



Conflict of Interest

Policy on Conflicts of Interest, Human and Animal Rights, and Informed Consent

Purpose:

The Axis Community Research Journal (ACRJ) is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of ethical integrity, objectivity, and transparency in all published research. To safeguard the credibility of our scholarly record and the trust of our readers and community stakeholders, we require full and frank disclosure from all involved parties—authors, reviewers, and editors—regarding any potential conflicts of interest. This policy is complemented by our unwavering commitment to the ethical treatment of human participants and animals in research.

Definition of Conflict of Interest (COI):

A conflict of interest exists when an individual's personal, financial, professional, or institutional interests could be reasonably perceived as unduly influencing, or having the potential to influence, their objectivity, judgment, or actions related to a scholarly work. This includes both actual conflicts and the appearance of a conflict.

Disclosure Requirements:

- **For Authors:** All authors must disclose any financial (e.g., employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications), personal, political, academic, or community-based relationships that could be construed as influencing the submitted work. This includes funding sources for the research, which must be declared in a dedicated statement.
- **For Reviewers and Editors:** Invited reviewers and handling editors must decline involvement if they possess a conflict of interest with the manuscript's authors or content. They must disclose any potential conflicts to the editor upon invitation and refrain from using confidential information for personal gain.
- **Timing:** Disclosures must be provided at the point of manuscript submission (authors) or review invitation (reviewers/editors).

Management of Disclosed Conflicts:

- **Transparency:** All author conflict of interest and funding disclosures will be published prominently within the accepted article.
- **Editorial Actions:** The editorial team will assess disclosed conflicts. In cases of significant potential bias, appropriate measures will be taken, which may include: recusal of an editor or

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- **Compliance:** Adheres to the [ICMJE Recommendations](https://www.icmje.org/).





reviewer, seeking additional independent reviews, or publishing an accompanying editorial note to provide context for readers.

Human and Animal Rights Policy:

- **Research Involving Human Participants:** Any study involving human subjects must have been conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and must have received formal approval from an appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethics Committee. For community-engaged research, ethical review that considers community partnership dynamics is essential. The manuscript must contain a statement confirming this approval.
- **Research Involving Animals:** Experimental work utilizing animals must adhere to internationally recognized guidelines (e.g., those from CIOMS or IUCN) for the care and use of laboratory animals. The research must have received approval from an institutional animal care and use committee. Authors must detail steps taken to minimize animal suffering.

Informed Consent Policy:

- **Requirement:** Written informed consent must be obtained from all human participants (or their legal guardians) involved in the research. This consent must explicitly cover both participation in the study **and** the publication of their data in an open-access journal. For case reports or studies featuring identifiable details (e.g., photographs, detailed pedigrees), specific consent for publication must be obtained and documented.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality:** Authors have a strict duty to protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality. Personally identifiable information must be omitted unless it is scientifically essential and explicit publication consent has been obtained. Research must comply with applicable data protection laws and regulations.

Implementation and Compliance:

- **Submission Process:** During online submission, authors are required to complete specific forms detailing conflicts of interest, funding sources, and ethical compliance. Uploads of ethics approval letters and informed consent documentation may be requested.
- **Verification:** The ACRJ editorial team will verify policy compliance as part of the manuscript assessment. Failure to provide required disclosures or evidence of ethical approval will result in the manuscript being declined or returned for correction.
- **Publication:** All published articles will include sections stating: 1) Conflict of Interest Disclosures, 2) Funding Information, and 3) a statement on Ethical Approval and Informed Consent. This ensures permanent, transparent record-keeping for readers.

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Compliance: Adheres to the [ICMJE Recommendations](#).





This integrated policy framework ensures that the Axis Community Research Journal upholds rigorous ethical standards, manages potential biases transparently, and fosters public trust in the community-engaged and interdisciplinary research we disseminate.