

Principles of transparency and clinical trial registration

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The significance of publication ethics in academic journals cannot be overemphasized. Recent increase in the number of fake or predatory journals/publishers has become concern among academic journal editors and authors.[1] Therefore, credibility of the journal and its publisher have become more important than ever.

Editors of TCP decided to accept the 'Principles of transparency' recommended by the COPE (<https://publicationethics.org/>). The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) established in UK in 1997 has over 10,000 members worldwide from all academic fields now. We have accepted all of the items of the principles and the TCP-adapted version is to be printed under the title of 'Principles of Transparency' in the last page of every upcoming issue and is posted on the journal homepage.

For example, the principle states that TCP never solicits non-specified researchers for manuscript contribution or joining their editorial teams that bothers people as one of the most common spam mails. As for the transparency in the review and editorial process, it clarifies that the editorial team members of TCP should not be the peer reviewers. Also, the conflicts of interests (COI) of reviewers and editors are to be publicized with those of authors. Whether the article published was peer-reviewed or invited will also be clarified on the front page of each article. Readers may see these in the articles published in this and every upcoming issue. According to the principles, reviewers should clarify their COI before beginning peer review activity. The submission system of TCP (submit.tcpharm.org) has been revised accordingly.

For the ethical practices in publication, transparency should be assured for the whole process from manuscript writing (authors), review, revision to final decision. Guidance for ethical review or editorial services has been discussed for a long time, but it has not been emphasized as enough as the ethics of authors. In that sense, it is desirable for TCP to declare the comprehensive and detailed principles for better future through improved transparency.

In addition, clinical trial registration is worth mentioning here as it has long been mentioned in the guidance for authors.. Despite the recommendation, the registration has not been strictly mandated by TCP because many of domestic sponsors were lack of experiences on global standards, especially when conducting healthy subject clinical trials. However, TCP decided not to overlook those manuscripts on non-registered clinical trials any more. Fortunately, most of domestic sponsors seem to accept the recommendation of MFDS to register the protocols to Korean or overseas registration sites these days. Thus, TCP mandates the registration (in other words, applies the author guidance strictly) from now on. For some exceptional cases where the registration is not possible, the corresponding author may consult the editor-in-chief (EIC) before submission until the end of 2018. When the EIC finds the situation inevitable and unlikely to hinder the value of TCP, it may be submitted. In that case, the situation will be clarified in detail at the acknowledgement section of the accepted article.

References

1. Sorokowski P, Kulczycki E, Sorokowska A, Pisanski K. Predatory journals recruit fake editor. *Nature* 2017;543:481-483. doi: 10.1038/543481a.

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