Editorial checks before peer review

Editors check submissions before peer review to ensure that the articles comply with the aims and scope of the journal and that there are no major ethical issues. Editors may desk reject or advise transfer to a more suitable journal if there are no ethical concerns.

The submission

Assessment includes:

- Assurance that the article is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, has been submitted solely to the one journal and is not already published
- Compliance with journal format
- Compliance with journal Guide for Authors
- Language (e.g. standard of English, use of tortured or bizarre phrases)
- Use of generative AI in writing and image preparation
- Patient privacy
- Plagiarism
- Duplicate/multiple submission
- Salami slicing
- Image integrity (e.g. alteration and manipulation, duplication and reuse)
- Reference checking (e.g. for validity and relevance)

Authors should check the aims and scope and guide for authors before submission.

Authors and suggested reviewers

Checks cover:

- Authors: number, expertise and role
- Author and reviewer emails
- Approval by all authors to publication
- Author conflict of interest – financial and non-financial
- Unsuitable/suspicious author-suggested reviewers, including current or recent colleagues and collaborators

Methodology, administration and ethics

The following points are considered:

- Methodology
- Research institution(s) – number, expertise and role
- Research feasibility – time frame, number of study sites
- Funding – name and role of the funding source
- Data sharing [if applicable]
- Trial registration – name of registry and reference number
- Ethical review and approval documents – for both human and animal research
- Participant and patient consent (particularly for case reports)

Further information

Committee on Publication Ethics   A short guide to ethical editing for new editors. May 2019. https://publicationethics.org/node/19871

Committee on Publication Ethics   *Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers*. September 2017. https://publicationethics.org/sites/default/files/ethical-guidelines-peer-reviewers-cope.pdf

World Medical Association   Declaration of Helsinki – Ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki