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Mission

The **SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES** is a double-blind peer review, open access, **multidisciplinary** journal dedicated to publishing high-quality content and is intended to fill a gap in terms of scientific information for Southern Brazil. We have set high standards for the articles to be published by ensuring strong but fair refereeing by at least two reviewers. The Journal publishes original research articles in all the fields of Engineering, Mathematics, physics, Chemistry, Biology, Agriculture, Natural resource management, Pharmacy, Medicine, and others.

Occasionally the journal will include review papers, interviews, and other types of communications. It will be published mainly in English, and at present, there are no page charges.

We hope that this journal will provide a forum for the dissemination of high-quality research in Science and are open to any questions and suggestions.

The responsibility for the articles is exclusive to the authors.

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For the most updated information please visit the website of the journal at <https://sjofsciences.com/>

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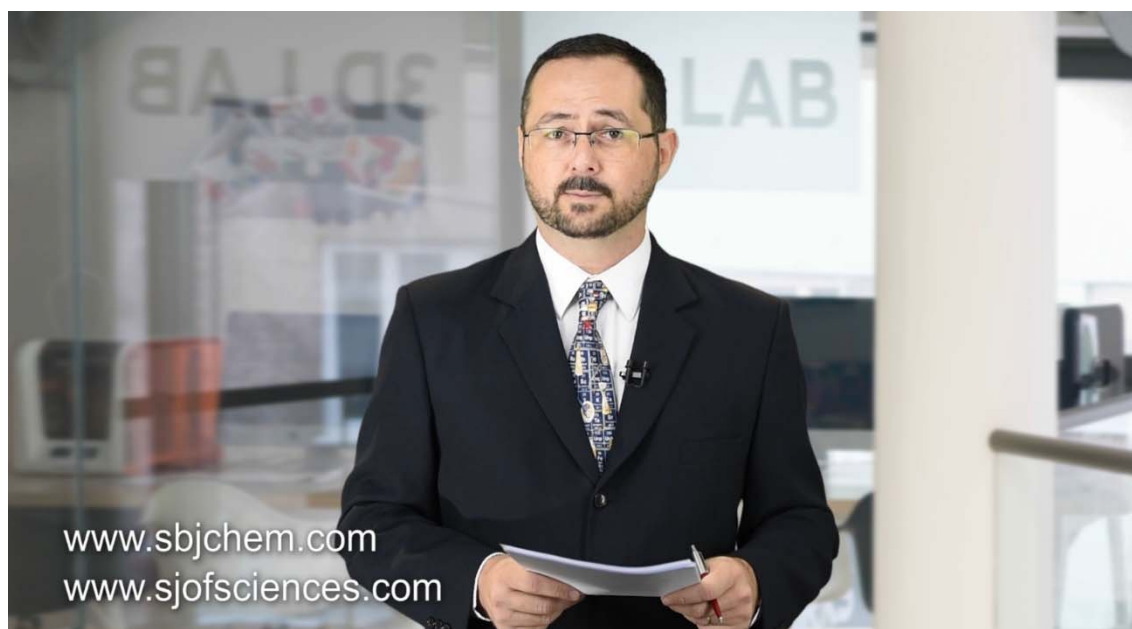
30 YEARS CELEBRATION CONFERENCE

This is a reprint of the first pages from the conference book organized to celebrate the 30 years of the former Southern Brazilian Journal of Chemistry. It was the first time in the history of the journal that such a dynamic project was put in motion. This new form of interaction between the journal and the Universities, authors, and speakers was very positive, and the journal team considered repeating it in collaboration with its partners.

The journal and the Conference organizing committee are extremely grateful to the supporting institutions, from Brazil the Vassouras University; IFSul; UERJ; UFRN; IPEN; AEB; IFRJ; UFRB; ABQRS; ITA; and CRQ-V. From Georgia ISU. From Kazakhstan Satbayev University. From Argentina University of Cordoba and INFIQC. From South Korea INNOSPACE. From Venezuela ULA. From Colombia UDFJC. From Nigeria, the University Of Ilorin. From Russia I.M. SECHENOV FMMSU. From Ecuador UTA. We hope to keep counting on your trust in the years to come.

The readers of this book may note that two dates are present in the conference date. This is because there was a change in the conference schedule, and we decided not to bother the authors with these details since, at present, we have bigger things to concern ourselves about, such as a virus with unknown origins and a horrible war where brother has turned against brother. Let God have mercy on us.

