

## **Rila Publications Ltd: Publication Ethics Policy**

Rila Publications Ltd adheres closely to the standards of ethical behavior set out by various industry associations such as COPE (Committee on Publications Ethics) [ [http://publicationethics.org/files/Code\\_of\\_conduct\\_for\\_journal\\_editors\\_Mar11.pdf](http://publicationethics.org/files/Code_of_conduct_for_journal_editors_Mar11.pdf)] and WAME (World Association of Medical Ethics) [ <http://www.wame.org/about/recommendations-on-publication-ethics-policie#Authorship> ]. Authors should refer to these guidelines when submitting an article for publishing.

A summary of these requirements is given below:

### **1. Conflict of Interest declaration**

Any conflict of interest or potential competing interest for all articles is required. These can be defined as anything that could influence the authors, reviewers or editors.

This could be any of but not exclusively interests that are financial, commercial, academic, political and personal. Broadly these are interest that may make a reader reasonably believe they may have been misinformed or deceived.

This would also include the need for obtaining patient consent as required and the maintenance of patient confidentiality and personal data.

Any conflicts of interest, or none if that is the case, should be declared at the time of initial submission. If more than one author, then the corresponding makes the declaration on behalf of all authors.

The declaration on conflict of interest should be made at the end of the article submitted.

### **2. Research ethics**

Approval from a recognised Research Ethics committee will be required for specific types of study or research. These would include the following studies:

- If involving patients/healthcare users
- If requiring access to patient sensitive data
- If medical staff or healthcare professionals are recruited as participants
- Further information available at:  
<http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/>

### **3. Key ethical roles**

- Editors: to execute the role in a fair manner and without influence on the grounds of gender, religious faith, political alliance and ethnicity of the submission author(s)
- Authors: retain and store all data associated with the submission, to confirm that the submission is not under consideration or accepted by any other publication, to confirm that the work is original and that any content from other sources is appropriately acknowledged or cited, declare conflicts of interest, that studies involving human or animal subjects adhere to the appropriate regulatory guidelines, obtain informed consent and report all errors in publication in a timely fashion and if required issue an erratum. One author accepts responsibility of the data and analysis involved in the manuscript.
- Reviewers: assist in editor in improving the standard of the publication, maintain confidentiality of the manuscript, flag up any potential areas of conflict of interest between the author and reviewer.

### **4. Handling ethical misconduct**

- Identification may be from any source e.g. editor, publisher, reviewer.
- Sufficient information and evidence should be made available so that a formal investigation may be commenced.
- The editor and publisher will reach an appropriate decision
- Allegation which are deemed of a minor nature may be resolved by taking evidence from the author
- Major or serious evidence of misconduct will require wider consultation than the editor and publisher e.g. experts in the field, and a decision taken whether to inform/involve the employing authority and/or the professional body of the author.
- The outcome of the process will be dependent on the severity of the misconduct but could involve: relay to the author the acceptable standards have not been met; a written warning on the misconduct and future behavior; publish, formally, a notice or editorial detailing the misconduct. For severe proven misconduct, informing the author's employer/funding organisation, withdrawing the publication, bar future manuscripts or report the misconduct to the appropriate professional or other sanctioning body.