

Publishing Ethics

Sciences Force Statement

All submitted manuscripts must adhere to the ethical standards set forth by Sciences Force, as outlined in our comprehensive policies. Our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of publication ethics aligns closely with the guidelines established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). These principles encompass a wide range of ethical considerations, including but not limited to conflicts of interest, authorship and contributorship issues and disputes, misconduct allegations, data issues, overlap, plagiarism, and peer review integrity.

Our Editorial Boards operate independently, ensuring that the publisher does not interfere with the editorial decision-making process. However, in cases where ethical or legal concerns arise, decisions may be subject to change. The acceptance of a manuscript may be rescinded if an ethical issue or conflict with our policies is identified. We prioritize the preservation of ethical standards in scientific publishing, and manuscripts that do not conform to Sciences Force's ethical policies may be withdrawn from submission.

To uphold these ethical standards, Sciences Force conducts thorough checks on all submitted manuscripts to confirm their alignment with the Publication Ethics Guidelines. Our checking process involves a combination of automatic checks supported by advanced tools and manual verifications performed by the dedicated teams in our Journal Editorial Offices. When potential issues are flagged, these are carefully reviewed and confirmed by a human decision maker. In instances where a manuscript does not conform to our policies or is flagged during the check, the input of an Academic Editor is often sought to ensure a fair and comprehensive assessment.

We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and diverse scholarly environment. Our commitment extends beyond traditional ethical considerations to encompass broader principles of inclusivity, diversity, and equitable representation. We welcome contributions from researchers across different backgrounds, disciplines, and perspectives, and we strive to provide a platform that promotes the dissemination of knowledge in a fair and unbiased manner.

At Sciences Force, we recognize the importance of continuous improvement and adaptation to evolving ethical standards. We encourage feedback from our community of authors, reviewers, and readers to ensure that our policies and practices remain robust, transparent, and inclusive. Together, we aim to foster a culture of responsible and ethical scientific publishing

Publication Ethics Statement

Sciences Force is actively seeking membership with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and currently strictly adheres to its Core Practices and Guidelines. Our commitment to ethical standards is fundamental to the integrity of scholarly publishing. Sciences Force journals maintain a stringent peer-review process, coupled with transparent ethical policies and standards, to ensure the inclusion of high-quality scientific studies in the scholarly literature. In cases where ethical issues come to our attention, we are unwavering in our dedication to investigate and take necessary actions to uphold the integrity of the literature and ensure the well-being and safety of research participants.

All submitted manuscripts must align with Sciences Force's editorial policies and ethical guidelines outlined on this webpage, as well as Sciences Force Instructions for Authors. Additionally, submissions are expected to adhere to specific guidelines outlined by individual journals.

Principles that underpin our commitment to ethical publishing include:

- ✓ **Prevention:** Early detection and flagging of potential ethical issues through a combination of automated and manual checks during the peer-review and manuscript evaluation process.
- ✓ **Neutrality:** We are committed to fairness and objectivity in making assessments to correct the literature where necessary, promoting unbiased and impartial decision-making.
- ✓ **Transparency:** Keeping all relevant parties informed when possible and appropriate, providing them with the time to respond to any ethical concerns that may arise.
- ✓ **Consistency:** Ensuring standard processes are followed for the investigation of issues, and upholding the principles and flowcharts outlined by COPE.

Ethical Guidelines for Authors

Authors submitting to Sciences Force journals must ensure that their manuscripts are not only scientifically robust but also ethically sound, aligning with industry-recognized standards reflected in Sciences Force policies. Authors are expected to:

- ✓ Accurately present their research findings, including an objective discussion of the significance of their work.
- ✓ Uphold accurate authorship, including only those who qualify for authorship and clearly stating their contributions.
- ✓ Disclose any facts that might be perceived as potential conflicts of interest at the time of submission.
- ✓ Present data and methods with meticulous attention to detail, allowing other researchers to replicate the work. Raw data must be made publicly available unless compelling reasons, such as patient confidentiality, dictate otherwise.
- ✓ Refrain from simultaneous submission of manuscripts to more than one journal.
- ✓ Ensure original research results are novel and not previously published, following our policy on translations for any translated content.
- ✓ Obtain permission to publish from the copyright holder for any previously published content, including quotations, figures, or tables.
- ✓ Promptly communicate errors and inaccuracies found after publication.

This list is not exhaustive, and authors are encouraged to be cognizant of local regulations and accepted norms within academic publishing. Sciences Force is committed to promoting inclusivity, diversity, and equity in scholarly communication and welcomes contributions from researchers across diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Authorship

Sciences Force upholds the principles of authorship in accordance with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) guidelines. These guidelines stipulate that individuals must meet all four criteria to qualify for authorship:

- ✓ **Substantial Contributions:** Authors must have made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work, or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work.
- ✓ **Drafting or Critical Review:** Authors should have been involved in drafting the work or reviewing it critically for important intellectual content.
- ✓ **Final Approval:** Authors must provide final approval of the version to be published.
- ✓ **Accountability:** Authors should agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work, ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Contributors who do not meet all four criteria for authorship but have contributed to the work should be acknowledged appropriately. We recognize the diversity of research collaborations, and our commitment to inclusivity extends to recognizing and appreciating the contributions of all those involved in the research process.

For more detailed guidance on authorship, Sciences Force recommends consulting the additional resources provided by ICMJE. While publications by single authors are common, Sciences Force acknowledges that collaborative research is essential in today's multidisciplinary scientific landscape.

Any changes to the author list during the editorial process or after publication must be approved by all authors, including those who may be added or removed. Sciences Force reserves the right to request evidence of authorship, and any changes made after acceptance will be considered at the discretion of Sciences Force. We understand that authorship issues may arise, and we are committed to handling these situations with fairness, transparency, and in adherence to established ethical standards.

Sciences Force values diverse perspectives and contributions within the scientific community. We encourage open communication among authors and are dedicated to fostering an environment that promotes responsible and ethical authorship practices."

Author Contributions: Fostering Inclusive Collaboration and Transparent Attribution

At Sciences Force, we prioritize transparency and recognize the diverse nature of collaborative research. To ensure complete transparency and fair attribution, all submitted manuscripts are required to include an author contributorship statement, delineating the specific contributions of each author to the work. This statement serves as a testament to the multifaceted nature of scholarly collaboration, acknowledging the unique roles and expertise brought by each contributor.

The following statements should be used:

“Conceptualization, X.X. and Y.Y.; methodology, X.X.; software, X.X.; validation, X.X., Y.Y. and Z.Z.; formal analysis, X.X.; investigation, X.X.; resources, X.X.; data curation, X.X.; writing – original draft preparation, X.X.; writing – review and editing, X.X.; visualization, X.X.; supervision, X.X.; project administration, X.X.; funding acquisition, Y.Y. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.”

For research articles involving multiple authors, a concise paragraph must be included, detailing the individual contributions of each author. To facilitate this, Sciences Force endorses the use of the CRediT taxonomy, a comprehensive system that provides clarity on various authorship roles and responsibilities. Authorship, in accordance with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) guidelines, is reserved for those who have made substantial contributions to the reported work.

The corresponding author assumes the role of a primary contact point between the editor and co-authors. In addition to managing communication, the corresponding author is responsible for keeping all co-authors informed and involving them in significant decisions regarding the publication. This collaborative approach ensures that the publication process reflects the collective input and consensus of the authoring team.

In instances where joint first authors exist, their equal contributions are appropriately acknowledged in the manuscript with a statement such as:

"X and Y contributed equally to this paper."

Furthermore, the contributorship statement should provide clarity on the specific roles undertaken by the co-first authors, embracing the diversity of their contributions.

For review articles, where the traditional breakdown of individual contributions may be less applicable, authors are encouraged to include a statement clarifying responsibilities. This includes specifying who was responsible for ideation, conducting literature searches and/or data analysis, and drafting and revising the work.

In cases where articles are primarily derived from a student's dissertation or thesis, Sciences Force recommends listing the student as the principal author. This acknowledgment reflects the foundational role played by the student in the research, aligning with our commitment to recognizing diverse academic contributions.

Sciences Force values and promotes inclusive collaboration, ensuring that our authorship guidelines and practices reflect the rich tapestry of perspectives and expertise that contribute to the advancement of scholarly knowledge.

Consortium/Group Authorship

At Sciences Force, we recognize and embrace the collaborative nature of scientific research, where contributions often extend beyond individual efforts. Consortium or group authorship serves as a testament to the collective endeavors that lead to significant advancements in knowledge. Our approach to consortium/group authorship is rooted in transparency, inclusivity, and adherence to established guidelines.