Please scan the QR-Code below the image to remember the opening ceremony and the announcements done during the conference.



Please visit the journal's new website at <https://sjofsciences.com/>.

SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES

REVIEW PROCESS

Document version 1.0. Last review: 16/09/2021.

The manuscripts submitted to the SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES for publication must be unpublished (they must not be subject to any other printed or digital journal). The authors are responsible for the opinions, results, and ideas declared in the article. The precision of the manuscript information, including figures and tables, is the full responsibility of the authors.

During the submission process of the article, authors must attach the cover letter in which it should be related to at least four potential reviewers with their respective data. It is the authors' responsibility to notify the potential reviewers that they may be invited to review a manuscript.

Only after the editorial board verifies that the manuscript follows the required format set out in the guide for authors template file and its content is appropriate for publication, it is sent to peer-review according to the research topic (manuscripts that are not following the journal theme or style will be returned without being evaluated). The manuscript is sent to at least two reviewers (the number of evaluators can differ for each manuscript, depending on the research field).

Then, the article gets in an evaluation stage that can be extended up to three months, depending on the time of evaluation acceptance. Finally, reviewers have up to twenty (20) days to submit their concepts (in some cases, depending on the evaluator's availability, this time extends up to one month).

Main reasons for rejection include but are not limited to: Plagiarism, false information, not providing the requested improvements done by the reviewers, inconsistent references.

Review process step by step

1- The authors submit the formatted original manuscript and the cover letter (the templates are available for download).

1.1- The received files will be initially verified for consistency, completeness, focus, and quality. The file will receive a tracking number (to be used in all the messages exchanged among the authors and the editors). If the initial evaluation is positive, the authors will receive an invoice order to deposit the [Submission Fee](#) (SF); If the initial evaluation is negative two actions may occur:

Action **a)** immediately rejection of the manuscript;

Action **b)** Improvement requests. If the author is incapable of providing positive results on the necessary requests of improvement, the author may receive two attempts to complete this step successfully. Fail will imply the rejection of the manuscript.

2- After the manuscript has successfully received for evaluation, it will go to the double blind peer review. At least two reviewers will be invited to evaluate the manuscript.

2.1- The returned evaluations will be compiled in at least one file and returned to the author for providence.

2.2 - The author must perform all the required modifications on the manuscript and send it back to the editors. If any doubts emerge, the reviewers may be contacted again to perform a new evaluation of the manuscript. If it is all approved by the editors and reviewers, the authors will receive an invoice order for the [APCs](#).

3- After the confirmation of the APC deposit, the manuscript will be published on the next **available** issue. [Plan ahead](#) the publication of the manuscript.

Double-blind peer review

The SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES uses the double-blind peer-review process to ensure quality, reliability, and integrity of evaluation. This modality consists of maintaining the anonymity of both the authors and reviewers throughout the editorial process. Moreover, precise review instructions containing the aspects to be evaluated are sent to each reviewer. It is up to the reviewer to make annotations within the manuscript. Possible results for the review process After receiving the reviews (minimum two concepts), the editorial committee sends the editorial decision to the corresponding author. Based on the reviewer's concepts, the editor may decide:

- To accept with minimal changes: Authors should submit a new version to the journal. Then, when the editor verifies that changes were made, the article could be accepted.
- To accept the manuscript with significant changes: Authors must send a new version to the journal, which will be submitted to a short review by the editorial committee. Authors must also submit a letter detailing the changes made or the reasons for the changes not made according to the review concepts.
- To reject: The authors are welcome to submit the manuscript to another journal or to restart the submission process. If so, the new version will be treated as a **new** and individual article. New submissions corresponding to previously rejected articles must include a letter detailing all the changes made and the reasons that validate the new submission.

SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES

ETHICAL GUIDELINESS

Document version 1.1. Last review: 16/09/2021.

Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement

The SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement is based, in large part, on the guidelines and standards developed by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). the SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES also endorses:

- Code of Conduct and Best-Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors (Committee on Publication Ethics, 2011), basically following the same adaptation created by PsychOpen;
- Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement – PsychOpen
- Ethics in Research & Publication (Elsevier)
- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)
- Principles of Transparency (COPE)
- Ethical Guidelines for Journal Publication (Elsevier)
- International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals.
- Declaration of Helsinki for research involving human participants, human material, or human data
- International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS)
- Conselho Nacional de Controle de Experimentação Animal – CONCEA – Brazil (Brazilian National Animal Experiment Control Council – CONCEA -)
- Comissões de Ética no Uso de Animais (CEUAs) – Brazil (Brazilian Animal Use Ethics Commissions)
- World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)

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The relevant duties and expectations of authors, reviewers, and editors of the journal are set out below.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Compliance with publication ethics ensures the integrity of scientific publishing and confidence in published articles. Therefore, the SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES expects all authors to adhere to ethical requirements in preparing their manuscripts.

Authors should observe high standards concerning publication ethics as set out by the Commission on Publication Ethics (COPE). Falsification or fabrication of data, plagiarism, duplicate publication of the authors' work without proper citation, and misappropriation of the work are unacceptable practices. Any cases of ethical misconduct are treated very seriously and will be dealt with following the COPE guidelines.

The SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES employs a fully double-blind peer-review process where both reviewers and authors remain anonymous throughout the review process. All articles submitted for publication undergo an initial editorial screening. When a submission is considered appropriate, it is sent to two reviewers under the editorial policies and with a minimum quality level. The reviewers will not know the identity of the authors, as any identifying information will be stripped from the document before review.

Once an author submits a paper, the Editor(s) checks the paper's composition and arrangement against the Journal's submission guidelines. In particular, we review the presence of required sections and stylizations; that the article is within the scope of the Journal; and that it is sufficiently original and topical. If not, the paper may be rejected without being reviewed any further. A designated Editor-in-Chief will take care of the review process from this point onwards. The appointed Editor-in-Chief assigns at least two Referees for manuscript review according to their expertise. The referees shall be experts in the given field, and, if possible, they should not be institutionally or personally associated with the author. Referees are asked to evaluate the manuscript and provide constructive anonymized comments for the author.

Authorship:

Authorship provides credit for a researcher's contributions to a study and carries accountability. Each author is expected to have made substantial contributions to one of the following moments of the manuscript: conception; design of the work; the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data; creation of new software used in work; have drafted the work or substantively revised it. Also, it is expected the authors have approved the submitted version (and any substantially modified version that involves the author's contribution to the study); have agreed both be personally accountable for the contributions of the author and to ensure that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work, even ones in which the author was not personally involved, are appropriately investigated, resolved, and the resolution documented in the literature.

The SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES encourages collaboration with colleagues in the locations where the research is conducted and expects their inclusion as co-authors when they fulfill all authorship as mentioned earlier criteria. Contributors who do not meet all criteria for authorship should be listed in the Acknowledgements section.

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Authors wishing to make changes to authorship will be asked to explain the reasons to make this change and complete a change of authorship form ([CLICK HERE](#)). However, it is essential to emphasize that changes to authorship cannot be made after the acceptance of a manuscript.

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The Cambridge Online Dictionary defines plagiarism as: "the process or practice of using another person's ideas or work and pretending that it is your own". the SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES considers plagiarism a serious offense. There is a very strict policy towards plagiarism in this Journal. Articles are screened for plagiarism before, during, and after publication, and if found, they will be rejected at any stage of processing. the SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES is committed to eliminating manuscripts with possible plagiarism cases from its review and publication process. the SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES

uses different plagiarism detection applications to check each manuscript for potential cases of plagiarism. A plagiarism check is the first step in the manuscript review process. Manuscripts that are found to contain an unacceptable level of similarity with other published works are immediately rejected. Submitted manuscripts should be the original works of the author(s). The SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES follows COPE guidelines in suspected cases of plagiarism.

Citations manipulation (Fake References):

- The SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES has a strict policy for fake references. All references will be checked before, during, and after publication, and if found fake ones or copied from other sources, the paper will be rejected at any stage of processing. The Journal will check into references cited by the author that are unfamiliar.
- The references should be appropriate, reasonably recent (most within ten years), and credible sources. Authors should be citing primary sources from the original research article or database.
- A manuscript should contain only relevant citations. The inclusion of sources that are not relevant to the work is strongly discouraged. Similarly, irrelevant self-citation to increase one's citation is unethical.
- Excessive self-citation, coordinated efforts among several authors to collectively self-cite, gratuitous and unnecessary citation of articles published in the journal to which the paper has been submitted, and any other form of citation manipulation are inappropriate, not ethical behavior.

