

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

International Journal of Ayurveda

Published by Dr. Kembhavi's Astanga Wellness Private Limited

Hubli, Karnataka, India

Website: internationaljournalofayurveda.org

Email: editor@internationaljournalofayurveda.org

Document Version: 1.0

Effective Date: September 2025

Review Date: September 2026

POLICY STATEMENT

The International Journal of Ayurveda is committed to maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity, ethical conduct, and transparency in all aspects of scholarly publishing. This policy establishes comprehensive guidelines for identifying, declaring, and managing conflicts of interest while ensuring ethical compliance throughout the publication process.

Scope of Application

This policy applies to all stakeholders involved in the journal's publication process:

- Authors and co-authors** of submitted manuscripts
 - Editorial board members** and guest editors
 - Peer reviewers** and expert consultants
 - Editorial staff** and administrative personnel
 - Publishers** and organizational affiliates
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ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Fundamental Values

Academic Integrity

- Honesty** in research conduct and reporting
- Transparency** in methodology and data presentation
- Accuracy** in citations and knowledge attribution

- **Objectivity** in analysis and interpretation
- **Accountability** for research quality and ethical compliance

Cultural Sensitivity

- **Respect** for traditional knowledge systems and indigenous wisdom
- **Appropriate attribution** of traditional practices and remedies
- **Community consent** for traditional knowledge utilization
- **Cultural competence** in research design and interpretation
- **Benefit sharing** with knowledge-providing communities

Research Ethics

- **Human subject protection** and informed consent
- **Animal welfare** compliance in experimental research
- **Environmental responsibility** in research conduct
- **Data integrity** and reproducibility standards
- **Risk minimization** and benefit maximization

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DEFINITIONS

Financial Conflicts

Direct Financial Interests

- **Stock ownership** or financial investments in pharmaceutical companies
- **Patent rights** or intellectual property related to submitted research
- **Consulting fees** or honoraria from industry sources
- **Research funding** from commercial entities with vested interests
- **Employment relationships** with competing organizations

Indirect Financial Interests

- **Institutional funding** from sources with commercial interests
- **Family member employment** in relevant industries
- **Board memberships** in commercial organizations
- **Speaking fees** from industry conferences or events
- **Travel support** from commercial entities

Professional Conflicts

Academic Relationships

- **Supervisor-student relationships** between authors and reviewers
- **Collaborative research** history with manuscript authors
- **Institutional affiliations** creating bias potential
- **Professional rivalries** or competitive relationships

- **Mentorship relationships** affecting objectivity

Editorial Conflicts

- **Competing journal** editorial board memberships
- **Similar research** publication in competing venues
- **Professional disagreements** with authors or editorial positions
- **Institutional pressure** influencing editorial decisions
- **Commercial partnerships** affecting editorial independence

Personal Conflicts

Personal Relationships

- **Family relationships** with authors, reviewers, or editors
- **Close friendships** affecting objective evaluation
- **Romantic relationships** creating bias potential
- **Personal animosity** or conflicts with stakeholders
- **Social obligations** influencing professional judgment

Ideological Conflicts

- **Strong personal beliefs** conflicting with research content
- **Political affiliations** affecting manuscript evaluation
- **Religious convictions** impacting objective review
- **Cultural biases** influencing editorial decisions
- **Professional ideology** conflicts with journal mission

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

Author Disclosure Obligations

Mandatory Disclosures

- **Funding sources** for research conduct and publication
- **Financial relationships** with organizations having vested interests
- **Employment affiliations** and institutional support
- **Patent applications** or intellectual property claims
- **Previous publications** or presentations of similar work

Disclosure Timeline

- **Submission stage:** Complete disclosure with manuscript submission
- **Revision stage:** Updated disclosures if circumstances change
- **Publication stage:** Final disclosure verification before publication
- **Post-publication:** Ongoing obligation to report new conflicts
- **Annual updates:** For ongoing relationships with the journal

Disclosure Format

- **Standardized forms:** Use journal-provided disclosure templates
- **Detailed descriptions:** Specific nature and extent of relationships
- **Monetary values:** Financial amounts when applicable and appropriate
- **Time periods:** Duration and current status of relationships
- **Supporting documentation:** Evidence of disclosed relationships

Reviewer Disclosure Requirements

Pre-Review Declarations

- **Competency assessment:** Expertise appropriateness for manuscript topic
- **Availability confirmation:** Time commitment and deadline compliance ability
- **Conflict screening:** Identification of potential bias sources
- **Confidentiality agreement:** Understanding and acceptance of confidentiality obligations
- **Professional relationship:** Declaration of connections with authors

Ongoing Disclosure Obligations

- **Emerging conflicts:** New relationships developing during review process
- **Changed circumstances:** Updates to previously declared situations
- **Discovery of undisclosed information:** Reporting of newly identified conflicts
- **Post-review relationships:** Implications of relationships formed during review
- **Future collaboration:** Potential for ongoing professional interactions