When authorship is retained by a consortium or group, the collective entity is acknowledged as the author, highlighting the joint efforts involved in the research. In this scenario, individual consortium/group author members listed in the author byline must meet the criteria for authorship outlined by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) guidelines. This ensures that each named author has made substantial contributions to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the work.

In cases where the work is presented by the author(s) on behalf of a consortium or group, transparency is paramount. The author list should explicitly indicate this collective representation, such as:

"Author A on behalf of XXX Consortium/Group."

The consortium/group is not retained as an author in these instances and is exclusively acknowledged in the author list.

For further transparency, any provided consortium/group members will be listed in a separate section at the end of the article. This section may be designated as Acknowledgments, Appendix, or Supplementary Materials, depending on the nature of the information. Acknowledging consortium/group members separately ensures due recognition for their contributions while maintaining the clarity of authorship roles. Consortium/group authorship is a powerful mechanism for recognizing collaborative efforts across diverse perspectives, disciplines, and institutions. It reflects our commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where the collective intellectual capital of researchers contributes to the advancement of science.

Authorship and the Use of AI or AI-Assisted Technologies

At Sciences Force, we recognize the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and AI-assisted technologies on scientific research, especially in the realm of manuscript preparation. Our approach to authorship in the context of AI aligns closely with the guidelines set forth by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), ensuring ethical and transparent practices.

Tools such as large language models (LLMs), including but not limited to ChatGPT, GPT-4, and BARD, are common resources that significantly contribute to the creation of academic content. However, Sciences Force firmly adheres to the [COPE position statement](#), which asserts that these AI tools do not meet the established authorship criteria. Consequently, AI tools cannot be listed as authors on manuscripts.

In instances where AI or AI-assisted tools have been integral to the manuscript preparation process, authors are required to declare this usage explicitly in the cover letter submitted with the manuscript. This declaration should include sufficient details outlining the extent of AI involvement in the creation of the manuscript. Besides, Transparency is paramount in communicating the role of AI tools in the research process. Therefore, authors must provide explicit details on how the AI tool was utilized within the “*Materials and Methods*” section of the manuscript. Additionally, the product details of the AI tool should be acknowledged within the “*Acknowledgments*” section.

Authors bear the responsibility for the originality, validity, and integrity of the content in their manuscripts, inclusive of any material contributed by AI or AI-assisted tools. Rigorous review processes are essential to ensure that the content aligns with all of Sciences Force’s publication ethics policies. This commitment underscores the importance of maintaining the highest ethical standards in scholarly publishing, even as technology evolves.

Sciences Force reserves the right to request additional information regarding the use of AI tools in manuscript preparation. Editorial decisions will be made in line with Sciences Force’s robust Editorial Process and the terms outlined in our Terms and Conditions. These measures are in place to safeguard the integrity of the publication process and uphold the trust of the scientific community.

Handling Deceased Authors in Manuscript Submission

At Sciences Force, we understand that the collaborative nature of scientific research extends beyond the boundaries of life, and we recognize the significance of honoring the contributions of deceased authors. Our policy regarding deceased authors is designed to be both compassionate and ethically sound.

In the unfortunate event that a manuscript is submitted with a deceased author or if an author passes away during the peer review process, we encourage the corresponding author or co-authors to promptly inform the editorial office. Open communication in such circumstances is crucial to ensure that the publication process is handled with sensitivity and respect.

If the deceased author held the role of the corresponding author, the authorship group is encouraged to nominate a co-author to assume this responsibility. This ensures the seamless continuation of communication between the editorial office and the authorship group. The corresponding author, in consultation with the co-authors, should confirm the specific contributions made by the deceased author to the manuscript. Additionally, any potential conflicts of interest related to the deceased author's contributions should be disclosed. This information is vital for maintaining transparency and upholding the integrity of the research.

Upon publication, a note will be added under the author list to honor the memory and contributions of the deceased author. This acknowledgment serves as a tribute and recognition of their valuable input to the research. The note may include a brief statement such as:

"In Memoriam"

Or

"Dedicated to the Memory of [Author's Name]"

accompanied by a respectful and concise description of their contributions.

The handling of deceased authors underscores our commitment to ethical practices in scholarly publishing. It acknowledges the significance of recognizing the intellectual contributions made by individuals, even in their absence, and highlights our commitment to treating authors with dignity and respect throughout the publication process. Furthermore, Sciences Force is committed to providing support and understanding during challenging circumstances. We understand the emotional impact of losing a co-author and strive to approach these situations with compassion, empathy, and a commitment to maintaining the ethical standards of the scientific community.

Changes to Authorship

At Sciences Force, we recognize that the authorship of a manuscript reflects the intellectual and ethical contributions of each individual involved in the research process. Our policy on changes to authorship is designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and adherence to ethical standards throughout the editorial and publication processes. Authors are strongly encouraged to carefully consider and finalize the authorship of their manuscripts before submission. This proactive approach promotes clarity and transparency from the outset.

Any proposed changes to the author list must be communicated during the editorial process and before manuscript acceptance. This includes additions, removals, or

rearrangements of author names. The goal is to address potential authorship issues in a timely manner and maintain the integrity of the publication process. Changes to authorship, irrespective of the nature (addition, removal, or rearrangement), necessitate the approval of all authors, including those who might be removed. The collaborative decision-making process ensures that all individuals involved in the research have a say in the authorship outcome.

To request any change in authorship, Sciences Force requires the submission of a completed authorship change form. This form should include the signatures of all authors, providing a clear and compelling reason for the proposed change. This documentation is essential to uphold the transparency and integrity of the authorship adjustment.

Changes to authorship requested after manuscript acceptance but before publication may result in a delay in the publication process. Authors are encouraged to initiate discussions regarding potential authorship changes as early as possible in the editorial timeline to minimize such delays. If a manuscript has already been published, any requests for changes to authorship will be thoroughly evaluated. If deemed necessary and justified, the changes will be implemented through the publication of a Correction. This corrective approach is taken to maintain the accuracy and integrity of the published work.

Sciences Force reserves the right to request evidence of authorship during the process of evaluating proposed changes. This ensures the validity and authenticity of authorship claims and aligns with our commitment to rigorous editorial oversight. Changes to authorship after acceptance will be made at the discretion of Sciences Force. This discretionary approach allows for a careful consideration of individual cases, taking into account the circumstances and justifications provided by the authors.

Authorship Disputes: Resolving Conflicts with Integrity and Fairness

At Sciences Force, we understand that authorship disputes can be complex and sensitive issues that may arise during the processing or post-publication stages of a manuscript. Our approach to resolving authorship disputes aligns closely with the guidelines provided by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), emphasizing transparency,

fairness, and adherence to ethical standards. Sciences Force follows the COPE guidelines, which emphasize that journals are not in a position to adjudicate on appropriate authorship contributions. The COPE guidelines explicitly state that authorship disputes are not grounds for retraction when there is no reason to doubt the validity of the findings. This approach safeguards the scientific record while addressing the challenges associated with authorship conflicts.

In cases where authorship disputes arise, Sciences Force encourages the parties involved to resolve the conflict amongst themselves. Open communication and mutual understanding can often lead to a satisfactory resolution. However, we recognize that disputes may persist despite efforts to reach an agreement. When disputes cannot be settled by the affected parties, Sciences Force is committed to seeking an impartial and expert resolution. To this end, we will reach out to an appropriate institution or governing body for final adjudication. This external intervention ensures an unbiased assessment and decision-making process.

Sciences Force reserves the right to amend authorship lists in line with recommendations provided by the institution or governing body involved in the dispute resolution process. This ensures that the final decision is based on an authoritative and objective evaluation. While authorship disputes are taken seriously, Sciences Force acknowledges that the validity of research findings remains a paramount concern. Retraction is not automatically pursued when there is no reason to doubt the validity of the research. This approach aligns with the COPE guidelines and underscores our commitment to preserving the integrity of the scientific record.

Throughout the resolution process, Sciences Force remains vigilant in upholding ethical standards and exercising editorial discretion. We recognize that each dispute is unique, and decisions are made with careful consideration of the circumstances, ethical principles, and the broader scientific community's interests.

Maintaining Integrity: Policies on Plagiarism, Data Fabrication, and Image Manipulation

At Sciences Force, upholding the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct in research and publication is paramount. Our policies on plagiarism, data fabrication, and image manipulation are designed to ensure transparency, trustworthiness, and the reliability of scientific contributions within our journals.