Duplicate submissions:

The SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES does not accept duplicate submissions. Duplicate submission is when an author submits the same or similar manuscripts to two different journals simultaneously. This includes the submission of manuscripts derived from the same data so that there are no substantial differences in the manuscripts. Duplicate submission also includes the submission of the same/similar manuscript in different languages to different journals. Also, It is unethical to fabricate, manipulate, or falsify data in a manuscript.

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL ON RESEARCH WITH HUMAN

Ethics approval for research involving human participants, human material, or human data Research involving human participants, human material, or human data must have been performed following the Declaration of Helsinki and must have been approved by an appropriate ethics committee. A statement detailing this, including the name of the ethics committee and the reference number where appropriate, must appear in all manuscripts reporting such research. Suppose a study has been granted an exemption from requiring ethics approval. In that case, this should also be detailed in the manuscript (including the name of the ethics committee that granted the exemption). Further information and documentation to support this should be made available to the Editor on request. Manuscripts may be rejected if the Editor considers that the research has not been carried out within an appropriate ethical framework. In rare cases, the Editor may contact the ethics committee for further information.

Research on human participants, which includes identifiable human material or identifiable data, requires ethical protection. According to the Declaration of Helsinki issued by the World Medical Association, research on human participants should be formulated in experimental protocols. These should be submitted to independent ethical review boards (ethics committees and institutional review boards) for approval. Additionally, every potential

participant should be informed about the “aims, methods, sources of funding, any possible conflicts of interest, institutional affiliations of the researcher, the anticipated benefits and potential risks of the study and the discomfort it may entail” and should give consent to participate.

Consent to participate:

- The protection of a patient's right to privacy is essential and Ethics approval must be sought for research involving human participants. Authors are required to describe in their manuscripts ethics committee approval and participants consent by study design from participants when research involves human participants. Please collect and keep copies of patients' consent forms on which patients or other subjects of your experiments clearly grant permission for the publication of photographs or other material that might identify them. If the consent form for your research did not specifically include this, please obtain it or remove the identifying material. A statement to the effect that such consent had been obtained must be included in the 'Methods' section of your paper. If necessary the individual journal Editor(s) may request a copy of any consent forms.
- For all research involving human participants that include details, images, videos, biomedical, clinical, and biometric data relating to an individual person, written informed consent for the publication of these details must be obtained from that person (or their parent or legal guardian in the case of children under 18), and a statement to this effect should appear in the manuscript. The manuscript must include a statement that written informed consent for publication was obtained. Authors can use the consent form to obtain consent for publication, or a consent form from their own institution or region if appropriate. The consent form must state that the details/images/videos will be freely available on the internet and may be seen by the general public. The consent form must be made available to the Editor if requested, and will be treated confidentially. In the case of articles describing human transplantation studies, authors must include a statement declaring that organs/tissues were not obtained from
- vulnerable groups (for example, unconscious patients) where there is the potential for coercion (for instance, prisoners) and must also name the institution(s)/clinic(s)/department(s) via which organs/tissues were obtained. Documentary evidence of consent must be supplied if requested. The final decision on whether consent to publish is required lies with the Editor.

Ethics committee approval:

- All articles dealing with original human or animal data must include a statement on ethics approval in the Materials and Methods section reporting of ethics committee approval and patient consent by study design. This paragraph must contain the name and address of the ethics committee responsible; the protocol name and number of approving committee that was attributed by this ethics committee; the name of the Chairperson of the ethics committee (or the person who approved the protocol), the date of approval by the ethics committee, type of consent, data source, and whether the study used data collected as part of a study reported elsewhere were recorded.
- Example of citation of Ethics committee approval in the Materials and Methods section.
- This research has been granted the ethics committee approval for Human or Animal sample use as follow: Ethics: Ethical approval for this study (Ethical Committee N° XXXXX) was provided by the Ethical Committee of (Name of University or Hospital Committee, City, Country) (Chairperson – Full Name of the responsible for authorizing the experiment -) on (Date – day, Month, Year).

