

International Urogynecology Journal (IUJ)

Instructions for Authors

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Article Types and Submission Process

The International Urogynecology Journal (IUJ) accepts original articles, case reports, reviews (including mini reviews), clinical opinions, editorials, controversies in urogynecology, and video. Original articles must present scientific results that are essentially new. All manuscripts are subject to peer review. All manuscripts must be submitted electronically through Editorial Manager at <http://www.editorialmanager.com/iujo>, or through the Springer website: <http://www.springer.com/medicine/gynecology/journal/192>. Manuscripts submitted by regular mail will not be reviewed and will not be returned. Authors will be notified by email to submit electronically. **If you have any questions regarding manuscript submission, please contact the IUJ Editorial Office by email at iujeditorialoffice@gmail.com.**

Authorship and Copyright and Financial Disclosure/Conflict of Interest Form

All submissions must include a completed [Authorship and Copyright and Financial Disclosure/Conflict of Interest Form](#). The corresponding author can complete the copyright portion of the form. All authors must complete and sign the conflict of interest and authorship portion of the form.

The Authorship and Copyright and Financial Disclosure/Conflict of Interest Form may also be obtained at the [Editorial Manager login site](#) or on the [Springer website](#).

The Authorship and Copyright and Financial Disclosure/Conflict of Interest Form must be submitted electronically at the time of manuscript submission, without exception. In addition to this form, the title page must include a conflict of interest statement for each author.

If you have any questions regarding manuscript submission, please contact the IUJ Editorial Office by email at iujeditorialoffice@gmail.com.

Authors must disclose all relationships or interests that could influence or bias the work. Although an author may not feel there are conflicts, disclosure of relationships and interests affords a more transparent process, leading to an accurate and objective assessment of the work. Awareness of real

or perceived conflicts of interests is a perspective to which the readers are entitled and is not meant to imply that a financial relationship with an organization that sponsored the research or compensation for consultancy work is inappropriate. Examples of potential conflicts of interests *that are directly or indirectly related to the research* may include but are not limited to the following:

- Research grants from funding agencies (please give the research funder and the grant number)
- Honoraria for speaking at symposia
- Financial support for attending symposia
- Financial support for educational programs
- Employment or consultation
- Support from a project sponsor
- Position on advisory board or board of directors or other type of management relationships
- Multiple affiliations
- Financial relationships, for example equity ownership or investment interest
- Intellectual property rights (e.g. patents, copyrights and royalties from such rights)
- Holdings of spouse and/or children that may have financial interest in the work
- In addition, interests that go beyond financial interests and compensation (non-financial interests) that may be important to readers should be disclosed. These may include but are not limited to personal relationships or competing interests directly or indirectly tied to this research, or professional interests or personal beliefs that may influence your research.

The corresponding author collects the conflict of interest disclosure forms from all authors. In author collaborations where formal agreements for representation allow it, it is sufficient for the corresponding author to sign the disclosure form on behalf of all authors. Examples of forms can be found [here](#).

The corresponding author will include a summary statement in the text of the manuscript in a separate section before the reference list, that reflects what is recorded in the potential conflict of interest disclosure form(s).

See below examples of disclosures:

Funding: This study was funded by X (grant number X).

Conflict of Interest: Author A has received research grants from Company A. Author B has received a speaker honorarium from Company X and owns stock in Company Y. Author C is a member of committee Z.

If no conflict exists, the authors should state:

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Patient Confidentiality

Patients have a right to privacy; identifying information, including names, initials, or hospital numbers, should not be published in written descriptions, photographs, videos, or pedigrees unless the information is essential for scientific purposes and the patient (or parent or guardian)

gives written informed consent for publication. Patient consent should be written and available to the IUJ Editors upon request.