✓ **Plagiarism: A Clear Prohibition**

Sciences Force unequivocally prohibits plagiarism in any form. Plagiarism encompasses the unauthorized copying of text, ideas, images, or data from any source, including one's own publications, without proper attribution. Authors are expected to give due credit to the original sources, and any reused text must be appropriately quoted with citation. Even when a study's design or manuscript structure is inspired by previous works, explicit citations are mandatory. To maintain the integrity of our publications, all submissions to Sciences Force undergo thorough plagiarism checks using industry-standard software, such as iThenticate. If plagiarism is identified during the peer review process, the manuscript may face rejection. In cases where plagiarism is detected post-publication, an investigation will be initiated, and appropriate actions will be taken in accordance with our policies.

✓ **Image Manipulation Guidelines**

Image files in manuscripts must not be subject to any manipulation that could compromise the accuracy or authenticity of the information they convey. Irregular manipulations, including the introduction, enhancement, moving, or removal of features, grouping of images that should be presented separately, or modifications to contrast, brightness, or color balance that could obscure or enhance information, are strictly prohibited. If irregular image manipulation is identified and confirmed during the peer review process, the manuscript may face rejection. Similarly, if irregular image manipulation is identified post-publication, Sciences Force may take corrective actions,

including issuing corrections or retracting the paper. These measures are implemented to maintain the credibility of the scientific record and ensure the accuracy of published findings.

✓ **Data Integrity and Preregistration**

Originality and integrity in presenting data are essential components of rigorous scientific research. Authors are expected to avoid inappropriate selection, manipulation, enhancement, or fabrication of data. This includes the exclusion of data points to manipulate statistical significance, fabrication of data, selective presentation of results, and the deliberate choice of analysis tools to support a particular conclusion (p-hacking). Sciences Force strongly recommends preregistration of methods and analysis to enhance transparency and accountability. Any breach of data integrity, if identified, may lead to serious consequences. These include, but are not limited to, rejection during the peer review process or post-publication correction or retraction, depending on the severity and nature of the breach. Sciences Force is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards in research and publication.

Ensuring Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Human Subjects

At Sciences Force, we prioritize the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects, human material, human tissues, or human data. Our guidelines adhere to the Declaration of Helsinki of 1975, revised in 2013, to ensure that all research meets the highest ethical standards. The following extensively discusses our policies and expectations in this regard:

Declaration of Helsinki Compliance: Authors conducting research involving human subjects must explicitly declare adherence to the rules of the Declaration of Helsinki. The Declaration outlines principles and guidelines for ethical research involving human participants, emphasizing the necessity of obtaining approval from local institutional review boards (IRBs) or ethics committees.

Institutional Review Board Statement: For studies involving human subjects, a dedicated section in the article, titled 'Institutional Review Board Statement,' must

provide essential information, including the project identification code, date of approval, and the name of the ethics committee or IRB. This statement ensures transparency and accountability regarding the ethical oversight of the research.

Ethical Approval for Non-Interventional Studies: Non-interventional studies, such as surveys or social media research, require full participant informed consent. Authors must communicate details about anonymity, the purpose of the research, data usage, and potential risks to participants. Ethical approval from an appropriate ethics committee is mandatory. If no ethical approval is required, authors must either provide an exemption or cite relevant legislation supporting this exemption.

Informed Consent for Publication: Written informed consent for publication must be obtained from participating patients, especially when case details, personal information, or images are included in the manuscript. Patient details must be anonymized to the greatest extent possible, and identifiable materials should only be included if relevant to the research.

Consent, Permission, or Release Form: Authors are required to obtain a signed consent, permission, or release form from participants, ensuring unlimited permission for publication in various formats. A template permission form is available, and a blank version (without names or signatures) must be uploaded during submission. The form should explicitly grant permission under an open-access license.

Additional Checks for Vulnerable Groups: Studies involving vulnerable groups may undergo additional scrutiny. The editorial office may request documentary evidence, including blank consent forms and discussion documents from the ethics board. Authors must be prepared to provide such evidence to ensure the protection of vulnerable participants.

Handling Categorization of Groups: In cases where studies categorize groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, disease, etc., authors must provide a clear explanation of why such categorization was necessary. This transparency promotes awareness and helps justify the inclusion of sensitive categorizations.

Editorial Oversight and Right to Reject: Editors reserve the right to reject any submission that does not comply with these ethical requirements. The scrutiny applied during the editorial process aims to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct and ensure the protection and respect of research participants.

Research Involving the Use of Animals

Sciences Force is committed to upholding ethical standards in research involving animals, aiming to balance scientific advancement with the welfare and humane treatment of animals. Our guidelines align with widely accepted principles, including the '3Rs' (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement), and advocate for transparency in reporting through adherence to the ARRIVE guidelines.

The 3Rs Principles: Authors are expected to adhere to the widely-accepted '3Rs' principles when conducting research involving animals:

- ✓ **Replacement:** Seek alternatives to animal use whenever possible.
- ✓ **Reduction:** Minimize the number of animals used to the minimum necessary for meaningful results.
- ✓ **Refinement:** Implement experimental conditions and procedures that minimize harm to animals.

Authors must justify the potential benefits derived from the research in relation to the costs endured by animals. Procedures should be designed to avoid causing offense to the majority of readers.

Inclusion of Details in Manuscripts: Authors are required to include comprehensive details on housing, husbandry, and pain management in their manuscripts. This information promotes transparency and allows readers to evaluate the ethical considerations taken during the research.

Compliance with Legislation and Ethics Committees: For studies involving vertebrates or higher invertebrates, approval from the appropriate ethics committee is mandatory if required by national legislation. The 'Institutional Review Board Statement' in the manuscript should include the project identification code, approval date, and the name of the ethics committee. Authors must ensure that research procedures comply with both national and institutional regulations. Ethical statements should confirm adherence to relevant legislation.

Clinical Studies Involving Animals: Clinical studies involving animals and interventions beyond routine care require ethics committee oversight, following guidelines from organizations such as the American Veterinary Medical Association. In studies involving client-owned animals, informed consent from the owners is mandatory and must be certified in the manuscript.

Exemption from Ethics Committee: If ethical approval is not required by national laws, authors must provide an exemption from the ethics committee, along with a full explanation of why ethical approval was not required.

Utilitarian Framework for Ethical Justification: If no animal ethics committee is available, authors should justify their research ethically using the same utilitarian framework employed by ethics committees. This justification may be requested by reviewers and editors.

ARRIVE Guidelines: Sciences Force endorses the ARRIVE guidelines for reporting experiments using live animals. Authors and reviewers are required to use the ARRIVE guidelines as a checklist, ensuring comprehensive and transparent reporting of animal experiments.

Editorial Oversight: Editors reserve the right to request the ARRIVE guidelines checklist and may reject submissions that do not adhere to these guidelines. Submissions may also be rejected based on ethical or animal welfare concerns or if the procedures described do not appear justified by the value of the work presented.

By adhering to these guidelines, Sciences Force aims to foster responsible and ethical research practices involving animals while promoting transparency and accountability within the scientific community.

Useful Links:

- [NSW Department of Primary Industries and Animal Research Review Panel - Three Rs](#)
- [Home Office - Animals \(Scientific Procedures\) Act 1986 Code of Practice](#)
- [American Association for Laboratory Animal Science - The Scientific Basis for Regulation of Animal Care and Use](#)
- [European Animal Research Association - EU regulations on animal research](#)
- [ARRIVE Guidelines](#)
- [ARRIVE Guidelines Checklist](#)

Ensuring Transparency in Research Involving Cell Lines

At Sciences Force, transparency and ethical conduct are paramount in research involving cell lines. Authors are required to provide detailed information on the origin and provenance of cell lines used in their research. The following guidelines outline the expectations and requirements for submissions reporting on research with cell lines:

✓ *Origin and Provenance of Cell Lines*

Authors must explicitly state the origin of any cell lines used in their research. For established cell lines, the provenance should be clearly indicated. References should be provided to either a published paper or a commercial source, ensuring traceability and authenticity of the cell lines.

✓ *Provenance for Established Cell Lines*

For established cell lines, authors should provide references to published papers or commercial sources, establishing the credibility and source of these cell lines. This ensures that readers and reviewers can verify the authenticity of the cell lines used in the research.

✓ *Use of Previously Unpublished De Novo Cell Lines*

In the case of previously unpublished de novo cell lines, including those obtained from other laboratories, authors must provide details of institutional review board or ethics committee approval. If the cell line is of human origin, written informed consent must be confirmed. This requirement emphasizes the ethical treatment and consent processes associated with the use of human cell lines.

✓ *Editorial Oversight*

Editors reserve the right to reject any submission that does not meet the stipulated requirements regarding the origin and provenance of cell lines. This ensures that the scientific community can trust the integrity and reliability of research findings published in Sciences Force journals.

