



Newer Horizons in Human Excellence

Research Ethics Policy

Research Involving Human Subjects

When reporting on research that involves human subjects, human material, human tissues, or human data, authors must declare that the investigations were carried out following the rules of the Declaration of Helsinki of 1975 (<https://www.wma.net/what-we-do/medical-ethics/declaration-of-helsinki/>), revised in 2013. According to point 23 of this declaration, an approval from the local institutional review board (IRB) or other appropriate ethics committee must be obtained before undertaking the research to confirm the study meets national and international guidelines. As a minimum, a statement including the project identification code, date of approval, and name of the ethics committee or institutional review board must be stated in Section 'Institutional Review Board Statement' of the article.

Example of an ethical statement: "All subjects gave their informed consent for inclusion before they participated in the study. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of XXX (Project identification code)."

For non-interventional studies (e.g. surveys, questionnaires, social media research), all participants must be fully informed if the anonymity is assured, why the research is being conducted, how their data will be used and if there are any risks associated. As with all research involving humans, ethical approval from an appropriate ethics committee must be obtained prior to conducting the study. If ethical approval is not required, authors must either provide an exemption from the ethics committee or are encouraged to cite the local or national legislation that indicates ethics approval is not required for this type of study. Where a study has been granted exemption, the name of the ethics committee which provided this should be stated in Section 'Institutional Review Board Statement' with a full explanation regarding why ethical approval was not required.

A written informed consent for publication must be obtained from participating patients. Data relating to individual participants must be described in detail, but private information identifying participants need not be included unless the identifiable materials are of relevance to the research (for example, photographs of participants' faces that show a particular symptom). Patients' initials or other personal

identifiers must not appear in any images. For manuscripts that include any case details, personal information, and/or images of patients, authors must obtain signed informed consent for publication from patients (or their relatives/guardians) before submitting to an MDP| journal. Patient details must be anonymized as far as possible, e.g., do not mention specific age, ethnicity, or occupation where they are not relevant to the conclusions. A template permission form is available to download. A blank version of the form used to obtain permission (without the patient names or signature) must be uploaded with your submission. Editors reserve the right to reject any submission that does not meet these requirements.

You may refer to our sample form and provide an appropriate form after consulting with your affiliated institution. For the purposes of publishing in the ***Awareness*** journal, a consent, permission, or release form should include unlimited permission for publication in all formats (including print, electronic, and online), in sublicensed and reprinted versions (including translations and derived works), and in other works and products under open access license. To respect patients' and any other individual's privacy, please do not send signed forms. The journal reserves the right to ask authors to provide signed forms if necessary.

If the study reports research involving vulnerable groups, an additional check may be performed. The submitted manuscript will be scrutinized by the editorial office and upon request, documentary evidence (blank consent forms and any related discussion documents from the ethics board) must be supplied. Additionally, when studies describe groups by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, disease, etc., explanations regarding why such categorization was scientifically necessary must be clearly stated in the article.

Ethical Guidelines for the Use of Animals in Research

The editors will require that the benefits potentially derived from any research causing harm to animals are significant in relation to any cost endured by animals, and that procedures followed are unlikely to cause offense to the majority of readers.

- Replacement of animals by alternatives wherever possible,
- Reduction in number of animals used, and
- Refinement of experimental conditions and procedures to minimize the harm to animals.

Authors must include details on housing, husbandry, and pain management in their manuscript.

If national legislation requires it, studies involving vertebrates or higher invertebrates must only be carried out after obtaining approval from the appropriate ethics committee. As a minimum, the project identification code, date of approval and name of the ethics committee or institutional review board should be stated in Section 'Institutional Review Board Statement'. Research procedures must be carried out in accordance with national and institutional regulations. Statements on animal welfare should confirm that the study complied with all relevant legislation. Clinical studies involving animals and interventions outside of routine care require ethics committee oversight as per the American Veterinary

Medical Association. If the study involved client-owned animals, informed client consent must be obtained and certified in the manuscript report of the research. Owners must be fully informed if there are any risks associated with the procedures and that the research will be published. If available, a high standard of veterinary care must be provided. Authors are responsible for correctness of the statements provided in the manuscript.

If ethical approval is not required by national laws, authors must provide an exemption from the ethics committee, if one is available. Where a study has been granted exemption, the name of the ethics committee that provided this should be stated in Section 'Institutional Review Board Statement' with a full explanation on why the ethical approval was not required.

If no animal ethics committee is available to review applications, authors should be aware that the ethics of their research will be evaluated by reviewers and editors. Authors should provide a statement justifying the work from an ethical perspective, using the same utilitarian framework that is used by ethics committees. Authors may be asked to provide this even if they have received ethical approval.