Editorial Disclosure Standards

Editorial Board Declarations

- **Annual comprehensive disclosure:** Complete relationship documentation
- **Case-specific declarations:** Manuscript-by-manuscript conflict assessment
- **Financial interest reporting:** Commercial relationships and investments
- **Professional relationship documentation:** Academic and industry connections
- **Update obligations:** Immediate reporting of significant changes

Editorial Decision Documentation

- **Recusal decisions:** Documentation of conflict-based recusals
- **Alternative handling:** Procedures when conflicts require special management
- **Transparency requirements:** Public disclosure when appropriate
- **Review process modification:** Adjustments made due to conflict management
- **Quality assurance:** Ensuring unbiased review despite conflicts

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Assessment Protocols

Initial Screening

- **Automated screening:** System-based conflict detection
- **Editorial review:** Human assessment of potential conflicts
- **Stakeholder consultation:** Input from affected parties when appropriate
- **Documentation requirements:** Record keeping for all assessments
- **Decision criteria:** Standardized evaluation frameworks

Severity Classification

- **Minor conflicts:** Manageable through disclosure and monitoring
- **Moderate conflicts:** Requiring special handling or additional oversight
- **Major conflicts:** Necessitating recusal or alternative arrangements
- **Severe conflicts:** Prohibiting participation in review or decision processes
- **Ongoing monitoring:** Regular reassessment of conflict status

Management Strategies

Disclosure and Monitoring

- **Public disclosure:** Transparent reporting in published materials
- **Enhanced oversight:** Additional editorial supervision
- **Independent review:** Third-party assessment when appropriate
- **Documentation enhancement:** Detailed record keeping and monitoring
- **Stakeholder notification:** Informing relevant parties of conflict status

Recusal Procedures

- **Complete recusal:** Full removal from evaluation or decision processes
- **Partial recusal:** Limited involvement with enhanced oversight
- **Alternative assignment:** Transfer to conflict-free editorial board members
- **Independent handling:** External expert involvement when necessary
- **Process documentation:** Clear record of recusal decisions and rationale

Structural Modifications

- **Review panel modification:** Adjusting reviewer composition to manage conflicts
- **Editorial team reassignment:** Changing handling editors to avoid conflicts
- **External expert involvement:** Bringing in conflict-free specialists
- **Institutional separation:** Ensuring independence from conflicted parties
- **Process transparency:** Clear communication of modifications made

ETHICAL RESEARCH STANDARDS

Human Subject Research

Informed Consent Requirements

- **Comprehensive disclosure:** Full information about research procedures and risks
- **Voluntary participation:** Free choice without coercion or undue influence
- **Capacity assessment:** Verification of decision-making ability
- **Cultural appropriateness:** Consent processes respecting cultural norms
- **Ongoing consent:** Continued agreement throughout research participation

Institutional Review Board Approval

- **Mandatory approval:** IRB review required for all human subject research
- **Documentation submission:** Complete IRB approval documentation with manuscripts
- **Protocol compliance:** Adherence to approved research protocols
- **Modification reporting:** IRB notification of protocol changes
- **Adverse event reporting:** Immediate notification of safety concerns

Privacy and Confidentiality

- **Data protection:** Secure handling of personal and health information
- **Anonymization procedures:** Removal of identifying information when appropriate
- **Consent for publication:** Specific agreement for case report publication
- **Cultural sensitivity:** Respect for community privacy expectations
- **Long-term storage:** Appropriate data retention and disposal procedures

Animal Research Ethics

Institutional Animal Care Standards

- **IACUC approval:** Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee oversight
- **Welfare protocols:** Appropriate animal housing and care standards
- **Veterinary oversight:** Professional animal health supervision
- **Environmental enrichment:** Species-appropriate living conditions
- **Endpoint criteria:** Humane research termination standards

Ethical Justification

- **Scientific necessity:** Clear justification for animal use
- **Alternative consideration:** Evidence of 3Rs implementation (Replace, Reduce, Refine)
- **Minimal harm principle:** Procedures minimizing pain and distress
- **Benefit-risk assessment:** Proportionate potential benefits to animal welfare costs
- **Species selection:** Appropriate species choice for research objectives

Traditional Knowledge Ethics

Community Engagement

- **Prior informed consent:** Community agreement before research initiation
- **Ongoing consultation:** Continued community involvement throughout research

- **Benefit sharing:** Appropriate recognition and compensation for knowledge use
- **Cultural protocols:** Respect for traditional research and knowledge sharing practices
- **Intellectual property recognition:** Appropriate attribution and protection

