

## Editorial

# Ethical guidelines for publication in Asian Biomedicine

The ethical guidelines for publication in Asian Biomedicine (ABM) are to make sure that ABM review-process selects manuscripts for publication that satisfy high quality in standards while preventing exploitation of humans and animals for research. This means that the ABM process is thorough, objective, fair, and conform to international ethical standards for publications. The following summarizes some key considerations that must be satisfied for publication in ABM.

All manuscripts must address important and essential scientific questions and the methodology to answer them should be well planned and well implemented [1]. The characteristics of the population and samples (including animal and laboratory samples) must be well defined. Studies of insufficient sample size are unethical since they put subjects in undue risks knowing that the sample size is too small to have enough statistical power to answer the questions posed. Outcome measures must be relevant, credible, accurate, and sensitive. Data summaries, statistical analysis procedures, and the interpretations of the results must be appropriate to the study questions.

All studies must be conducted only by scientifically qualified persons and carried out under the supervision of competent clinicians or scientists. Laboratory procedures must be standardized and performed by qualified medical technologists/scientists who are knowledgeable of the pertinent scientific literature.

Research involving human subjects, human samples (such as blood, serum, or tissue), and personal and health records must be subjected to a review by a formally constituted Ethical Review Board. The Ethical Review Board ensures that the study balance the potential benefits and harms, protect the subjects, and allow subject withdrawal from the study without any consequences on subject-provider relationships. Evidence of informed consent by participants as well as respect for the privacy of the study subjects must be an important element of the ethical review process. The authors must be able to produce evidence of informed consent and respect for privacy of the study subjects if required. For animal experiments, a full compliance with local, national, and international regulations is necessary and must be reviewed by relevant Ethical Review Boards as well.

The authorships must follow the guidelines developed by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors [2]. Authors must provide a formal statement of acceptance of scientific conduct:

- Data, text, figures, and tables submitted have to be original and unpublished. Those reproduced from other publications must be clearly stated and with the permission of the copyright holder.
- The corresponding author must be responsible for the content of the manuscript. He/she is held responsible for obtaining the approval of other authors of the original submission and any subsequent revision, and for all correspondence accompanying the paper.
- All individuals who have actively contributed to the study (planning, collection, interpretation and analysis of the data, and writing of the manuscript) must have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.
- Approval of relevant organizations must have been obtained, including an Ethical Review Board for animal or human studies.
- All authors must declare all financial or personal conflict of interest (past or present).

ABM peer reviewers are experts chosen by editors to provide written assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the research, with the aim of improving the reporting of research and identifying the most appropriate and highest quality materials for the journal. They are experts in the scientific topic addressed in the articles. They are asked to comment on the relevance of the questions, appropriateness of the methodology, the analysis, the results, and the interpretation. They are also required to state whether the conclusions are in line with the data provided. They are requested to comment on any ethical concerns raised by the study on animals, humans, and scientific quality. Finally, they will provide the author with useful and constructive suggestions to improve the manuscript. Each manuscript has at least two reviewers. If both reviewers disagree on key issues, then a third reviewer will be invited to give opinions.

ABM decisions about a manuscript are based on its relevance and importance in the Asian context with good methodology and high ethical and scientific standards. Studies with negative results but enough sample size receive equal consideration.

Rules of ethical behavior shall also apply after publication:

- If an author wishes to re-use a part of work (table or figure) published in ABM, they must notify ABM and obtain copyright permission.

- ABM Editors will be informed immediately, at any time before or after publication, if any of the above statements is found to be untrue. The Editors hold all rights to correct every aspect of a publication, including cancellation of the paper even if it has been already been published.

## References

1. World Association of Medical Editors Publication Ethics Committee. Publication ethics policies for medical Journals, accessed January 01, 2010.
2. International Info Committee for Medical Journal Editors. Guidelines available at <http://www.icmje.org/#author>.
3. European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences: Ethical guidelines for publication in Journals and reviews, Brussels, 2006.