An example of an ethical statement:

“The HCT116 cell line was obtained from XXXX. The MLH1+ cell line was provided by XXXXX, Ltd. The DLD-1 cell line was obtained from Dr. XXXX.”

“The DR-GFP and SA-GFP reporter plasmids were obtained from Dr. XXX and the Rad51K133A expression vector was obtained from Dr. XXXX.”

Research Involving Plants

At Sciences Force, ethical considerations in experimental research involving plants, whether cultivated or wild, are of paramount importance. Authors are required to adhere to institutional, national, or international guidelines, with a recommendation to comply with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The following guidelines detail the expectations for authors conducting research on plants:

✓ *Compliance with Guidelines*

Experimental research on plants, including the collection of plant material, must align with institutional, national, or international guidelines. Authors are encouraged to follow ethical standards set forth by organizations such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

✓ *Genetic Information and Origin*

For each submitted manuscript, authors must provide supporting genetic information and details on the origin of the plant material used in the research. This information ensures traceability and transparency in the research process.

✓ *Voucher Specimens for Rare and Non-Model Plants*

For research manuscripts involving rare and non-model plants (excluding typical model plants like *Arabidopsis thaliana*, *Nicotiana benthamiana*, *Oriza sativa*, etc.), authors must

deposit voucher specimens in an accessible herbarium or museum. Vouchers serve as reference materials for future investigators to verify the identity of the plant material. Information on populations sampled, GPS coordinates, date of collection, and the documented part(s) used in the study should be included. In exceptional cases involving rare, threatened, or endangered species, authors may request a waiver, but this must be clearly described in the cover letter.

✓ *Editorial Oversight*

Editors reserve the right to reject any submission that does not meet the stipulated requirements. This ensures that research involving plants aligns with ethical standards and contributes to the credibility and integrity of scientific findings.

✓ *Example of Ethical Statements*

Authors should include detailed ethical statements in their manuscripts. For instance:

For *Torenia fournieri* plants:

"White-flowered Crown White (CrW) and violet-flowered Crown Violet (CrV) cultivars were selected from 'Crown Mix' (XXX Company, City, Country) and kindly provided by Dr. XXX (XXX Institute, City, Country)."

For *Arabidopsis* mutant lines:

"Arabidopsis mutant lines (SALKxxxx, SAILxxxx,...) were kindly provided by Dr. XXX, institute, city, country."

Clinical Trials Registration

Sciences Force places a strong emphasis on transparency, ethical conduct, and methodological rigor in clinical trials. The guidelines set forth by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and the CONSORT (Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials) Statement are adopted to uphold these principles.

✓ **Clinical Trials Registration:**

- *Registration Requirement:* Sciences Force strictly adheres to the ICMJE guidelines, which necessitate the registration of clinical trials in a public trials registry at or before the time of the first patient enrollment. This registration is considered a condition for the paper's consideration for publication. Purely observational studies are exempt from this requirement. Clinical trials encompass not only those conducted in hospitals or involving pharmaceuticals but also any studies that involve participant randomization and group classification within the context of the intervention under assessment.
- *Encouragement for Pre-Registration:* Authors are strongly encouraged to pre-register clinical trials with recognized international clinical trials registries. Suitable databases include clinicaltrials.gov, the EU Clinical Trials Register, and those listed by the World Health Organization International Clinical Trials Registry Platform. Authors should cite a reference to the registration in the Methods section of the manuscript.
- *Prospective Clinical Trial Registration:* It is clarified that approval to conduct a study from an independent local, regional, or national review body does not substitute for prospective clinical trial registration. Sciences Force retains the right to decline any paper without trial registration for further peer-review. However, an exception is made if the study protocol has been published before enrollment, in which case registration can be waived with correct citation of the published protocol.

✓ **CONSORT Statement:**

- *Reporting Randomized Trials:* For manuscripts reporting the results of randomized trials, Sciences Force requires authors to submit a completed CONSORT 2010 checklist and flow diagram as part of the submission process. This requirement ensures comprehensive and standardized reporting of key elements in randomized trials.
- *CONSORT 2010 Checklist:* Authors are directed to utilize the CONSORT 2010 checklist, and the submission should report the content addressed by each item of the checklist. This approach guarantees that critical aspects of the trial design, conduct, and analysis are adequately reported, promoting transparency and reproducibility.

- *CONSORT Statement Extensions:* Authors are encouraged to explore CONSORT checklist extensions available for different designs and types of data beyond two-group parallel trials. This flexibility allows for comprehensive reporting tailored to the specificities of diverse trial designs.

Dual Use Research of Concern

In alignment with the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and the comprehensive framework outlined in the "Guidance for Editors: Research, Audit, and Service Evaluations," Sciences Force places a strong emphasis on ethical research conduct and potential risk evaluation. This approach ensures the responsible dissemination of scientific knowledge and aligns with the broader commitment to maintaining the highest standards in scholarly publishing.

Identification and Communication of Potential Threats: Researchers engaging in studies that have the potential to pose significant threats, either to public health or national security, are required to explicitly indicate these aspects in their manuscript. The cover letter accompanying the submission should provide a detailed explanation of any potential dual-use research concerns, emphasizing transparency from the outset.

Areas of Concern: While not exhaustive, potential areas of concern encompass biosecurity, nuclear and chemical threats, and research with military applications. Sciences Force recognizes the nuanced nature of research activities and encourages authors to proactively address any potential implications related to the aforementioned areas.

Risk-Benefit Analysis for Peer Review Consideration: For manuscripts falling under the category of potential dual-use research or those carrying inherent risks, a rigorous risk-benefit analysis is paramount. These submissions undergo careful scrutiny during the peer-review process. A key criterion for consideration is that the benefits of the research to the general public or public health must demonstrably outweigh the associated risks.

Legal Compliance: Authors are obligated to comply with both national and international laws relevant to their research. Adhering to legal frameworks ensures that the research aligns with ethical standards, fostering responsible dissemination and use of scientific knowledge.

Sex and Gender in Research

In our commitment to fostering inclusive and equitable scientific practices, Sciences Force advocates for the adherence to the 'Sex and Gender Equity in Research - SAGER - guidelines' among our esteemed authors. Recognizing the pivotal role of sex and gender considerations in research, we urge authors to integrate these dimensions thoughtfully and systematically into their scholarly endeavors.

Precision in Terminology: Authors are encouraged to approach the terms "sex" and "gender" with precision and clarity. Acknowledging that sex pertains to biological attributes, while gender is shaped by social and cultural circumstances, is essential. A meticulous use of these terms is crucial in order to prevent confusion and ensure accurate communication of research findings.

Transparent Reporting in Titles and Abstracts: To enhance the transparency of research, article titles and abstracts should unequivocally specify the sex(es) to which the study applies. This upfront communication sets the stage for a nuanced understanding of the research focus.

Incorporating Sex and Gender in Research Design: Authors are expected to delve into the background of their study, exploring whether sex and/or gender differences are anticipated. The research design should explicitly account for these considerations, demonstrating a proactive approach to understanding potential variations among diverse populations.

Disaggregated Data for Comprehensive Insights: In pursuit of comprehensive insights, authors should provide disaggregated data by sex and/or gender where relevant. This

inclusive reporting approach ensures that the nuances of research findings are adequately captured across diverse groups.

Discussion of Results and Rationale: Should a sex and/or gender analysis not be conducted, authors are encouraged to articulate the rationale behind this decision in the Discussion section. Transparent communication about the choices made in the research process contributes to the overall integrity and reliability of the study.

Guidance for Authors: Authors are strongly recommended to familiarize themselves with the complete SAGER guidelines before submitting their work. This proactive step ensures alignment with best practices in sex and gender equity, facilitating the creation of research that is not only scientifically robust but also ethically sound.

Borders and Territories

At Sciences Force, we recognize the potential sensitivity and relevance of borders and territories in the context of research, author affiliations, and editorial decisions. Our editorial policy is designed to address potential disputes, ensure neutrality, and handle conflicts in a fair and respectful manner.

✓ **Content Decisions and Editorial Neutrality:**

- *Editorial Matter:* Decisions regarding content, including how research is described and the presentation of author or editor correspondence addresses, fall under editorial discretion.
- *Neutrality:* Sciences Force maintains a neutral stance concerning jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations. This approach ensures that the journal remains impartial in matters related to geographical boundaries or territorial disputes.

✓ **Handling Disputes and Complaints:**

- *Resolution Attempts:* In the event of a potential or perceived dispute or complaint related to borders, territories, or any other relevant matter, the

editorial team is committed to finding a resolution that satisfies all parties involved.