Awareness endorses the [ARRIVE guidelines](https://arriveguidelines.org/arrive-guidelines) for reporting experiments using live animals. Authors and reviewers must use the ARRIVE guidelines as a checklist, which can be found at <https://arriveguidelines.org/arrive-guidelines>. Editors reserve the right to ask for this checklist and to reject submissions that do not adhere to these guidelines, to reject submissions based on ethical or animal welfare concerns or if the procedure described does not appear to be justified by the value of the work presented.

Research Involving Cell Lines

Methods sections for submissions reporting on research with cell lines should state the origin of any cell lines. For established cell lines the provenance should be stated and references must also be given to either a published paper or to a commercial source. If previously unpublished de novo cell lines were used, including those gifted from another laboratory, details of institutional review board or ethics committee approval must be given, and confirmation of written informed consent must be provided if the line is of human origin.

An example of Ethical Statements: The HeLa cell line was obtained from XXXX. The HEK293 cell line was provided by XXXXX, Ltd.

Research Involving Plants

Experimental research on plants (either cultivated or wild) including collection of plant material, must comply with institutional, national, or international guidelines. We recommend that authors comply with the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) and the [Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora](#).

For each submitted manuscript supporting genetic information and origin must be provided. For research manuscripts involving rare and non-model plants (other than, e.g., *Arabidopsis thaliana*, *Nicotiana benthamiana*, *Oryza sativa*, or many other typical model plants), voucher specimens must be deposited in an accessible herbarium or museum. Vouchers may be requested for review by future

investigators to verify the identity of the material used in the study (especially if taxonomic rearrangements occur in the future). They should include details of the populations sampled on the site of collection (GPS coordinates), date of collection, and document the part(s) used in the study where appropriate. For rare, threatened, or endangered species this can be waived but it is necessary for the author to describe this in the cover letter.

Editors reserve the rights to reject any submission that does not meet these requirements.

An example of Ethical Statements: *Brassica napus* plants were used in this study; the blooming *Prunoidae*, *Chrysanthemum* spp. and *Taraxacum* were obtained from (XXX Company, City, Country) and *Cynomorium coccineum* were kindly provided by Dr. XXX (XXX Institute, City, Country).

Clinical Trials Registration

Registration

Awareness follows the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) *guidelines* which require and recommend registration of clinical trials in a public trials registry at or before the time of first patient enrollment as a condition of consideration for publication.

Purely observational studies do not require registration. A clinical trial not only refers to studies that take place in a hospital or involve pharmaceuticals, but also refer to all studies which involve participant randomization and group classification in the context of the intervention under assessment.

Authors are strongly encouraged to pre-register clinical trials with an international clinical trials register and cite a reference to the registration in the Methods section. Suitable databases include *clinicaltrials.gov*, the *EU Clinical Trials Register* and those listed by the World Health Organization *International Clinical Trials Registry Platform*.

Approval to conduct a study from an independent local, regional, or national review body is not equivalent to prospective clinical trial registration. **Awareness** reserves the right to decline any paper without trial registration for further peer-review. However, if the study protocol has been published before the enrolment, the registration can be waived with correct citation of the published protocol.

CONSORT Statement

Awareness requires a completed CONSORT *checklist* and *flow diagram* as a condition of submission when reporting the results of a randomized trial. Templates for these can be found here or on the CONSORT website (<http://www.consort-statement.org>) which also describes several CONSORT checklist extensions for different designs and types of data beyond two group parallel trials. At minimum, your article should report the content addressed by each item of the checklist.

Sex and Gender in Research

We encourage all **Awareness** authors to follow the '[Sex and Gender Equity in Research – SAGER – guidelines](#)' and to include sex and gender considerations where relevant. Authors should use the terms sex (biological attribute) and gender (shaped by social and cultural circumstances) carefully in order to avoid confusing both terms. Article titles and/or abstracts should indicate clearly what sex(es) the study applies to. Authors should also describe in the background,

whether sex and/or gender differences may be expected; report how sex and/or gender were accounted for in the design of the study; provide disaggregated data by sex and/or gender, where appropriate; and discuss respective results. If a sex and/or gender analysis was not conducted, the rationale should be given in the Discussion. We suggest that all authors consult the full guidelines before submission.

Borders and Territories

Potential disputes over borders and territories may have particular relevance for authors in describing their research or in an author or editor correspondence address, and should be respected. Content decisions are an editorial matter and where there is a potential or perceived dispute or complaint, the editorial team will attempt to find a resolution that satisfies parties involved.

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