

## ***Community Eye Health Journal (CEHJ)*** **Editorial and Publishing Standards, Policies and Practices**

The Community Eye Health Journal (CEHJ) follows the ‘Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing’ joint statement produced by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME). The CEHJ also follows the recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals produced by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). The standards, policies and practices outlined here should be read and interpreted in conjunction with the joint statement and ICMJE guidelines.

### **Aims and Scope**

The aim of the CEHJ is to support the global elimination of avoidable blindness and vision impairment by providing eye health professionals, managers and policy makers with the information and guidance they need to improve eye health in their communities. The journal does this by publishing review articles, practical guidance, and the real-world experiences of individuals who plan and deliver eye care and present this in a way that is visually appealing and easy-to-digest for a wide range of audiences. The journal has a particular focus on producing content which is relevant in low and middle-income countries, although content is often applicable more widely.

### **Content and Submissions**

The journal tends not to publish primary research but instead concentrates on reviews and synthesis of the evidence and current best practice, and example case studies of these being applied. High quality content is aimed for in terms of educational content and teaching value so that articles are of real, practical value to those involved with delivering eye care.

Four issues are published each year, with issues usually concentrating on a particular theme related to eye health, as well as series of articles on different topics. Articles are usually commissioned by the Editorial Team who approach potential authors with experience and expertise in the relevant area. We also encourage authors to contact us with an expression of interest if they would like to contribute an article which is keeping with our Aims and Scope. An expression of interest can be emailed to Anita Shah, the Editorial Assistant, as below. Any articles submitted to the journal which have not been commissioned, or agreed on beforehand, are generally not considered for publication.

### **Editorial team / contact information**

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**Authorship**

Authorship should be based on the following 4 criteria, in keeping with the ICMJE guidelines:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

All those designated as authors should meet all four criteria for authorship, and all who meet the four criteria should be identified as authors. Those who do not meet all four criteria should be acknowledged. Each author should be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work. In addition, authors should have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors. It is the collective responsibility of the authors to determine that all people named as authors meet all four criteria.

Joint first authors can be indicated by the inclusion of the statement 'X and Y contributed equally to this paper' in the author details section of the manuscript.

**Funding**

All sources of funding should be declared by authors. Authors must describe the role of the study sponsor/funder, if any, in the study design; the collection, analysis and interpretation of data; the writing of the report; and in the decision to submit for publication. If the funder(s) had no such involvement, this should be stated.

**Conflicts of Interest**

A competing interest may exist when judgement concerning one interest (such as the outcome of a research study) may be influenced by a secondary interest (such as financial gain or a personal relationship). A competing interest is not in itself unethical, but it needs to be disclosed and openly stated. Perceptions of conflict of interest are equally as important. The CEHJ may still publish work even if the authors have a possible conflict of interest, but these will be declared on the published paper.

Authors should disclose four types of information for any work which is potentially being published by the CEHJ:

1. Their associations with commercial entities that provided support for the work reported in the submitted manuscript (the time frame for disclosure in this section of the form is the lifespan of the work being reported).
2. Their associations with commercial entities that could be viewed as having an interest in the general area of the submitted manuscript (the time frame for disclosure in this section is the 36 months before submission of the manuscript).
3. Any similar financial associations involving their spouse or their children under 18 years of age.
4. Other financial or non-financial associations that may be relevant to the submitted manuscript.

Any disclosure should be made using the ICMJE Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest.

### **Research ethics and consent**

The CEHJ expects authors to follow the World Medical Association's Declaration of Helsinki. Research articles submitted are required to include statement that the study obtained appropriate ethics approval (or a statement that it was not required and why). This should include the name of the research ethics committee or institutional review board and a statement outlining how informed consent was gained from participants before taking part. Even when a study has received research ethics committee or institutional review board approval the Editorial Management team may have concerns about the ethics of the work and ask for further information. If the Editorial Management team continue to have significant concerns they may seek further advice or take further action, such as contacting the department where the work was done to explain their concerns and recommend a local investigation.