- *Fair and Respectful Approach:* Sciences Force acknowledges the sensitivity of these issues and is dedicated to handling disputes in a fair, respectful, and impartial manner. Open communication and a willingness to address concerns are integral to our editorial approach.

✓ **Respecting Author Choices:**

- *Author Affiliations:* Authors have the autonomy to describe their research and choose how their affiliations are presented. Sciences Force respects authors' choices while adhering to the overarching principle of maintaining neutrality in jurisdictional claims.

✓ **Editorial Neutrality in Published Material:**

- *Maps:* Any maps published in Sciences Force will maintain editorial neutrality concerning territorial claims. The presentation of geographical information will be done with the intent of remaining impartial and respectful.

✓ **Transparent Editorial Decision-making:**

- *Communication:* Sciences Force is committed to transparent communication with authors, reviewers, and other stakeholders. Decisions related to content, potential disputes, or editorial matters will be communicated clearly and openly.

Possible Conflicts of Interests

Ensuring transparency and integrity in scientific research is a cornerstone of Sciences Force. To address potential conflicts of interest, our guidelines align with the recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. This comprehensive approach aims to identify, disclose, and manage conflicts of interest to uphold the credibility of published research.

✓ *Identification and Declaration*

- *Study Sponsor Agreements:* Authors are urged to avoid agreements with study sponsors that compromise their access to study data, hinder their ability to analyze and interpret data independently, or affect their freedom to publish manuscripts autonomously.
- *Personal Circumstances or Interests:* Authors must openly identify and declare any personal circumstances or interests that could be perceived as influencing the representation or interpretation of research results. This includes both financial interests (e.g., employment, consultancies, stocks ownership) and non-financial interests (e.g., personal or professional relationships, affiliations, beliefs).

✓ *Examples of Potential Conflicts of Interest*

- *Financial Interests:* Membership, employment, consultancies, stock/shares ownership, honoraria, grants or other funding, paid expert testimonies, and patent-licensing arrangements.
- *Non-financial Interests:* Personal or professional relationships, affiliations, and personal beliefs.

✓ *Declaration of Funding Sponsor Role*

- *Role in Study Design, Data Collection, and Manuscript Development:* Authors must declare any role played by funding sponsors in the study design, data collection, analyses or interpretation, manuscript writing, or the decision to publish. If no role is present, a clear statement indicating so must be included.

✓ *Submission and Disclosure*

- *Online Submission System:* Authors can disclose potential conflicts of interest during the online submission process.
- *Sciences Force Disclosure Form:* Declarations can also be submitted via the Sciences Force disclosure form, ensuring a comprehensive overview of potential conflicts of interest.

✓ *Summary Statement in Manuscript*

- *Separate Section "Conflicts of Interest"*: The corresponding author is responsible for including a summary statement in the manuscript, placed just before the reference list. This section, titled "Conflicts of Interest," should reflect all collected potential conflicts of interest disclosures.

See below for examples of disclosures:

“Conflicts of Interest: Author A has received research grants from Company A. Author B has received a speaker honorarium from Company X and owns stocks in Company Y. Author C has been involved as a consultant and expert witness in Company Z. Author D is the inventor of patent X.”

If no potential perceived conflicts exist, the authors should state:

“Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.”

Sciences Force acknowledges the importance of publishing research regarding smoking cessation or reduction in tobacco use. While we accept submissions on these topics, Sciences Force does not publish studies funded partially or fully by the tobacco industry. Other privately funded studies – for example, those associated with the pharmaceutical or food industries – must clearly state the role of the funder. This statement should cover aspects related to how the study topic was selected, experimental design, and collection and analysis of data.

Intellectual Property and Licensing

At Sciences Force, we recognize the importance of intellectual property rights and strive to create a supportive environment for authors while ensuring open access to scholarly works. Our guidelines on intellectual property encompass copyright, patents, and licensing, aiming to balance the dissemination of knowledge with the protection of authors' rights.

✓ **Copyright Ownership**

- *Retained by Authors:* For all articles published in Sciences Force journals, authors retain copyright. This ensures that authors maintain control over their intellectual property.

✓ **Licensing**

- *Open Access CC BY 4.0 License:* Published articles are licensed under an open access Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license. This license allows free download and reading of the paper by anyone. The work may be reused and quoted, provided the original published version is cited. This open access model maximizes the accessibility and exposure of the work while ensuring proper attribution to the authors.
- *Special Conditions:* In exceptional circumstances, articles may be subject to different licensing conditions. Authors with specific conditions, such as those linked to funding, preventing the use of the CC BY 4.0 license, are encouraged to communicate this to the Editorial Office during submission. Exceptions will be considered at the discretion of the publisher.

✓ **Permissions for Previously Published Content**

- *Obtaining Permission:* Authors must obtain permission prior to submission if using content that is not in the public domain or for which they do not hold the copyright. This includes figures, tables, text, or any other material.

✓ **Permission Required For:**

- Your own work published by other publishers if copyright was not retained.
- Substantial extracts from the work of others.
- Use of unaltered or slightly modified tables, graphs, charts, schemes, and artworks.
- Photographs for which the author does not hold copyright.

✓ **Permission Not Required For:**

- Reconstruction of the author's own table with data already published elsewhere, with proper citation.
- Very short quotes considered fair use.
- Redrawn graphs, charts, schemes, and artwork that are significantly changed beyond recognition, with verification of underlying data copyright.

By adhering to these intellectual property guidelines, Sciences Force seeks to foster a collaborative and transparent scholarly environment, promoting the dissemination of knowledge while respecting the rights of authors and contributors. Authors are encouraged to engage with the Editorial Office for any specific circumstances or requests related to licensing and permissions. Once you have obtained permission, the copyright holder may give you instructions on the form of acknowledgement to be followed. Alternatively, we recommend following style:

“Reproduced with permission from [author], [book/journal title]; published by [publisher], [year]”.

Translations

At Sciences Force, we recognize the value of disseminating high-quality content to a diverse audience and, as such, may consider publishing content that has been previously published in a different language. Our translation policy is designed to ensure transparency, respect copyright, and acknowledge the original authors appropriately.

✓ *Submission and Declaration*

- *Cover Letter Declaration:* Authors are required to declare explicitly in the cover letter that their submitted paper is a translated version of content previously published in a different language.
- *Acknowledgment of Translation:* Authors should acknowledge the translation process and provide relevant details in the cover letter.

✓ *Authorship and Permissions*

- *Inclusion of Original Authors:* All authors from the original publication must be listed on the submitted manuscript, giving proper credit to the contributors of the original work.
- *Permission and Documentation:* Authors must obtain and provide evidence of appropriate permission from the publisher, copyright holders, and/or original authors of the content before submitting the manuscript.
- *Documentation Upload:* Relevant documentation, such as permission grants, must be uploaded in the Supplementary Materials section during the submission process.

✓ *Acknowledgment in Manuscript*

- *Transparent Acknowledgment:* The Acknowledgments section of the manuscript must transparently reference the original article, including details such as title, original language, publisher, journal name, year, issue/volume number, and page numbers.
- *Sample Acknowledgment Format:* "This is a translation/reprint of [insert title] originally published in [insert language] by [insert publisher] ([insert journal name, year, issue/volume number, page numbers]). This translation was prepared by [insert name] with support from [insert name of funding source, if any]. Permission was granted by [insert publisher, copyright holder, and/or author's name]."

✓ *Editorial Process*

- *Pre-Check and Peer Review:* Translated articles that adhere to the outlined guidelines will undergo pre-check. Submissions passing the pre-check will be subjected to peer review following Sciences Force's editorial process.

We emphasize that any translated articles not conforming to the specified guidelines will be considered unacceptable for publication. By following this translation policy, Sciences Force aims to uphold ethical standards, provide due credit to original authors, and facilitate the dissemination of valuable research across linguistic boundaries.

Patents

Sciences Force journals are committed to providing a streamlined and efficient publishing process, characterized by fast, rigorous peer review and immediate online availability of accepted articles. This approach ensures that valuable research is promptly shared with the global scientific community. In alignment with this commitment, several key aspects related to patents and intellectual property merit extensive discussion:

✓ **Speed and Accessibility:**

- Sciences Force Journals prioritize rapid publication, making accepted articles immediately accessible online.
- The DOI (Digital Object Identifier) assigned to each article enhances discoverability and facilitates timely dissemination of research findings.