For **case reports and video articles**, authors must obtain written consent from the patient. All authors must include a statement before the References section under the heading 'Consent' which reads: *'Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for publication of this case report/ video article (please delete as appropriate) and any accompanying images.'*

Review Process

Once a manuscript has been submitted, the corresponding author will be contacted by email. Manuscripts that do not conform to the journal style (see **Manuscript Preparation** below) will be returned to the corresponding author for revision and resubmission online, prior to being considered for publication.

Manuscripts which **do not meet the general criteria** for this journal will be returned to the corresponding author without undergoing peer review and will not be accepted. This decision will be made by the Editors-in-Chief. Criteria include but are not limited to:

- relevance to the aims of the journal with the topic being of overall general interest
- sufficiently original and contributing to the advancement of the field
 - clearly written with appropriate study methods, well-supported data and conclusions which are supported by the data
- clear and understandable English, grammar, and spelling

Once a manuscript has been submitted, conforms to journal style, and is deemed appropriate for this journal, it will be assigned to an editor and begin to go through the peer review process. The corresponding author will be contacted by email with editorial decisions as the manuscript moves through the peer review process.

Manuscripts that are returned to the corresponding author with Major Revisions or Minor Revisions, will include the reviewers' and the editor's comments and suggestions for changes. The notification will include the option for the corresponding author to accept or decline submitting a revised manuscript and addressing the reviewers' comments, as well as the deadline for resubmitting a revised manuscript. All revised manuscripts will be submitted online via Editorial Manager. **Revised manuscripts should clearly show where revisions have been made by using the Track Editing option in Microsoft Word, and include a cover letter addressing each reviewer's point with a counterpoint.** Manuscripts which have been returned with a decision of Major Revisions or Minor Revisions are not guaranteed acceptance after a revised manuscript has been resubmitted. Revised manuscripts will go through the peer review process. Manuscripts which have been reviewed and a decision for revisions (major or minor) has been made may be considered as new submissions if not resubmitted **within three months from the time of notification.** Requests for extension of the resubmission deadline should be directed by email to the Editorial Office.

Redundant, Duplicate, or Fraudulent Publication

Authors must not simultaneously submit their manuscript to another journal if that manuscript is under consideration by the International Urogynecology Journal (IJU). Redundant or duplicate publication is considered as a manuscript that overlaps substantially with one already published in print or electronic media. At the time of manuscript submission, authors must inform the editor about all submissions and previous publications that might be regarded as redundant or duplicate publication of the same or very similar work. Any such publications must be referred to and referenced in the new manuscript. Copies of such material should be included with the submitted manuscript as a "supplemental file".

Authors must not:

- Willfully and knowingly submit false data
- Submit data from a source not the authors' own
 - Submit previously published material (with the exception of abstracts) without correct and proper citation
- Omit reference to the work of other investigators that establishes a priority
- Falsely certify that the submitted work is original
 - Use material previously published elsewhere without prior written approval of the copyright holder

Please refer to 'Ethical Responsibilities of Authors' for a detailed explanation on Publishing Ethics (full policy available at the [IJU Homepage](#)).

Confidentiality

All manuscripts are treated by the assigned reviewers as privileged and confidential information. Reviewers may request advice from another party, subject to the general principles of confidentiality and permission of the managing editor. Reviewers' comments are not published or made available publicly except with the prior written permission of the reviewer, author, and editor. However, reviewers' comments are shared with the other reviewers of the same manuscript, and reviewers will be notified of the editor's decision. The reviewers' identity remains anonymous. All reviewers are asked to disclose any potential conflict that could influence their opinions of manuscripts, prior to review of a manuscript. Editors will only disclose information pertaining to a specific manuscript (i.e. receipt, status in review process, content, criticism, or final decision) to the author and reviewers.

Manuscript Preparation

Manuscripts **must be written in clear, concise English** and conform to the specifications described herein. Manuscripts that are considered poor quality in terms of English, grammar, and spelling and require extensive revisions for clarity may be returned to the author for revision prior to proceeding to the peer review process. Springer offers a manuscript revision service through Edanz, and can be accessed through a link on the IJU Springer homepage. Edanz may also be

accessed directly at www.edanz.com. This is associated with a fee for service, which is the author's responsibility.