Clinical trials should be registered in a public registry prior to submission in keeping with the trials registration policy of the ICMJE. Randomised controlled trials should adhere to the CONSORT statement (Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials) and submissions should be accompanied by a completed CONSORT checklist.

### **Process for identification of and dealing with allegations of research misconduct**

The CEHJ takes seriously any possible misconduct. The CEHJ is becoming a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and will follow COPE guidelines on dealing with cases of suspected or alleged misconduct. Such misconduct may include falsification of data; plagiarism, redundant and duplicate publication; simultaneous submission; improprieties of authorship; misappropriation of the ideas of others; violation of generally accepted research practices; material failing to comply with legislative and regulatory requirements.

If an allegation raises valid concerns following an investigation the author will be contacted and allowed an opportunity to respond to the issue. As part of the investigation or if misconduct is established beyond reasonable doubt one or more of the following measures may be taken:

- Suspend review or publication until the investigation is complete.
- Request additional information from the author such as original data or ethics committee approval.
- Make inquiries of other titles believed to be affected.
- Article rejection and return to the author.
- If the article is already published a correction may be published alongside the article, or a complete retraction of the article may occur, with reasons given.
- Inform the author's employer, institution or funding agency.
- Refer the matter to other authorities or appropriate regulatory bodies, e.g., the Medical Council of the relevant country.
- Refer the situation to COPE in an anonymised format.

## **Data sharing**

We strongly encourage primary data generated by research that supports an article to be made openly and publicly available as soon as possible. Datasets can either be deposited in publicly available repositories or presented in the main manuscript or additional supporting files, wherever legally and ethically possible. Where this is not possible, for example, owing to confidentiality or sensitivity issues, data can be shared through a controlled access repository.

## **Peer review process**

Peer review is recognised as an important part of the scientific process by the CEHJ. Review and best practice guideline articles undergo review by at least one independent reviewer who has relevant expertise in the area and is not part of the CEHJ editorial management team. Letters, case reports or other short articles may not undergo formal peer review but are reviewed internally by the editorial staff.

Reviewer's evaluations will help the editors to make a decision as to whether to publish:

- Accept, with or without editorial revisions
- Publish, with major revisions needed (substantial changes needed before proceeding)
- Publish, with minor revisions needed (article suitable for publication but some changes needed)
- Reject, but further work may justify resubmission
- Reject outright. This may be on grounds of lack of interest, lack of novelty, technical and/or interpretational problems.

The CEHJ editorial and review process has a dynamic and collaborative approach which may be different from other journals. We encourage editors and reviewers to work with authors to help ensure that articles have a high educational quality and are engaging, relevant and accessible.

## **Peer review terms**

Any potentially conflicting or competing interests should be declared to the editorial staff (whether personal, financial, intellectual, professional, political or religious in nature). Manuscripts submitted to the CEHJ are the private, confidential property of the authors and reviewers should keep the information they contain strictly confidential. If manuscripts are discussed with a professional colleague, the reviewer should ensure that they are aware of the confidential nature of the discussion and that they must not disclose any information before the article is published. The identity of any co-reviewer and any potential conflicting or competing interests they have should be disclosed when any review is submitted. Reviewers should not retain any manuscript for personal use and should destroy/delete copies after submitting a review. If a reviewer has any concern that misconduct may have occurred the Editor should be informed. A reviewer should provide a fair, honest and unbiased assessment of a manuscript and maintain a professional approach, for example, refrain from being hostile or inflammatory or making derogatory personal comments. It is not the job of the reviewer to extend the work beyond its current scope. Reviewers are asked not to identify themselves to authors without discussing with the editorial staff first. Authors should not attempt to determine the identities of reviewers or confront them.