- Authors are required to describe in their manuscripts ethical approval from an appropriate committee and how the participants consented to the study if they have signed any document in which the research and its outcomes are clearly and well explained, how the researches will use all data and, if the case, the number of the ethics committee approval from the UNIVERSITY or HOSPITAL. When reporting experiments on people, authors should indicate whether the procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional and national).
- In case the University in which the study was carried out does not demand any official document, or if no formal ethics committee is available, research must have been performed in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki as revised in 2013. If doubt exists whether the research was conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration, the authors must explain the rationale for their approach and demonstrate that the institutional review body explicitly approved the doubtful aspects of the study. The authors have to explain that and say that all participants have agreed to participate in this study.

A 'participant' is someone who actively provides research data. For example:

- Completes surveys;
- Participates in interviews, discussions or observations;
- Undergoes psychological, physiological or medical treatment or testing;
- Tests software;
- Grants access to personal collections of records, photographs;
- Is the person from whom tissue has been collected (including blood, urine, saliva, hair);
- Is identified in a record, e.g., employment record, medical record, education record, membership list, electoral roll;
- Is identified or de-identified in data banks or unpublished human research data, e.g., analysis of existing unpublished data collected by another researcher or collected for a different research project.

RESEARCH INVOLVING ANIMALS

ANIMAL ETHICS COMMITTEES (A.E.C.S)

Authors must describe in their manuscripts the Animal Ethics Committee approval when the study is carried out using animals. Experimental research on vertebrates or any regulated invertebrates must comply with institutional, national, or international guidelines, and where available, should have been approved by an appropriate ethics committee. Field studies and other non-experimental research on animals must comply with institutional, national, or international guidelines, and where available, an appropriate ethics committee should have been approved. A statement detailing compliance with relevant guidelines and/or appropriate permissions or licences must be included in the manuscript.

The Basel Declaration outlines fundamental principles to adhere to when conducting research in animals following the International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS) and the Brazilian Conselho Nacional de Controle de Experimentação Animal (CONCEA) ethical guidelines.

A statement detailing compliance with relevant guidelines and/or ethical approval (including the name of the ethics committee and the reference number where appropriate) must be included in the manuscript. Suppose a study has been granted an exemption from requiring ethics approval. In that case, this should also be detailed in the manuscript (including the name of the ethics committee that granted the exemption and the reasons for the exemption). The Editor will take account of animal welfare issues and reserves the right to reject a manuscript, especially if the research involves protocols inconsistent with commonly accepted norms of animal research. In rare cases, the Editor may contact the ethics committee for further information. For experimental studies involving client-owned animals, authors must also document informed consent from the client or owner and adherence to a high standard (best practice) of veterinary care.

Animal Ethics Committees (A.E.C.s) provide avenues for public participation in the regulation of animal research. A.E.C.s are responsible for approving and monitoring research within Accredited Animal Research Establishments, including carrying out inspections of animals and facilities.

No animal research may be carried out without A.E.C. approval. A.E.C.s must consider and evaluate applications to conduct research on the basis of the researchers' responses to a comprehensive set of questions, including their justification for the research, its likely impact on the animals, and procedures for preventing or alleviating pain and distress.

On behalf of the establishment, A.E.C.s can stop inappropriate research and discipline researchers by withdrawing their research approvals. They can require that adequate care, including emergency care, is provided for animals. They also provide guidance and support to researchers on matters relevant to animal welfare through the preparation of guidelines and disseminating relevant scientific literature. A.E.C.s are responsible for advising establishments on the changes to physical facilities that should be made to provide for the needs of the animals used.

Ethics committee approval:

This research has been granted the ethics committee approval for Human or Animal sample use as follow:

Ethics: Ethical approval for this study (Ethical Committee N° XXXXX) was provided by the Ethical Committee of (Name of University or Hospital Committee, City, Country) (Chairperson – Full Name of the responsible for authorizing the experiment -) on (Date – day, Month, Year).

PEER-REVIEW POLICY

All research articles undergo thorough double-blind peer-review. This usually involves a review by two independent peer reviewers.

Peer-review policy

All submissions to the SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES are assessed by an Editor, who will decide whether they are suitable for peer-review. An editor is on the author list or has any other competing interest regarding a specific manuscript. Another member of the Editorial Board will be assigned to assume responsibility for overseeing peer-review. Submissions felt suitable for consideration will be sent for peer-review by appropriate

independent experts identified by the Handling Editor. Editors will decide based on the reviewers' reports, and authors are sent these reports along with the editorial decision on their manuscript. Authors should note that even in light of one positive report, concerns raised by another reviewer may fundamentally undermine the study and result in the manuscript being rejected. The practice of peer-review is to ensure that only good science is published. It is an objective process at the heart of good scholarly publishing and is carried out by all reputable scientific journals. All referees play a vital role in maintaining the high standards Review Policy and all manuscripts are peer-reviewed following the procedure outlined below.