- ✓ **Continuous Publication Process:**
 - Articles are published on an ongoing basis, independent of the scheduled release date of the entire issue.
 - This continuous publication model expedites the sharing of new knowledge and contributes to the timely advancement of scientific discourse.
- ✓ **No Postponement for Pending Patents:**
 - The publication, peer review, editorial procedures, and proofreading/copyediting processes are not delayed due to pending patent issues.
 - This proactive approach ensures that research output is not hindered by patent-related concerns, allowing for a swift and efficient dissemination of scholarly work.
- ✓ **Author Responsibility for Patent Resolutions:**
 - Authors bear the responsibility of resolving any patent applications or intellectual property issues before the publication of their work.
 - Timely resolution of these matters is essential to align with the rapid publication model adopted by Sciences Force Journals.
- ✓ **Declaration in Accordance with Conflicts of Interest Policy:**
 - Authors are required to declare any patent applications or registrations in adherence to Sciences Force's Conflicts of Interest Policy.
 - Transparent disclosure of potential conflicts related to intellectual property ensures the integrity and ethical conduct of the publication process.
- ✓ **Navigating Conflicts between Publication and Patent Processes:**
 - Authors engaging in both the publication and patent application processes need to manage potential conflicts effectively.
 - Proactive management ensures a smooth transition from the research phase to intellectual property considerations without impeding the publication timeline.
- ✓ **Ethical Considerations:**
 - The alignment of the publication process with established ethical standards underscores the commitment to scientific integrity and responsible dissemination of knowledge.

Citation Policies

Sciences Force journals emphasize the paramount importance of maintaining high standards of integrity and attribution in scholarly writing. Our citation policies are designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and the ethical use of source material. Authors are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

✓ **Clear and Appropriate Citation:**

- Authors must provide clear and accurate citations for all materials sourced from other publications, including their own previously published work.
- Permission, where applicable, should be obtained for material usage from external sources.

✓ **Avoidance of Excessive Self-Citation:**

- Authors should refrain from excessive self-citation to maintain objectivity and to avoid creating an undue influence on the perceived significance of their work.

✓ **Reading and Citing Original Work:**

- Authors must read and understand the content of the works they cite, avoiding the practice of copying references without engaging with the cited material.

✓ **Impartial Citation Practices:**

- Authors are discouraged from preferentially citing their own, friends', peers', or institution's publications to ensure a fair and unbiased representation of relevant literature.

✓ **Exclusion of Advertisements or Advertorial Material:**

- Citations should be limited to scholarly and academic sources, excluding references to advertisements or advertorial material.

✓ **Quotation Marks for Direct Wording:**

- Original wording taken directly from other researchers' publications, including the author's own work, should be placed in quotation marks with appropriate citations, following COPE guidelines.

✓ **COPE Guidelines on Citation Manipulation:**

- Authors are expected to adhere to COPE guidelines on citation manipulation, as outlined in the discussion document produced by COPE. This document provides recommendations for best practices in citation use.

Sciences Force Policies on Research Data Sharing and Accessibility

At Sciences Force, we are dedicated to fostering transparent and open scientific communication. Our research data policies are designed to encourage authors to share comprehensive datasets, including protocols, analytical methods, raw and processed data, code, software, algorithms, and study materials. Upholding the principles of FAIR data – ensuring findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability – is paramount for enhancing the scholarly exchange.

Data Depository Recommendations: Authors are strongly encouraged to deposit their data and code in reputable repositories that facilitate maximum reuse. Should this prove impractical, authors are urged to articulate the specific reasons in the Data Availability Statement, offering to share the material upon request from interested researchers. Journal-specific guidelines, available on the 'Instructions for Authors' page, should be consulted.

Data Sharing Scope: Our data sharing policies align with the TOP Guidelines, focusing on the minimal dataset required to support a study's central findings. The generated data should be publicly accessible and appropriately cited in line with journal guidelines.

Ethical and Legal Considerations: When ethical, legal, or privacy concerns arise, data sharing may not be appropriate. Authors are expected to clearly communicate the availability status of data upon submission and disclose any limitations or exceptions in the Data Availability Statement. It is imperative that shared data adheres to participant consent agreements and safeguards participant anonymity, complying with local data protection laws.

Restricted Access and Permissions: In cases where restricted access is necessary to protect confidential or proprietary information, authors must elucidate such restrictions in the dataset. If required, the data should be made available upon request for the purpose of peer review, with appropriate permissions.

Retention Beyond Project Completion: While some institutions and funding agencies may stipulate finite data retention periods, Sciences Force imposes no such limits. Authors are encouraged to archive research data through suitable repositories or provide minimal datasets within Supplementary Material, facilitating ongoing access.

Our commitment to research data transparency not only adheres to ethical standards but also enriches the scientific community by promoting collaborative exploration and validation of research findings. Sciences Force values the dedication of authors to open data practices, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and innovation.

Data availability statements

At Sciences Force, we uphold the importance of transparent and accessible research, and therefore, we require Data Availability Statements for all articles published with us. These statements serve as a crucial element during the peer-review and editorial decision process.

Key Elements of Data Availability Statements:

- ✓ **Requirement Inclusion:**
 - Authors are expected to explicitly address the existence and accessibility of datasets or raw data analyzed in the manuscript.

- The statement should clarify whether these datasets will be made available to other researchers following the publication of the article.
- ✓ **Peer-Review Engagement:**
 - During the peer-review process, authors may be prompted to provide additional information or share existing datasets that are pertinent to the manuscript.
 - Specific details regarding any analyzed datasets should be shared with the editorial team.
- ✓ **Enhancing Accessibility:**
 - Authors are encouraged to enhance the accessibility of their research by making datasets available to fellow researchers.
 - The Data Availability Statement should outline the procedures or platforms through which other researchers can access the datasets.
- ✓ **Existing Datasets Disclosure:**
 - Authors are required to disclose details of any existing datasets that have been utilized and analyzed in the manuscript.
 - The statement should include references to these datasets, ensuring a clear trail for interested researchers.

Author Responsibility: Authors play a pivotal role in promoting open science by providing comprehensive Data Availability Statements. These statements not only contribute to the integrity of the research process but also empower the broader scientific community by facilitating the verification and reproducibility of findings.

Our commitment to robust data practices underscores the ethos of open research, fostering collaboration, and advancing knowledge. Sciences Force appreciates authors' dedication to transparency and accessibility, ensuring the enduring impact of their research on the scientific landscape.

Below are the recommended Data Availability Statements:

Data availability status	Recommended Data Availability Statement
Data available in a publicly accessible repository	The data presented in this study are openly available in [repository name, e.g., FigShare] at [doi], reference number [reference number].

Data available in a publicly accessible repository that does not issue DOIs	Publicly available datasets were analyzed in this study. This data can be found here: [link/accession number].
Data available on request due to restrictions (e.g., privacy, legal or ethical reasons)	The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author (accurately indicate status).
3rd Party Data	Restrictions apply to the availability of these data. Data were obtained from [third party] and are available [from the authors/at URL] with the permission of [third party].
Embargo on data due to commercial restrictions	The data that support the findings will be available in [repository name] at [URL / DOI link] following an embargo from the date of publication to allow for commercialization of research findings.
Restrictions apply to the datasets:	The datasets presented in this article are not readily available because [include reason, e.g., the data are part of an ongoing study or due to technical/ time limitations]. Requests to access the datasets should be directed to [text input].
Data derived from public domain resources:	The data presented in this study are available in [repository name] at [URL/DOI], reference number [reference number]. These data were derived from the following resources available in the public domain: [list resources and URLs]
Data sharing is not applicable (only appropriate if no new data is generated or the article describes entirely theoretical research.	No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article
Data is contained within the article or supplementary material:	The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author/s.
Dataset available on request from the authors.	The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors on request.

Data preservation

At Sciences Force, we recognize the shared responsibility among researchers, institutions, journals, and data repositories to ensure the long-term preservation of research data. This collective effort is integral to fostering scientific progress and maintaining the integrity of scholarly work. Authors are strongly encouraged to actively participate in this endeavor by choosing data repositories with a commitment to sustainable preservation.

Authors' Commitment to Data Preservation: Authors are pivotal contributors to the longevity of research data, and Sciences Force advocates for their commitment to preserving datasets on their laboratory or institutional servers for a minimum of five years post-publication. This proactive approach aligns with our dedication to robust data practices and underscores the importance of accessible and verifiable research outcomes.

Contingency Measures for Repository Challenges: Recognizing the potential challenges faced by repositories over time, Sciences Force remains flexible and responsive. In instances where the original repository encounters issues such as disappearance or data loss within the initial five-year period, authors may be requested to re-upload their data to an alternative repository. This ensures the continued availability of research data, and any such corrective actions will be transparently communicated through a correction or update to the original publication.

