ICMJE Updates Guidelines for Medical Journal Publication, Emphasizes on Inclusivity and AI Transparency

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https://www.enago.com/academy/icmje-update-on-medical-journal-publication/

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recently updated its recommendations for best practices in medical journal publishing. These comprehensive guidelines aim to ensure the accuracy, clarity, reproducibility, and unbiased nature of medical articles, catering to authors, editors, peer reviewers, and other stakeholders in biomedical publishing.

The updated guidelines extensively define the roles of non-author contributors, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in medical and health research, and the disclosure of financial and non-financial relationships in medical journal publications.

Purpose of the Latest Recommendations

The primary objective of these recommendations is to improve the quality of research and materials published in medical journals. They are curated to guide authors to create

articles adhering to the highest ethical standards while offering valuable insights into the publishing process for all stakeholders involved.

Furthermore, the guidelines aim to address issues surrounding overlapping publications, duplicate submissions, and preprints, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the integrity of scientific literature and ensuring transparency throughout the publishing process.

Key Highlights of the Latest ICMJE Recommendations

1. Promotes Inclusive Publishing Practices

Raises awareness among editors on the practice of excluding the researchers form low-income and middle-income countries from authorship, thereby promoting their inclusion for fairness and inclusivity. Furthermore, the editors are advised to question researchers in cases of exclusion of the local investigators, and reject the submission, in case of lack of acknowledgement.

2. Emphasizes the Acknowledgement of AI Use

Emphasizes the importance reporting the role of AI in any aspect of the research or manuscript writing and image generation in the acknowledgement section of the manuscript. Additionally, the use of AI technology or chatbots are to be described in the cover letter and appropriate section of the manuscript.

3. Provides Clarity in Disclosing Potential Conflicts of Interests

Distinguishes the nature of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest between direct and indirect support for the work. While funding statement, individual contributions are included as a direct support, general institutional support has been considered to be an indirect support.

4. Restricts the Use of AI by Editors

Prohibits the use of AI technology in manuscript processing for the editors to prevent violation of data confidentiality.

5. Defines the Use of AI in Peer Review

Restricts reviewers on using AI for the review process and instructs them to seek permission from the journal prior to using AI technology for the review process.

6. Emphasizes the Significance of Transparency

Restates the importance of transparency by demanding medical journals to state its governance and relationship with the journal owner.

7. Instructs the Journal Stakeholders to Take a Stand Against the Global Challenges

Addresses the growing issue of carbon emissions and climate change and instructs the stakeholders at different stages in the journals to take a unified action against it.

8. Highlight the Importance of Maintaining Proper Participant Data

Instructs authors to be equipped with the data of the research participants and provide necessary documents when requested by the journal editors.

These updates not only strengthen existing guidelines but also promote ethical conduct in research.

Implementation by Journals

Journals adhering to these recommendations are encouraged to explicitly state their compliance with ICMJE guidelines in their instructions for authors. Furthermore, journals seeking recognition as compliant on the ICMJE website should notify the guideline committee's secretariat. Conversely, journals deviating from these guidelines can request removal from the list.

By adopting these updated guidelines, medical journals can maintain integrity, prevent biases, and uphold the highest publication ethics standards. Readers and authors are encouraged to refer to the complete ICMJE guidelines for detailed information on responsible publishing practices.

The ICMJE plays a crucial role in improving medical journal publishing practices, ensuring integrity and clarity in disseminating medical research. Stakeholders are urged to adhere to these standards to preserve the integrity of scholarly work, emphasizing the collective responsibility of all involved in the publication process to ensure that rigorous ethical standards are maintained.

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