

Guidelines for authors

Ethics of publishing

Authors are expected to understand and comply with the principles of publication ethics. The following guidance of the Indian Journal of Medical Ethics (IJME) is based on the guidelines relating to ethics in publication developed by the COPE, Committee on Publication Ethics (<https://publicationethics.org/guidance/Guidelines>) and the ICMJE, International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (<http://www.icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf>). These guidelines are followed on points not covered in the IJME guidelines; and in the event of any doubt, issue or dispute, these guidelines are used for the resolution.

The IJME is fully open access and free-to-publish journal. However, it encourages authors making submission to voluntarily pay whatever manuscript processing fee they can afford. It also encourages readers accessing the full text or the pdf of the published manuscript to voluntarily pay whatever fee they can afford.

Sections under which submissions are invited

1. *Research articles* (up to 7000 words): Manuscripts based on original theoretical and empirical research
2. *Comments* (up to 4000 words): Analytical and narrative pieces on important themes, published work and controversies, regulations, policies and programmes, bioethics norms and principles, local and global
3. *Case study* (up to 2400 words): Cases in research, training, clinical practice and public health; may be carried along with a commentary
4. *Discussions* (up to 4000 words): Responses to and commentaries on papers published in the *IJME*
5. *Reviews of books and films* (up to 1000 words): Critical reviews of books, films and other media that are relevant to discussions on bioethics and allied themes
6. *Reports* (up to 2400 words): Reports of meetings, workshops/symposia, seminars, events, fact-finding / investigations etc.
7. *Students' corner* (up to 1500 words): Short discussions and reflections on ethical issues encountered by students of medicine, social sciences, law, philosophy and other disciplines that interface with bioethics
8. *Letters* (up to 800 words): Selected letters to the editor, including submissions sent in as comments
9. *Reflections (up to 1500 words)*: Personal narratives or experiences faced in the journal's core areas of interest
10. *Creative space*: Stories and poems based on themes linked with our core area of bioethics and medical ethics

Authors may suggest the section under which their submission may be published, but the final decision on this rests with the Editor.

The word limits indicated above may be relaxed at the Editor's discretion.

Submission components

Submissions should be sent in as two files: a cover letter and the manuscript.

Cover letter: The cover letter (in jpg or pdf format) must include the following information:

- **Title** of the submission
- **Authors' details**, including names, beginning with the name of the first author, affiliations, mailing addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses including institutional and personal email ids, and *signatures* of **all** authors
- **Description of the contribution** made by (each) author(s).
- **A statement of authorship:** It should state that the contribution made by each author confirms to the criteria for authorship as per Section IIA of the 2018 ICMJE recommendations (<http://www.icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf>); that each has read and approved the manuscript; and is responsible for the full content of it.
- The name of the designated **corresponding author**

Manuscript: The manuscript should contain the following:

- **Title** of the submission
- **Names of authors**, with their affiliations, mailing addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses (in the sequence as they should appear in the article)
- **Abstracts** of 100–200 words for all submissions other than editorials, film and book reviews, creative pieces and letters
- **Main article***
- **Acknowledgements**
- **Statement on Conflict of Interest:** Each author must provide a statement on Conflict of Interest (COI). Please note that non-declaration of COI will be treated as a misconduct.
- **Statement on funding support** received for the work on which the submission is based as well as for the preparation of manuscript
- **Statement of submissions/publications of manuscript based on the same / similar work.** If such submission/publication of manuscripts done, then please enclose a copy of each for ready reference of editors and reviewers. Please note that we discourage salami and redundant submissions.
- **References**

Please also submit, separately:

- Tables, diagrams, charts (in b/w only) separately in file format rtf/doc/images in jpg/png

***Wherever applicable, authors are required to:**

- a) have ethics review and approval or waiver from an appropriate ethics committee or institutional review board;
- b) obtain informed consent, whether oral or written, from the study participants;
- c) ensure the confidentiality and privacy of their study participants; and
- d) anonymise study locations and sites where sensitive medical or social issues are concerned.

Anonymous submission: As a rule, author(s) must identify to the journal and readers. However, under some exceptional circumstances, the IJME may allow author(s) anonymity. Such authors must identify themselves in confidence to the Editor, explain the need for anonymity and provide a copy of the submission for which anonymity is required. The decision on the anonymity would be made

on the basis of circumstances of the author, the subject matter and points being made in the submission, and any other relevant material/issues.

Formatting of the manuscript:

**Please format manuscripts as rtf/doc/docx in Times New Roman, 12 point.
Submissions in PDF format are not acceptable.**

Alignment and spacing:

The text should be left aligned with single-line spacing and double spacing between paragraphs.

Subheads:

Do not number subheads or put them in capital letters, and please follow a single format. Multiple subheads should be differentiated as follows:

Main heading: **bold regular;**

Subheading: ***bold italic;*** and

sub-section under subheading: *regular italic.*

Endnotes:

Footnotes are not accepted in text. Endnotes may be used where absolutely necessary.

Tables and figures:

Tables and figures should be kept to the minimum and must be simple, black and white, formatted to fit one page, correctly numbered (Table 1, 2, 3...; Figure 1, 2, 3...) and titled. If tables and figures are obtained or reproduced from third party sources, the authors must ensure that proper permissions have been taken and all sources are accurately cited.

Lengthy or multiple tables or appendices will be published only online. This will be indicated in the print version, which will mention the link.