Terminology

It is suggested that "Methods, definitions, and units conform to the standards jointly recommended by the International Urogynecological Association and the International Continence Society and , except where specifically noted" (Haylen et al. An International Urogynecological Association (IUGA)/International Continence Society (ICS) joint report on the terminology for female pelvic floor dysfunction. *Int Urogynecol J* 2010;21:5-26.

All manuscripts that have been accepted for publication are subject to copy-editing.

Article Types and Specific Requirements

Original Articles

- Title page:
 - all authors and affiliations
 - corresponding author contact information (email mandatory)
 - conflict of interest statement for each author
 - each author's participation in the manuscript
- Structured abstract (250 words) and Keywords (up to 6)
- Brief summary (25 words)
- Word limit of 4000 words (average is 2000 words)
 - Maximum of 6 authors (more than 6 authors requires submission of a letter to the editorial office explaining the reasons)
- Maximum of 30 references
 - Maximum of 6 figures/tables (If the article contains a large number of illustrations then the length of the text should be adjusted accordingly to a lower word count)

Review Articles

- Title page:
 - all authors and affiliations
 - corresponding author contact information (email mandatory)
 - conflict of interest statement for each author
 - each author's participation in the manuscript
- Structured abstract (250 words) and Keywords (up to 6)
- Brief summary (25 words)
- Word limit of 6000 words
- Maximum of 3 authors
- Maximum 100 references
- Maximum of 10 figures

Case Reports

- Title page:
 - all authors and affiliations
 - corresponding author contact information (email mandatory)
 - conflict of interest statement for each author
 - each author's participation in the manuscript
- Abstract (50 – 150 words) to include case/conclusions and Keywords (up to 6)
- Brief Summary (25 words)
- Word limit of 1000 words
- Maximum of 3 authors
- Maximum of 1-2 figures/tables
- Maximum of 5 references

Current Opinion/Updates

- Title page:
 - All authors and affiliations
 - corresponding author contract information (email mandatory)
 - conflict of interest statement for each author
 - each author's participation in the manuscript
- Unstructured abstract (50 – 150 words) and Keywords (up to 6)
- Word limit of 3000 words
- Maximum of 7 authors
- Maximum of 25 references

Letters to the Editor (Comments)*

- Title and corresponding author
- Word limit of 400 words
 - Maximum of 5 references (the first reference must be the publication in question if letter relates to a publication)

*NOTE: The editorial staff reserves the right to shorten letters if necessary and to make minor editorial alterations without reference to the writer; letters may be published together with a reply from the original author. If the original author does not respond, a notation indicating 'response declined' will be published. As space for Letters-to-the-Editor is limited, only a selection of letters submitted may be published.

Video Article

In addition to a video authors should submit a manuscript text. This should include:

- Title page (incorporating a structured abstract, keywords and references):
 - Title of video
 - All authors and affiliations
 - Corresponding author contact information (email mandatory)

- Conflict of interest statement for each author
- Abstract (up to 200 words)
- Structured text (800-1200 words):
 1. Aim of the video / Introduction
 2. Method
 3. Results (if presenting data)
 4. Conclusion

Presenting results and using tables is encouraged.