Data Removal and Access Criteria: Should authors decide to remove their data from the original public repository or modify access criteria in a way that deviates from the publication's terms, Sciences Force emphasizes the importance of prompt notification to the editorial office. This collaborative approach ensures that any changes align with ethical and transparency standards, allowing for timely updates and appropriate communication.

How to choose an appropriate data repository

At Sciences Force, we advocate for a culture of data sharing that extends beyond publication, contributing to the openness and reproducibility of research. Authors are encouraged to submit their data to community-recognized data repositories whenever feasible, aligning with best practices in the scientific community. To assist authors in this endeavor, we recommend consulting reputable resources such as re3data.org or fairsharing.org, which offer comprehensive databases of registered and certified data repositories tailored to various subject areas.

Authors are particularly encouraged to explore the availability of generalist data repositories within their institutions. These repositories can serve as effective hosts for authors' data, provided they meet specific criteria. Essential among these criteria is the repository's capability to assign DataCite DOIs, ensuring the unique identification of

datasets. Additionally, the repository should support open terms of use, exemplified by licenses such as CC0 waiver, promoting the unrestricted sharing of data.

When selecting an appropriate repository, authors are advised to consider the following criteria, ensuring that the chosen platform aligns with best practices in data management:

- ✓ **Long-Term Persistence:** The selected repository should commit to the long-term persistence and preservation of datasets in their published form, safeguarding the integrity of scientific contributions over time.
- ✓ **Stable Identifiers:** Platforms should provide stable identifiers, commonly in the form of DOIs, to facilitate the unequivocal citation and reference of submitted datasets.
- ✓ **Public Access:** The repository should enable public access to data without imposing unnecessary barriers, such as logins or paywalls, fostering inclusivity and transparency.
- ✓ **Open Licenses:** To promote widespread use and collaboration, repositories should support open licenses, with preferences for CC0 and CC-BY, or their equivalents, in most cases.
- ✓ **Confidential Review:** Platforms should facilitate confidential review of submitted datasets without requiring reviewers to disclose identifying information, ensuring an unbiased evaluation process.

Data citation

Authors are strongly encouraged to provide formal citations for datasets stored in external repositories that are referenced in their manuscripts. This includes not only the primary datasets central to the submission but also any additional datasets integral to the research. For datasets that have been previously published, authors are expected to cite both the associated research articles and the datasets themselves, ensuring comprehensive and accurate acknowledgment.

This practice serves to enhance the transparency and reproducibility of research, allowing readers and fellow researchers to access and validate the underlying data. The acknowledgment of datasets is considered a critical aspect of scholarly communication, providing due credit to data contributors and facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of the research context.

It is important to note that the appropriate citation of data is rigorously reviewed and enforced by the Journal Editorial staff as part of the pre-publication verification process. This ensures that the citation practices align with established standards, contributing to the overall integrity and credibility of the scientific literature. Authors are encouraged to adhere to these citation guidelines to promote a robust and ethical research environment.

Ethical Guidelines for Reviewers and Editors

In tandem with the Editorial Office, every participant involved in the peer-review process, encompassing Editors-in-Chief, Editorial Board Members, Guest Editors, and Reviewers, collectively bears the responsibility of upholding the integrity of Sciences Force's editorial procedures. Should any participant harbor ethical concerns regarding a manuscript undergoing review or post-publication, or come across information suggestive of a potential ethical dilemma, immediate contact with the Editorial Office is imperative. Subsequently, the Editorial Office will initiate an investigation following the Sciences Force Comments and Complaints Policy and in adherence to [COPE guidelines](#).

Throughout the pre- and post-publication phases, the Editorial Office, led by Managing Editors and Assistant Editors, performs several essential checks. Nevertheless, any concerns raised by Reviewers and Editors are actively encouraged to be reported to the Editorial Office. These checks include:

- Verification of ethics approval and permissions for research involving human subjects, animals, or cell lines.
- Scrutiny for plagiarism, duplicate publication, and securing necessary permissions from copyright holders for the inclusion of previously published figures or images.
- Verification of Clinical Trials Registration, with explicit reference to the registration details in the Methods Section.
- Compliance, ethics, and research integrity checks in alignment with Sciences Force policies and guidelines.

During the evaluation process, Reviewers and Editors are expected to consider the following key aspects:

- Disclosure of any potential conflict of interest, ensuring authors disclose conflicts related to their manuscript or study before submission.
- Authors' accurate presentation of research findings and inclusion of an impartial discussion on the significance of their results.
- Presentation of sufficient detail regarding data and methods used in the research, facilitating reproducibility by other researchers.
- Alignment of the submission with the journal's scope.

- Assessment of whether Reviewers provided substantial feedback and were well-suited to review the submission.

Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest in Peer-Review Processes

Promoting transparency, we underscore the paramount importance of acknowledging and disclosing any potential conflicts of interest throughout the peer-review process, from evaluation to decision-making and publication. It is imperative that all involved parties declare any associations that might compromise, or appear to compromise, the unbiased assessment and decision-making process.

In situations where a Reviewer or Editor perceives that a conflict of interest, or multiple conflicts, may not impact the peer review or decision-making, it is still advised for the involved individual to recuse themselves. This ensures the avoidance of any perceived conflicts of interest and upholds the integrity of the entire peer-review process.

Types of Conflicts of Interest

- *Personal or Collaborative Conflicts*

Reviewers and Editors are expected to abstain from reviewing manuscripts submitted by authors affiliated with their institution, research or project collaborators, personal friends, family members, or spouses. Furthermore, participation in the review or decision-making of manuscripts authored by mentors, mentees, or those with whom they have collaborated within the past 3 years is discouraged.

- *Financial or Professional Conflicts*

Financial conflicts involve any professional or business relationships, financial interests, or competing interests that might introduce bias into the review process. Reviewers and Editors should not receive benefits, salary, board memberships, funding, or grants from companies with interests in the reported results. Participation in the review or decision-making of manuscripts featuring conflicts of interest that could potentially introduce bias is strongly discouraged.

- *Other Conflicts*

Any other conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived to influence peer review and decision-making, should be transparently declared. It is crucial for Reviewers and Editors to assess a manuscript's merit, originality, and appropriateness for the journal in adherence to Sciences Force editorial guidelines. Sciences Force is committed to diversity and inclusion, and any personal biases affecting peer review must be disclosed.

In the event of a conflict, alternative Reviewers and/or Editors will be assigned. If an Editor submits a manuscript, it will be handled by other Editors without a conflict of interest.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Reviewers and Editors must maintain the confidentiality of the manuscript, including the abstract. Reviewers may delegate reviews to a student or colleague with notification to the Editorial Office.

Sciences Force journals employ single- or double-blind peer review, necessitating Reviewers to avoid revealing their identity to authors. Although Sciences Force allows for open review reports and signing by Reviewers, identities are kept confidential until publication and only with explicit agreement. Further details can be found in the Open Peer-Review Option.

Comments and Complaints

In cases where readers harbor concerns or complaints about published papers, it is recommended to initially reach out to the corresponding author for direct resolution attempts before contacting the Editorial Office. In instances where direct communication with authors is not appropriate, authors remain unresponsive, or concerns persist, the Editorial Office becomes the next point of contact. The Editorial Office, in collaboration with the complainant, authors, Editors-in-Chief, or Editorial Board members, facilitates the investigation, remedy, or resolution of any raised issues.

Complaints, comments, or requests for updates related to scholarly validity, ethical considerations, or legal aspects of the paper or its review process will be thoroughly investigated where deemed appropriate. The Editorial Office, supported by the Editorial Board and with final approval from the Editor-in-Chief, scrutinizes all complaints, ensuring adherence to the core principles of publication ethics advocated by COPE. In cases involving ethical concerns, the Editor-in-Chief or Editorial Board members, assisted by the Editorial Office, may seek consultation with external entities, including university authorities or field experts. Legal counsel may be sought if the complaint carries legal implications.

Personal comments or criticisms are not entertained during this process, and all complaints, including anonymous ones, are subjected to investigation. Complainants have the option to request confidential handling of their complaint, and the Editorial Office, Editors-in-Chief, or other Editorial Board members endeavor to respect this preference in alignment with internal procedures.

Decisions arising from an investigation, including Corrections, Comments and Replies, Expressions of Concerns, or Retractions, are made by Editors-in-Chief, Section Editors-in-Chief, or Editorial Board members and communicated to the authors. All updates must adhere to our policy on Updating Published Papers.