Style:

The *IJME's* readership includes people from different academic and work backgrounds. Please write in a clear and direct style. Use the active voice, avoid long sentences, make the minimum use of abbreviations, and spell out acronyms the first time they are used. Please keep the title short, simple and relevant, and use subheads to break up the text in long articles. If necessary, seek the assistance of a writer, giving them appropriate credit in the acknowledgements section of the article.

Referencing:

The journal follows the ICMJE's Uniform Requirements for references. General rules for this may be found at www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html, with details in the book *Citing Medicine*, available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK7256/>

Please limit the references to those essential to justify the point being made. References should be complete, with details of the author/s, title, publication title, publishers, and place and date of publication. For Internet references, a link to the cited work is necessary, with the citation date.

Personal communications as references are discouraged, unless essential. E-mailed consent will be required and should be addressed to the journal directly and carry the person's address, affiliation and telephone details. Such communications should be cited in parentheses in the text, with the name, subject and date of the communication. For the *unpublished scientific articles*, please obtain written permission and confirmation of accuracy from the source.

References must be verified against the original documents before the article is submitted. The author is responsible for the accuracy of the references and for the links being functional.

References should be numbered consecutively in the order in which they appear in the text, with the same number recurring for repeated citations. These numbers should appear within parentheses in the text, and not in superscript, with the full list of references provided at the end of the article.

A typical format for references is:

Gopichandran V. Trust in healthcare: an evolving concept. *Indian J Med Ethics*. 2013 Apr–Jun [cited 2017 May 3];10(2):79–82. Available from:<http://ijme.in/articles/trust-in-healthcare-an-evolving-concept/?galley=html>

Papers with incomplete references shall be returned to the authors for correction before being sent for review. Authors of accepted manuscripts will be required to rework the references to comply with the *IJME* format before the manuscripts are processed for publication

Review process

Articles are reviewed initially by one of the editors and returned if their focus has no relevance to the journal’s field of interest or in clear cases of plagiarism. Submissions which fall within the purview of the journal are peer reviewed. Such submissions are peer reviewed irrespective of whether they were submitted directly by the authors or commissioned by the journal. Submissions for the different sections of the journal are peer reviewed as per the following:

Submissions reviewed by external experts	(1) Articles, (2) Comments, (3) Case Studies, (4) Students’ Corner, (5) Reflections.
Submissions reviewed internally (but also reviewed externally when needed)	(1) Editorials, (2) Book & Film Reviews, (3) Creative Writing, (4) Reports, (5) Letters

As a policy the *IJME* support the review disclosure system where the names and details of the authors, reviewers and review reports are disclosed in public domain. But due to current contextual constraints in the country, the *IJME* has been using the “single blinded” review system, where the names and other details of authors are disclosed to reviewers, but the name and other details of reviewers are not disclosed to authors.

In order to make transition to the review disclosure system, the *IJME* encourages and provides option to the reviewers to provide permission to the *IJME* to disclose their names and other details along with the publication of the manuscripts reviewed by them.

Ethics of peer review:

The reviewers are expected to provide unbiased, adequate and to-the-point comments in a respectful manner. They are expected to respect the confidentiality of submissions, and not to use their privileged, pre-publication knowledge of a submission for personal gain – such action amount to plagiarism and is a serious misconduct. The reviewers must disclose any competing interest (conflict of interest) that they may have and might influence their comments.

Editorial Decision, Copy-Editing & Publication

The steps involved in processing a manuscript are:

- 01. Acknowledgement of receipt of submission with cover letter providing requisite information.
- 02. Preliminary assessment of submission and plagiarism check by the editorial office
- 03. Initial assessment of the submission by a Working Editor (WE)
- 04. If initial assessment positive, assignment of the submission to reviewer(s)
- 05. Receipt of peer review reports/comments, evaluation by the WE and the summary communicated to author(s)
- 06. Revision of the submission by authors, re-review by reviewer(s) if needed
- 07. Assessment of the revised manuscript by the WE and recommendation to the editor
- 08. Assessment of all documents and final manuscript by the editor and final decision making
- 09. Communication of decision to author(s)
- 10. Copy-editing and expressed approval of copy edited manuscript by the author
- 11. Publication

Editorial decision:

Revised submissions may also be sent back to the original reviewers for opinion before the final editorial decision is taken.

The *IJME* editors are responsible for monitoring and ensuring the fairness, comprehensiveness, timeliness and civility of the peer-review process.

All final decisions on submissions are made by the Editor.

The Forum for Medical Ethics Society, the publisher and owner of the journal, have no role to play in editorial decision-making.

Copy Editing:

Articles accepted for publication may be edited for language, clarity and length. The author(s) will be sent the copy-edited manuscript by email for pre-publication approval. At that time, they may also be asked to clarify certain points raised by the copyeditor. Authors are requested to aid the demands of production and respond to the corrected manuscript within five days. They must not make substantive changes and restrict correction in the copy edited manuscript. All corrections should be in track change mode in the text of the returned file.

Publication, author's access and copyright

We try to publish accepted articles ahead of print in the 'Online First' section to reduce delays. However, this is at the editors' discretion.

Author in India will receive a complimentary copy of the issue in which their article is published. Author outside India will receive PDF copy of the issue. PDF files of all articles will also be available on the website as soon as the article is uploaded, either as Online First or as part of the quarterly issue.

All articles published in the *IJME* are available on its website free of charge. ***The copyright*** for published material belongs to *IJME*/FMES. The *IJME* freely permits the reprint (or reproduction on a website) of articles from the journal ***for non-commercial use*** when appropriate credit is given to the author and the journal, and publication details are mentioned. Our content can be used commercially only after obtaining permission from and on payment to the *IJME*. This is intended to support the production of the journal.