Further advice and guidance on conducting a peer review of an article can be found at:

- <https://mrc.ukri.org/funding/peer-review/guidance-for-peer-reviewers/>
- <http://publicationethics.org/files/Peer%20review%20guidelines.pdf>
- <https://authorservices.wiley.com/Reviewers/journal-reviewers/how-to-perform-a-peer-review/top-tips-for-peer-reviewers.html>
- <https://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-reviewers>

## **Ownership and management**

The Community Eye Health Journal is published by the International Centre for Eye Health, part of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The journal is produced and managed by the CEHJ Editorial Management team which is led by the Editor and Medical Editor and which is overseen by the Director of the ICEH. Funding for the journal comes from donors (see below for more detail). Advice and guidance are provided by the Editorial Committee and Strategy Group (see below for more detail).

## **Editorial Committee and Strategy Group**

The CEHJ has an Editorial Committee which advises the Editorial Management Team on the content of the CEHJ and consists of members with relevant expertise and knowledge. This committee proposes and discusses content of the journal as well as helping to maintain quality. The Editorial Committee meets twice a year. Members of this Committee and its Terms of Reference can be found on the CEHJ website.

The Editorial Committee meetings are also supported by a number of members of staff at the ICEH including, but limited to, the Editorial Management team.

The CEHJ also receives advice and guidance from a number of additional advisers; this is received remotely rather than through attendance at Editorial Committee meetings. A list of the current advisers can be found on the CEHJ website.

The CEHJ also has an advisory Strategy Group which provides guidance to the Editorial Management team on the strategic direction and planning of the journal. The Strategy Group is composed of regular, substantial charitable funders to the journal, representatives of other versions of the journal and other individuals or groups with relevant experience or expertise. Members of this Group and its Terms of Reference can be found on the CEHJ website.

## **Copyright and Licensing**

Authors retain copyright of their work but must agree that all material is published by the CEHJ under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International license ([CC BY-NC 4.0](#)). This means that material can be copied and redistributed and also remixed, transformed, or built upon. However, appropriate credit must be given when material is used, a link provided to the license and an indication given if changes were made to the original material. Material may not be used for commercial purposes.

## **Author fees**

There are currently no author fees or charges for manuscript processing and/or publishing materials in the journal.

## **Corrections and Retractions**

Authors should contact the Editor or Editorial Assistant of any errors of fact they have noticed in their article once published. Corrections are made at the discretion of the Editorial Management team and, if made, will involve a correction notice in the next issue and a link to the correction notice for the online version of the article. Retractions made by made in cases of evidence of serious research misconduct such as unreliable data or findings, plagiarism, duplicate publication and unethical research. Retraction notices will explain why the article was retracted.

## **Publishing schedule**

An issue of the CEHJ is usually published four times a year. Where possible, we also aim to publish articles in an online format before full print publication.

## **Access, Indexing and Archiving**

The CEHJ is a fully open access journal with no subscription or payment required to view content. Content can be accessed through the CEHJ website and smartphone application. Issues are published in paper form and distributed to our readership in low- and middle-income countries. This is funded by charitable donors of the CEHJ.

Peer-reviewed articles are indexed in PubMed and deposited in PubMed Central on publication. We also encourage authors to post the final, published PDF of their article on a website, institutional repository or other free, public server on publication.

## **Revenue sources, Advertising and Marketing**

The CEHJ receives financial support from a number of donors who choose to support the journal in view of the educational benefits and open-minded ethos of the journal. A list of these donors can be found on the CEHJ website.

The CEHJ currently contains no advertising or sponsored content.

### **Complaints and Appeals**

Complaints and appeals can be directly emailed to the Editor at  
[Elmien.Wolvaardt@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Elmien.Wolvaardt@lshtm.ac.uk)

or the Medical Editor at  
[Victor.Hu@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Victor.Hu@lshtm.ac.uk)

Complaints and appeals will be reviewed by the Editorial Management team and the appropriate response taken, including informing the complainant of the outcome. All complaints will be acknowledged in a timely manner, aiming for within 3 working days where possible, with responses made within 2 weeks where possible.

If a complainant remains unhappy with the response given the complainant may complain to an external body, where that body has relevant oversight. COPE can facilitate the resolution of disputes in a manner that is consistent with its mission:

<https://publicationethics.org/facilitation-and-integrity-subcommittee>