If a complaint lacks substantiation, further communication is only considered if additional information evidencing concerns is presented. Complainants may not receive interim updates on the investigation's status until a final decision is reached, but they will be notified upon publication of any updates. The Editorial Office and Editorial Board members are not obligated to provide extensive details, and communication will cease if it is deemed discourteous or disrespectful. It's crucial for readers to acknowledge that investigations take time to conduct.

When reporting concerns to the Editorial Office, please utilize the [Contact Form](#) or contact details below. Alongside paper details, include specifics of the complaint, its scholarly or academic validity, a summary of key points, previous correspondence with authors, and a statement addressing any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

Updating Published Papers: Sciences Force Protocols

In line with our commitment to scientific accuracy and ethical standards, Sciences Force acknowledges the necessity of rectifying scientifically pertinent errors or ethical concerns brought to our attention. To maintain transparency for our authors and readers, we adhere to standardized criteria when updating any of our published papers.

Direct Update Protocol

Direct updates involve alterations made directly to the publication and can be implemented under specific circumstances, as detailed in our correction reference guide. The Editorial Office assesses the merit of update requests, and if deemed reasonable, approves the direct update. Subsequently, the revised paper is re-published on our website. To ensure comprehensive coverage, all pertinent indexing databases are promptly notified of the revisions made.

Corrections in Sciences Force Journals

In handling corrections, Sciences Force adopts a nuanced approach, distinguishing between Minor and Major corrections to ensure the integrity and accuracy of published articles.

Minor Corrections: Minor corrections pertain to issues that do not substantially impact the scientific content but necessitate an updated version on the version of the record (VoR). Upon approval, the revised version is uploaded with a corresponding footnote on the PDF and a "correction statement" in the backmatter of the website version. Unlike Major corrections, a separate published correction notice is not issued for minor corrections.

Major Corrections: Major corrections are designed to rectify issues or errors that have the potential to influence the scientific interpretation of an article. Upon approval, the paper is updated and re-published on our website, accompanied by the issuance of a

correction notice. This notice is treated as a distinct publication, linked to the updated paper and published in the latest issue of the journal. It serves as an alert to readers about a significant alteration in the paper, directing them to the revised version available on the website.

In the aftermath of both Minor and Major corrections, Sciences Force ensures that relevant indexing databases receive timely notifications, guaranteeing that their versions are aligned with the revised publications. For a more in-depth understanding of our publication update policy, please refer to our correction reference guideline.

Policy on Author Name Changes in Sciences Force Journals

In certain instances, authors may express the need to alter their name post-publication. Sciences Force understands the sensitivity and privacy surrounding such requests, which may arise due to factors like gender identity alignment, marriage, divorce, or religious conversion. To accommodate these situations, Sciences Force has established a comprehensive Author Name Change Policy.

Procedure for Author Name Change:

1. **Request Submission:** Authors seeking a name change should reach out to the journal's Editorial Office to initiate the process.
2. **Confidential Handling:** Understanding the private nature of name changes, Sciences Force ensures the utmost confidentiality. No Correction will be published, and co-authors will not be notified to protect the author's identity.
3. **Update and Republish:** Upon receiving the name change request, Sciences Force will promptly update and republish the article. Simultaneously, the revised metadata will be delivered to indexing databases (subject to the policies of the respective databases).
4. **Database Notifications:** Sciences Force acknowledges that the effectiveness of updates is contingent upon the policies of indexing databases. However, our teams strive to communicate these changes to ensure alignment across platforms.

This policy underscores Sciences Force's commitment to respecting the privacy and personal considerations of authors, providing a supportive framework for those seeking a change in their published name.

Retractions

In certain instances, the need arises to retract a published paper from the body of scientific literature. This decision could stem from various reasons, including inadvertent errors during the research process, severe ethical breaches, data fabrication, extensive plagiarism, or other circumstances that compromise the integrity of scientific records. In adherence to ethical standards, Sciences Force has implemented a Retraction Policy aligned with the recommendations set forth by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Key Elements of Sciences Force's Retraction Policy:

- ✓ **Retraction Criteria:** Papers may be retracted due to errors, ethical violations, data fabrication, plagiarism, or other factors that jeopardize the credibility of the research.
- ✓ **COPE Guidelines:** Sciences Force strictly adheres to COPE guidelines for the proper execution of retractions, ensuring transparency and adherence to ethical standards.
- ✓ **Publication Amendment:** Upon a Retraction, the original publication is amended with a prominent "RETRACTED" watermark. While the retracted article remains accessible on the journal's website, it is strongly discouraged from being cited or used for further research due to unreliability.
- ✓ **Authorship and Affiliation:** Retraction notices are published with the same authorship and affiliation as the retracted paper, facilitating easy identification within indexing databases.
- ✓ **Inclusion in Current Issue:** Retraction notices are featured in the current issue of the journal, providing visibility and ensuring that readers are informed about the retraction.
- ✓ **Partial Retractions:** In cases where only certain results are erroneous, partial retractions may be considered to rectify specific inaccuracies.
- ✓ **Exceptional Circumstances:** Complete removal of a paper from Sciences Force's website and indexing databases is reserved for exceptional circumstances where leaving it online would constitute an illegal act or pose a significant risk of harm.

This Retraction Policy underscores Sciences Force's commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards in scientific publishing, emphasizing transparency, and safeguarding the reliability of the research literature.

Expression of Concern

In instances of complexity, inconclusiveness, or prolonged investigations into suspected research misconduct, an Expression of Concern may be issued. This editorial statement outlines specific points of concern and conveys ongoing actions, if any, while investigations remain incomplete. This ensures transparency and addresses uncertainties in the scholarly discourse.

Comments and Replies: Fostering Scientific Dialogue

- **Submission of Comments:** Readers expressing concerns about reported results or methods in a specific paper are encouraged to approach the journal's Editorial Office. If deemed meritorious, a Comment may be submitted for potential publication. Comments are concise letters from readers publicly questioning specific papers.
- **Peer Review of Comments:** Once a Comment undergoes approval for further peer review, the Editorial Office invites the authors of the questioned paper to prepare a Reply. The Reply allows authors to address concerns raised by the reader.
- **Resolution and Correction:** If reader complaints are substantiated and authors fail to provide an adequate response, corrective actions such as publishing a Correction or retracting the paper may be considered. In the absence of a response from authors, the Comment may be published with a note explaining the lack of a Reply.

Review Criteria for Comments and Replies:

- **Addressing Significant Aspects:** Both the Comment and Reply are evaluated to ensure that the Comment addresses crucial aspects of the original paper without introducing new content.
- **Direct Response:** The Reply is expected to address concerns directly without evasion, fostering a constructive scientific dialogue.

- **Appropriate Tone:** Both publications must maintain a tone suitable for a scientific journal, upholding the standards of scholarly discourse.

Guidelines for Comment Submission:

- **Criticizing Work, Not Authors:** While Comments can critique the work, they should refrain from criticizing the authors personally. The focus is on the scientific content.
- **Avoiding Repetition:** Comments should avoid reiterating previously published disagreements. Only one round of Comment and Reply will be facilitated if from the same reader/s.
- **Exclusivity to Sciences Force Publications:** Sciences Force journals only accept Comments on articles published within the Sciences Force portfolio, ensuring relevance to the specific journal's content.

This comprehensive approach ensures that scientific discourse remains robust, transparent, and aligned with the high standards set by Sciences Force journals.

Contact

At Sciences Force, we prioritize the highest standards of research integrity and publication ethics, aligning with the principles established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Collaborating closely with authors and editors, we are dedicated to upholding ethical standards throughout the publication process. To facilitate adherence to these principles, we strongly recommend utilizing the valuable resources provided by COPE, available on their website.

Ethical Standards in Manuscripts: All submitted manuscripts are expected to adhere to the highest ethical standards. Should any ethical concerns arise during the review process or after publication, Sciences Force is committed to thorough investigation and prompt action to preserve the integrity of the scholarly literature.

Reporting Ethical Concerns: If you have concerns about the ethical conduct of a published manuscript or any related issues, we encourage you to use our dedicated reporting form. This form allows you to provide detailed information about your concerns, aiding our team in conducting a comprehensive investigation.

Alternative Contact via Email: For direct communication, you can reach out to our Research Integrity and Publication Ethics team through the following email address:

publication.ethics@sciencesforce.com. Please feel free to share your concerns, questions, or feedback, and a member of our team will promptly respond.

Ensuring Ethical Excellence: Your contributions in upholding research integrity and ethical standards are invaluable. By reaching out through the reporting form or email, you actively participate in maintaining the credibility of scientific literature. Sciences Force is committed to addressing your concerns promptly and transparently, reinforcing our dedication to ethical excellence in scholarly publishing.