

Statement of Ethics and Malpractice

Editorial Responsibilities

Editorial independence

The Nidan is completely independent of any government or non-governmental funding agencies whether in South Africa or elsewhere. Its editors with the help of its board select articles through a preliminary evaluation based on scholarly standards without prejudice of race, gender, ethnicity and citizenship or ideological position of the authors. The editor-in-chief has full authority to determine the editorial content of the journal and the timing of the publication of such content. Editor-in-chief of Nidan can often approach prominent scholars in the field to be guest editors and accept the editorial decisions made by such guest editors.

Confidentiality

Nidan's editorial staff will keep all information submitted to the journal in full confidence and ensure that correspondence between Nidan's editorial staff and authors, reviewers and the publisher and any other party involved is kept in confidence.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

Editors and editorial board members of Nidan will not use unpublished information disclosed in a submitted manuscript for their own research purposes without the authors' explicit written consent. Privileged information or ideas obtained by editors as a result of handling the manuscript will be kept confidential and not used for their personal advantage. Editors will recuse themselves from considering manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships/connections with any of the authors, companies or institutions connected to the papers; instead, they will ask another member of the editorial board to handle the manuscript.

Publication decisions

The editors ensure that all submitted manuscripts being considered for publication undergo double blind peer-review by at least two reviewers who are experts in the field. The Editor-in-Chief is responsible for deciding which of the manuscripts submitted to the journal will be published, based on the validation of the work in question, its importance to researchers and readers, the reviewers' comments, and such legal requirements as are currently in force regarding libel, copyright infringement and plagiarism. The Editor-in-Chief may confer with other editors or reviewers in making this decision.

Involvement and cooperation in investigations

Editors (in conjunction with the publisher) will take responsive measures when ethical concerns are raised with regard to a submitted manuscript or published paper. Every reported act of unethical publishing behaviour will be looked into, even if it is discovered years after publication.

Duties of Reviewers

Contribution to editorial decisions

Nidan relies on peer reviewers to assist editors in making editorial decisions. Nidan shall not directly involve reviewers to communicate with authors, but relay all recommendations and suggestions made by them to the authors concerned for improvement of the articles if they are recommended for publication.

Promptness

Nidan requests all reviewers to inform the editors timeously whether or not they are qualified to review an article; and whether or not they would be able to return the review within a reasonable stipulated time. Nidan is reliant on the free time offered to it by reviewers and is therefore uses its discretion to often extend the period of reviewing process upto a reasonable period and will ensure that the authors are in no way disadvantaged in the process.

Confidentiality

Nidan expects all its reviewers to maintain confidentiality in dealing with any manuscripts submitted to them for review. Any manuscript received for review is a confidential document and must be treated as such; they must not be shown to or discussed with others except if authorized by the Editor-in-Chief (*who would only do so under exceptional and specific circumstances*). This applies also to invited reviewers who decline the review invitation.

Standards of objectivity

Nidan expects its reviewers to conduct reviews objectively and observations formulated clearly with supporting arguments so that authors can use them for improving the manuscript. Personal criticism of the authors is considered inappropriate. Reviewers are advised not to prejudice the reviewing process of an article based on their ideological preferences.

Acknowledgement of sources

Reviewers are expected to identify relevant published work that has not been cited by the authors. Any statement that is an observation, derivation or argument that has been reported in previous publications should be accompanied by the relevant citation. A reviewer should also notify the editors of any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other manuscript (published or unpublished) of which they have personal knowledge.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

Nidan expects all their reviewers to declare any conflict of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies or institutions connected to the manuscript and the work described therein and decline the invitation to review so that alternative reviewers can be found.

Unpublished material disclosed in a submitted manuscript must not be used in a reviewer's own research without the express written consent of the authors. Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for the reviewer's personal advantage. This applies also to invited reviewers who decline the review invitation.

Duties of Authors

Reporting standards

Authors of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed and the results, followed by an objective discussion of the significance of the work. The manuscript should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Review articles should be accurate, objective and comprehensive, while editorial 'opinion' or perspective pieces should be clearly identified as such. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behaviour and are considered unacceptable.

Data access and retention

Nidan may ask the authors to provide the raw data of their study together with the manuscript for editorial review and should be prepared to make the data publicly available if practicable. In any event, authors should ensure accessibility of such data to other competent professionals for at least 10 years after publication (preferably *via* an institutional or subject-based data repository or other relevant data centre), provided that the confidentiality of the participants can be protected and legal rights concerning proprietary data do not preclude their release.