Knowledge Attribution

- **Source acknowledgment:** Clear citation of traditional knowledge sources
 - **Cultural context preservation:** Maintaining knowledge within appropriate cultural frameworks
 - **Community approval:** Consent for specific uses and applications
 - **Misrepresentation prevention:** Accurate portrayal of traditional practices
 - **Commercial use restrictions:** Appropriate limitations on commercialization
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PUBLICATION ETHICS

Authorship Standards

Authorship Criteria

- **Substantial contribution:** Significant involvement in research conception, conduct, or analysis
- **Manuscript preparation:** Meaningful participation in writing or critical revision
- **Final approval:** Review and approval of final manuscript version
- **Accountability:** Responsibility for accuracy and integrity of all work aspects
- **Ongoing involvement:** Availability for questions and clarifications post-publication

Authorship Disputes

- **Prevention procedures:** Clear authorship agreements before research initiation
- **Resolution mechanisms:** Fair and transparent dispute resolution processes
- **Documentation requirements:** Written records of authorship decisions
- **Editorial intervention:** Journal involvement when necessary for resolution
- **Post-publication corrections:** Mechanisms for addressing authorship errors

Data Integrity

Data Management Standards

- **Accurate reporting:** Truthful representation of research findings
- **Complete disclosure:** Full reporting of relevant data and outcomes
- **Reproducibility support:** Sufficient detail for study replication
- **Statistical appropriateness:** Correct application of analytical methods
- **Data availability:** Reasonable access to underlying data when requested

Misconduct Prevention

- **Plagiarism detection:** Systematic screening for inappropriate copying

- **Fabrication prevention:** Verification procedures for data authenticity
- **Falsification detection:** Review processes identifying data manipulation
- **Self-plagiarism screening:** Identification of inappropriate self-citation
- **Image integrity:** Verification of figure and photograph authenticity

Publication Misconduct

Detection Mechanisms

- **Automated screening:** Software-based detection of potential misconduct
- **Peer review identification:** Reviewer reports of potential ethical issues
- **Post-publication reporting:** Mechanisms for reporting concerns after publication
- **Whistleblower protection:** Safe reporting procedures for misconduct allegations
- **Investigation procedures:** Fair and thorough examination of allegations

Response Protocols

- **Immediate action:** Prompt response to misconduct allegations
- **Investigation procedures:** Thorough and impartial examination of concerns
- **Institutional notification:** Appropriate reporting to relevant institutions
- **Corrective measures:** Corrections, retractions, or expressions of concern as appropriate
- **Prevention measures:** Systemic improvements to prevent future occurrences

EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

Publisher Independence

Editorial Autonomy

- **Content control:** Editor-in-Chief authority over publication decisions
- **Financial independence:** Protection from commercial pressure in editorial decisions
- **Resource allocation:** Adequate support for independent editorial operations
- **Policy development:** Editorial board authority over journal policies and procedures
- **Quality standards:** Independent determination of publication standards

Commercial Relationship Management

- **Advertising separation:** Clear distinction between editorial content and commercial material
- **Sponsor influence prevention:** Protection from inappropriate sponsor interference
- **Financial transparency:** Clear disclosure of all revenue sources and financial relationships
- **Conflict management:** Appropriate handling of publisher-author-editor conflicts
- **Independence documentation:** Regular affirmation of editorial independence

Institutional Independence

Academic Freedom

- **Research topic freedom:** No restrictions on research areas or controversial topics
- **Methodological autonomy:** Independence in research approach and methodology selection
- **Conclusion independence:** Freedom to report findings regardless of institutional preferences
- **Collaboration freedom:** Ability to work with researchers from any institution
- **Publication timing:** Independence in publication scheduling and decision-making

Institutional Pressure Management

- **Pressure resistance:** Procedures for handling inappropriate institutional influence
 - **Support mechanisms:** Resources for editors facing institutional pressure
 - **Documentation requirements:** Record keeping for pressure incidents
 - **Resolution procedures:** Fair and transparent handling of institutional conflicts
 - **Protection measures:** Safeguards for editorial independence
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TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS

Public Disclosure Standards

Financial Disclosure

- **Funding source publication:** Clear identification of research funding sources
- **Commercial relationship disclosure:** Transparent reporting of industry connections
- **Editorial financial interests:** Public disclosure of editorial board financial relationships
- **Journal funding transparency:** Clear information about journal financial support
- **Conflict resolution disclosure:** Public reporting of conflict management actions

Process Transparency

- **Review process description:** Clear explanation of peer review procedures
- **Editorial decision criteria:** Transparent standards for publication decisions
- **Conflict management procedures:** Public documentation of conflict handling processes
- **Appeal mechanisms:** Clear procedures for challenging editorial decisions
- **Quality assurance descriptions:** Transparent reporting of quality control measures

Documentation Requirements

Record Keeping Standards

- **Comprehensive documentation:** Complete records of all relevant decisions and procedures
- **Retention periods:** Appropriate length of record retention

