
EDITORIAL

Striving for Best Practices in Journal Publishing

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In this issue of the *Hong Kong Journal of Radiology* (HKJR), we introduce our revised 'Guide for Authors'. This editorial explains why our guidelines have been revised and highlights the major changes that have been made.

The Editorial Board of HKJR are constantly striving to improve, to promote HKJR as widely as possible, and to ensure a publication of the highest possible quality. Most recently, to manage increasing numbers of manuscripts and to provide a smooth process for authors, we introduced an online submission system in 2016.¹ This has been successful on both fronts; between 2016 and 2018, submissions have increased by 8%, and article processing times have decreased by 23% for accepted papers and by 52% for rejections.

In 2018 we also received news that the most recent application for HKJR to be indexed in Medline was unsuccessful. Applying for Medline indexing is notoriously challenging.² The National Library of Medicine (NLM) publishes some core criteria that are considered when assessing journals for inclusion in Medline.³ The Literature Selection Technical Review Committee (LSTRC), which assesses applications, considers quality of scientific content of the highest importance.³ It is vital that all articles that are published in HKJR clearly describe their novelty and significance. We should also make every effort to attract more citations, to demonstrate the value of these articles to the field.

After assessment, the LSTRC provides a report detailing the score awarded and key areas for improvement. We followed this advice and have made some clear improvements since our previous application. In addition to their basic requirements, NLM also considers current industry best practices as prescribed by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting,

Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals⁴ and the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing⁵ — a joint statement by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), and the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA). The NLM also refers to standards for publication ethics set by COPE⁶ and the Council of Science Editors (CSE).⁷ These standards are periodically updated, and it is apparent that we need to be more proactive in following the most up-to-date recommendations.

Potentially predatory journals have been in the news again recently, with publisher OMICS fined US\$50 million for engaging in deceptive publishing practices.⁸ It is important for all legitimate open-access journals, including HKJR, to make every effort to clearly distinguish themselves from potentially predatory publications.⁹ Through initiatives such as Think. Check. Submit.,¹⁰ authors are advised to choose journals carefully when submitting an article; following international standards and implementing transparent and robust policies are key differentiating factors. Although we endeavour to follow best practices, our guidelines have become outdated and do not reflect the most current procedures that we follow. Considering this, and the latest feedback from NLM, we have revised our author guidelines to clarify that HKJR is aligned with the latest international standards.

The revised guidelines now clearly specify that the ICMJE recommendations should be followed when writing a manuscript, and that we defer to these recommendations for defining authorship and conflicts of interest.

HKJR has long advocated using standard reporting guidelines to ensure clear presentation of research. Our instructions now request that a suitable checklist from the EQUATOR Network¹¹ should be submitted with certain article types (eg, CONSORT or STROBE for

Original Articles, PRISMA for Review Articles, and CARE for Case Reports). In addition to standardising the presentation of research, these guidelines also help authors to prepare their manuscript.

For publication ethics matters, HKJR recognises that COPE sets the gold standard.⁶ Our instructions now reflect the advice of COPE and highlight that we defer to COPE guidelines and flowcharts to handle potential breaches of ethics, such as image manipulation or allegations of misconduct.

Finally, although it has not changed, our peer review process is now more clearly described. We have also improved our guidance for reviewers.

Several other minor changes have been made, and we hope that these changes achieve our goal of making our instructions and processes as transparent as possible. The latest author guidelines can be found at: <http://www.hkjr.org/page/information-author>.

We are committed to making our journal the first choice for radiology and oncology publications in the Asia-Pacific region. We wholeheartedly thank all of our readers, authors, and reviewers for their contributions. With your generous support we will continue to provide rigorous and constructive peer review to maximise the value of HKJR.

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