Initial manuscript evaluation

The Editor first evaluates all manuscripts to check their suitability to the AIM and SCOPE of the Journal apart from critical issues like Plagiarism and Citation manipulation. It is rare, but an exceptional manuscript can be accepted at this stage. Manuscripts rejected at this stage are insufficiently original, have serious scientific flaws, have poor grammar or English language, or are outside the journal's aims and scope. Those that meet the minimum criteria are normally passed on to at least 2 experts for review.

Type of Peer-Review

The SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES employs double-blind peer-reviewing, where both the referee and author remain anonymous throughout the process.

Referee's report form

Referees are asked to evaluate whether the manuscript is original; methodologically sound; follows appropriate ethical guidelines; has results clearly presented and supports the conclusions, correctly references previous relevant work. Language correction is not part of the peer-review process, but referees may, if so wish, suggest modifications to the manuscript.

How long does the review process take?

The review processing time might take up to 150 days from the date of receiving the paper. Should the referee's reports contradict one another or a report is unnecessarily delayed, a further expert opinion will be sought. The Editor's decision will be sent to the author with recommendations made by the referees, which usually includes verbatim comments by the referees. Revised manuscripts might be returned to the initial referees, who may then request another revision of a manuscript.

Final report

A final decision to accept or reject the manuscript will be sent to the author and any recommendations made by the referees and may include verbatim comments by the referees.

Editor's Decision is final

Referees advise the editor, who is responsible for the final decision to accept or reject the article.

Misconduct

The SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES will follow the COPE guidelines outlining how to deal with cases of suspected misconduct.

Research misconduct

All research involving humans (including human data and human material) and animals must have been carried out within an appropriate ethical framework (see our Research involving animals - Animal Ethics Committees (A.E.C.s) and Ethics approval for Research involving human participants, human material, or human data information). If there is suspicion that research has not taken place within an appropriate ethical framework, the Editor may reject a manuscript and may inform third parties, for example, author(s)' institution(s) and ethics committee(s). In cases of proven research misconduct involving published articles, or where the scientific integrity of the article is significantly undermined, articles may be retracted.

NOTIFICATIONS

Corrections, Retractions & Expressions of Concern

In case the SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES must publish corrections to, or retractions of, articles published in the Journal, this will be made to maintain the integrity of the academic record. the SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES applies Committee on Publication Ethics guidelines on corrections, retractions, and expressions of concern in such situations.

Corrections

Errors in published papers may require a correction in the form of an erratum. Because articles can be read and cited as soon as they are published, any changes after that could potentially impact those who read and cited the earlier version. the SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES provides authors with an opportunity to review article proofs before publication with the express goal of ensuring the accuracy of the content. Publishing an erratum increases the likelihood readers will find out about the change and explains the change's specifics. Errata is published on a numbered page and will contain the original article's citation. Cases where these corrections are insufficient to address an error, will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Editor-in-Chief. Inadequacies arising from the normal course of new scientific research are not within this scope and will require no correction or withdrawal.

Expressions of Concern

Where substantial doubt arises as to the honesty or integrity of a submitted or published article, it is the Editor-in-Chief's responsibility to ensure that the matter is adequately addressed. The Editor-in-Chief should be promptly informed of the decision of the sponsoring institution and a retraction printed should it be determined that a fraudulent paper was published. Alternatively, the Editor-in-Chief may choose to publish an expression of concern over aspects of the conduct or integrity of the work.

Article retraction

The SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF SCIENCES endorses the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Retraction Guidelines, and also refers to the ICMJE advice on Corrections,

Retractions and "Expressions of Concern" as well as on Overlapping Publications. Any alterations to the original article will be described in the note. The original article remains in the public domain, and the subsequent Correction or Retraction will be widely indexed. In the exceptional event that material is considered to infringe certain rights or is defamatory, we may have to remove that material from our site and archive sites. Authors, readers, or organizations who become aware of errors or ethics issues in a published article are encouraged to contact the individual journal in the first instance via the contact details available on the journal website. The Editors will consider all reports; additional expert advice may be sought when deciding on the most appropriate course of action. A retraction note titled "Retraction: [article title]" is published in the paginated part of the journal's subsequent issue and listed in the contents list. The online article is preceded by a screen containing the retraction note. To this screen, the link resolves; the reader can then proceed to the article itself. The original article is retained unchanged save for a watermark on the .pdf indicating on each page that it is "retracted."