Originality and plagiarism

Nidan expects the authors to ensure that they have written the article and to submit only entirely original works, and if they have used the work and/or words of others, that this has been appropriately cited. Publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the work reported in the manuscript should also be cited. Plagiarism takes many forms, from "passing off" another's paper as the author's own, to copying or paraphrasing substantial parts of another's paper (without attribution), to claiming results from research conducted by others. Plagiarism in all its forms constitutes unethical publishing behaviour and is considered unacceptable.

Multiple, duplicate, redundant or concurrent submission/publication

It is an explicit condition of Nidan that papers describing essentially the same research should not be published in more than one journal or primary publication. Hence, authors should not submit for consideration a manuscript that has already been published in another journal. Submission of a manuscript concurrently to more than one journal is unethical publishing behaviour and unacceptable.

Nidan, however, accepts that publication of some kinds of articles in more than one journal is sometimes justifiable, provided that relevant conditions are met. The authors and editors of the journals concerned must agree to the secondary publication, which must reflect the same data and interpretation of the primary document. The primary reference must be cited in the secondary publication.

Authorship of the manuscript

Nidan stipulates that only persons who meet the following authorship criteria should be listed as authors in the manuscript as they must be able to take public responsibility for the content: (i) made significant contributions to the conception, design, execution, data acquisition, or analysis/interpretation of the study; and (ii) drafted the manuscript or revised it critically for important intellectual content; and (iii) have seen and approved the final version of the paper and agreed to its submission for publication. All persons who made substantial contributions to the work reported in the manuscript (such as technical help, writing and editing assistance, general support) but who do not meet the criteria for authorship must not be listed as an author, but should be acknowledged in the "Acknowledgements" section after their written permission to be named has been obtained. The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co-authors (according to the above definition) and no inappropriate co-authors are included in the author list and verify that all co-authors have seen and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to its submission for publication.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

Authors should—at the earliest stage possible (generally by submitting a disclosure form at the time of submission and including a statement in the manuscript)—disclose any conflicts of interest that might be construed to influence the results or their interpretation in the manuscript. Examples of potential conflicts of interest that should be disclosed include financial ones such as honoraria, educational grants or other funding, participation in speakers' bureaus, membership, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity interest, and paid expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements, as well as non-financial ones such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or

beliefs in the subject matter or materials discussed in the manuscript. All sources of financial support for the work should be disclosed (including the grant number or other reference number if any).

Acknowledgement of sources

Nidan expects the authors to ensure that they have properly acknowledged the work of others, and also cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work. Information obtained privately (from conversation, correspondence or discussion with third parties) must not be used or reported without explicit, written permission from the source. Authors should not use information obtained in the course of providing confidential services, such as refereeing manuscripts or grant applications, unless they have obtained the explicit written permission of the author(s) of the work involved in these services.

Peer review

Nidan takes the view that authors are obliged to participate in the peer review process and cooperate fully by responding promptly to editors' requests for raw data, clarifications, and proof of ethics approval, patient consents and copyright permissions, if applicable. In the case of a first decision of "revisions necessary", authors should respond to the reviewers' comments systematically, point by point, and in a timely manner, revising and re-submitting their manuscript to the journal by the deadline given.

Fundamental errors in published works

Nidan expects that when authors discover significant errors or inaccuracies in their own published work, it is their obligation to promptly notify the journal's editors or publisher and cooperate with them to either correct the paper in the form of an erratum or to retract the paper. If the editors or publisher learns from a third party that a published work contains a significant error or inaccuracy, then it is the authors' obligation to promptly correct or retract the paper or provide evidence to the journal editors of the correctness of the paper.

Duties of the Publisher

Handling of unethical publishing behaviour

In cases of alleged or proven scientific misconduct, fraudulent publication or plagiarism, the publisher, in close collaboration with the editors, will take all appropriate measures to clarify the situation and to amend the article in question. This includes the prompt publication of an erratum, clarification or, in the most severe case, the retraction of the affected work. The publisher, together with the editors, shall take reasonable steps to identify and prevent the publication of papers where research misconduct has occurred, and under no circumstances encourage such misconduct or knowingly allow such misconduct to take place.

Access to journal content

The publisher is committed to the permanent availability and preservation of scholarly research and ensures accessibility by partnering with organizations and maintaining their own digital archive.