript is sent to the journal editor-in-chief and company editor-in-chief for further review, we perform iThenticate (CrossCheck) detection of the revised manuscript returned by the authors. The detection report will be published online together with the manuscript.

**6.4 Rejecting recommendation of peer reviewers by authors:** In order to prevent the manipulation of peer review by a third party, we do not allow for authors to recommend peer reviewers. The peer reviewers for all manuscripts are chosen in our editorial member board/peer reviewer data base by our science editor.

**6.5 Crossover peer review:** In order to prevent potential academic misconduct that may arise from authors and peer reviewers from the same country knowing one another and/or colluding, our science editor chooses peer reviewers from a country different from that of the authors.

**6.6 Co-first authors and co-corresponding authors:** In order to prevent inappropriate authorship, we do not allow for the presence of co-first authors or co-corresponding authors in any of our journals; this is specified in the guidelines for authors.

**6.7 Meta-analysis:** We have found that some authors submit meta-analysis articles that are not relevant to their work, a practice which falls under the activities of academic misconduct. Once we find that authors do not cite their work in a meta-analysis manuscript, the manuscript will be rejected.

**6.8 Manuscript withdrawal:** In our manuscript acceptance letter and copyright transfer document, we remind authors that the manuscript will be withdrawn and the authors will be punished immediately upon discovery of plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, duplicate submission/multiple submissions, overlapping publication, or inappropriate authorship. For example, we charge \$ 10,000 as compensation costs in the case that a published paper is withdrawn, and we will not accept any future manuscripts submitted to any of the 43 BPG journals by any one of the authors (either separately or collectively) of the withdrawn article.

**6.9 Citation manipulation:** In order to prevent citation manipulation, our science editor and editorial director check whether the manuscript's citations meet the rules and norms; for example, self-citation and citation of other journals published by BPG are considered. Upon discovery of citation manipulation, the manuscript will be withdrawn.