- **Access procedures:** Mechanisms for appropriate record access
- **Confidentiality protection:** Secure handling of confidential information
- **Legal compliance:** Adherence to applicable record keeping regulations

Audit Procedures

- **Internal auditing:** Regular self-assessment of ethical compliance
 - **External review:** Independent evaluation of ethical procedures
 - **Continuous improvement:** Systematic enhancement of ethical practices
 - **Benchmarking:** Comparison with industry best practices
 - **Training updates:** Regular education based on audit findings
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ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS

Violation Response

Investigation Procedures

- **Allegation assessment:** Initial evaluation of potential violations
- **Formal investigation:** Comprehensive examination when warranted
- **Due process:** Fair procedures protecting all parties' rights
- **Expert consultation:** Involvement of appropriate specialists
- **Documentation requirements:** Complete record keeping throughout investigations

Sanctions and Remedies

- **Warning systems:** Progressive discipline for minor violations
- **Manuscript rejection:** Refusal to publish non-compliant research
- **Author sanctions:** Restrictions on future submissions
- **Editorial board removal:** Termination for serious ethical violations
- **Institutional notification:** Reporting to relevant organizations

Appeal Mechanisms

Appeal Procedures

- **Formal appeal process:** Structured procedures for challenging decisions
- **Independent review:** Unbiased evaluation of appeals
- **Timeline requirements:** Reasonable deadlines for appeal resolution
- **Documentation standards:** Complete record keeping for appeals
- **Final resolution:** Clear determination of appeal outcomes

Remedial Actions

- **Corrective measures:** Appropriate actions to address violations
- **Process improvements:** Systematic enhancements based on violations

- **Training enhancements:** Educational improvements addressing identified deficiencies
 - **Policy updates:** Guideline modifications based on experience
 - **Prevention measures:** Proactive steps to prevent future violations
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TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Mandatory Training Programs

Initial Orientation

- **Ethics overview:** Comprehensive introduction to ethical requirements
- **Conflict identification:** Training in recognizing potential conflicts
- **Disclosure procedures:** Instruction in proper disclosure methods
- **Policy familiarization:** Thorough review of all relevant policies
- **Case study analysis:** Practical application through scenario-based learning

Ongoing Education

- **Annual updates:** Regular training on policy changes and best practices
- **Specialized workshops:** Focused education on specific ethical issues
- **Industry developments:** Updates on evolving ethical standards and requirements
- **Peer learning:** Collaborative education with other editorial boards
- **Expert consultation:** Access to ethics specialists for complex issues

Resource Availability

Educational Materials

- **Policy documentation:** Complete and accessible policy materials
- **Training resources:** Comprehensive educational tools and materials
- **Best practice guides:** Practical guidance for common situations
- **Case study libraries:** Examples of ethical decision-making
- **Reference materials:** Access to relevant literature and guidelines

Support Systems

- **Ethics consultation:** Available expertise for complex ethical issues
 - **Peer support:** Networking with other editorial board members
 - **Professional development:** Opportunities for ethics education advancement
 - **External resources:** Access to professional organizations and training programs
 - **Regular communication:** Updates on ethical issues and developments
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POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

Regular Review Schedule

- **Annual assessment:** Systematic evaluation of policy effectiveness
- **Continuous monitoring:** Ongoing assessment of policy implementation
- **Stakeholder feedback:** Input from all affected parties
- **Best practice integration:** Incorporation of evolving industry standards
- **Legal compliance review:** Verification of regulatory compliance

Update Procedures

- **Stakeholder consultation:** Involvement of all affected parties in policy updates
- **Expert review:** Professional evaluation of proposed changes
- **Implementation planning:** Systematic rollout of policy modifications
- **Training updates:** Education programs reflecting policy changes
- **Communication protocols:** Clear notification of policy updates to all stakeholders

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ethics Inquiries

Email: editor@internationaljournalofayurveda.org

Subject Line: Ethics Inquiry - [Specific Topic]

Response Time: Within 48 hours for routine inquiries

Conflict Reporting

Email: editor@internationaljournalofayurveda.org

Subject Line: Conflict Report - [Manuscript ID if applicable]

Response Time: Within 24 hours for urgent conflicts

Misconduct Reporting

Email: editor@internationaljournalofayurveda.org

Subject Line: Misconduct Report - Confidential

Response Time: Immediate acknowledgment, investigation within 7 days

POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All stakeholders are required to acknowledge understanding and acceptance of this Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy. Continued participation in the journal's activities constitutes ongoing agreement to abide by these standards.

Document Distribution: All editorial board members, regular reviewers, and administrative staff

Training Completion: Required within 30 days of initial appointment
Annual Acknowledgment: Required as part of annual disclosure process

This policy ensures the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in all aspects of the International Journal of Ayurveda's operations, maintaining public trust and advancing the credibility of traditional medicine research.

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