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It may be necessary to remove an article from the online database in an extremely limited number of cases. This will only occur where the article is defamatory or infringes others' legal rights, or where the article is, or we have good reason to expect it will be, the subject of a court order, or where the article, if acted upon, might pose a serious health risk. In these circumstances, while the metadata (Title and Authors) will be retained, the text will be replaced with a screen indicating the article has been removed for legal reasons.

Editors' responsibilities

Publication decisions

The editor is responsible for deciding which of the papers submitted to the journal will be published. The editor will evaluate manuscripts without regard to the authors' race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, citizenship, or political philosophy. The decision will be based on the paper's importance, originality and clarity, and the study's validity and its relevance to the journal's scope. Current legal requirements regarding libel, copyright infringement, and plagiarism should also be considered.

Confidentiality

The editor and any editorial staff must not disclose any information about a submitted manuscript to anyone other than the corresponding author, reviewers, potential reviewers, other editorial advisers, and the publisher, as appropriate.

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Unpublished materials disclosed in a submitted paper will not be used by the editor or the members of the editorial board for their own research purposes without the author's explicit written consent.

Acknowledgement of sources

Editors should use appropriate software to identify cases in which relevant published work referred to in the paper has not been cited in the reference section. The results of the software analysis should point out whether observations or arguments derived from other publications are accompanied by the respective source. The Editors will notify the author of any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper of which they have taken knowledge.

Reviewers' responsibilities

Contribution to editorial decisions

The peer-reviewing process assists the editor and the editorial board in making editorial decisions and may also serve the author in improving the paper.

Promptness

Any selected referee who feels unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or knows that its prompt review will be impossible should notify the editor and withdraw from the review process.

Confidentiality

Any manuscripts received for review must be treated as confidential documents. They must not be disclosed to or discussed with others except as authorized by the editor.

Standards of objectivity

Reviews should be conducted objectively. Personal criticism of the author is inappropriate. Referees should express their views clearly with supporting arguments.

Acknowledgement of sources

Reviewers should identify cases in which relevant published work referred to in the paper has not been cited in the reference section. They should point out whether observations or arguments derived from other publications are accompanied by the respective source. Reviewers will notify the editor of any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper of which they have personal knowledge.

Disclosure and conflict of interest

Privileged information or ideas obtained through peer review must be kept confidential and not used for personal advantage. Reviewers should not consider manuscripts in which they have conflicts of interest resulting from competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions associated with the papers.

Authors' duties

Reporting standards

Authors of original research reports should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the paper. A paper should contain sufficient detail and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

Data access and retention

Authors could be asked to provide the raw data of their study together with the paper 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 ten years after publication (preferably via an institutional or subject-based data repository or other data center), provided that the confidentiality of the participants can be protected and legal rights concerning proprietary data do not preclude their release.

Originality, plagiarism, and acknowledgement of sources

Authors will submit only entirely original works, and will appropriately cite or quote the work and/or words of others. Publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work should also be cited.

Multiple, redundant or concurrent publication

In general, papers describing essentially the same research should not be published in more than one journal. Submitting the same paper to more than one journal constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable. Manuscripts which have been published as copyrighted material elsewhere cannot be submitted. In addition, manuscripts under review by the journal should not be resubmitted to copyrighted publications. However, by submitting a manuscript, the author(s) retain the rights to the published material. In case of publication, they permit the use of their work under a CC-BY license [<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>], which allows others to copy, distribute and transmit the work as well as to adapt the work and to make commercial use of it.

Authorship of the paper

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors. The corresponding author ensures that all contributing co-authors and no uninvolved persons are included in the author list. The corresponding author will also verify that all co-authors have approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication.

Disclosure and conflicts of interest

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When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published work, it is the author's obligation to promptly notify the journal editor or publisher and to cooperate with the editor to retract or correct the paper in the form of an erratum.