- Keywords (up to 6)
 - Up to 10 references
- Video format:
 - Should not exceed 9 minutes
 - File size should not exceed 100MB
 - All videos should be in MP4 format and will be playable on a Windows-based computer
 - The use of unnecessary audio (i.e. music) is discouraged
 - The content of the video file(s) must be identical to that reviewed and accepted by the editors
 - All narration should be in English
 - Information that may identify patients, including names, initials, or hospital numbers, should not be included in videos unless the information is essential for scientific purposes and the patient (or parent or guardian) gives written informed consent for publication. Patient consent should be written and available to the IUJ Editors upon request. All authors must include a statement before the References section under the heading 'Consent' which reads: *'Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for publication of this video article and any accompanying images.'*

Manuscript Format

The following sections must each begin on separate pages:

- Title Page*
- Abstract*
- Text (Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion)*
- Acknowledgements
- References*
- Figure Legends (if any figures)
- Tables
- Appendices (if any)

*Mandatory sections

Manuscripts must have all pages numbered and the text should be double spaced.

Title page

The title page MUST include:

- **Title** - Capture the essence of the scientific contribution in no more than 15 words, including spaces. It should be specific enough for electronic retrieval and searches
- **Author Details** - Name(s) and institutional affiliation(s) of all the author(s)
- **Corresponding Author** and contact information (address, telephone, fax, email)
- **Word Count** – Must be included in the lower left hand side of the title page. Word count includes abstract and main text but *not* references.
- **Financial Disclaimers/Conflict of Interest statement (if none, state FINANCIAL DISCLAIMER/CONFLICT OF INTEREST: NONE)**. NOTE: This does not replace the mandatory Copyright and Authorship Form which must be completed and included at the time of submission.
- **Each authors' contribution to the Manuscript**
 - List each author by surname (family name) and describe each of their contributions (select all that apply) to the manuscript using the following terms:
 - Protocol/project development
Data collection or management
Data analysis
 - Manuscript writing/editing
 - Other (please specify briefly using 1 to 5 words)
 - (Adapted from WAME Authorship paper, www.wame.org, posted January 10, 2007)
 - *For example:*
 - AR Smith: Project development, Data Collection, Manuscript writing
 - TS Jones: Data collection
 - AJ Davis: Manuscript writing

Abstract

Each original article and review/mini review article must include a structured abstract of up to **250 words** that is intelligible to the journal's general readership without reference to the text and must reflect the content of the article accurately. All original articles and reviews/mini reviews should present the abstract in a structured format as follows:

- Introduction and Hypothesis
- Methods (include sample size and statistical approaches).
 - Results - The Results must contain sufficient data for readers to evaluate the credibility of the conclusion. All of the data does not need to be presented. The conclusion should be an inference, not a summary.
 - Conclusions - Readers should be able to understand the question asked in the study and why and how it was done.

Keywords

Up to **3-6 keywords** should be supplied in alphabetical order after the Abstract, characterizing the scope of the manuscript.

Brief summary

A **25-word summary** is mandatory and will be used in the table of contents of the journal.

Abbreviations

These should be defined at first mention in the abstract and again in the main body of the text and used consistently thereafter.

Introduction

Develop the study rationale and avoid a literature review. Literature should be cited only to the extent that helps the reader understand why the question is asked. End the Introduction with a stated aim or question, preferably expressed as a testable hypothesis. For example, if the study is aimed at identifying the color of apples, or asks what color are apples, state 'we hypothesized that apples will be green rather than red'. The reason for this hypothesis should be contained in the rationale.

Materials and Methods

The Materials and Methods section should describe the procedures used and include sufficient information such as subjects and measurements) so that a reader can evaluate the credibility of results and interpretation in the light of possible methodological limitations. Detailed statistical methods should be included. Findings should be quantified when possible and presented with appropriate indicators of measurement error or uncertainty, e.g. confidence intervals. The source or manufacturer name of all products used should be stated. Authors should always consider clarity for other workers about how and why a study was done in a particular way. All original articles should include Ethics/Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for all studies, human or animal. Studies in which ethics approval does not apply or is waived by the IRB/Ethics Committee should state this in the manuscript, and the reason for the exemption or waiver.

Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT)

In cases of prospective, randomized trials (RCT), it is strongly encouraged that they are registered with a public clinical trial registry, such as www.clinicaltrials.gov (NO FEE) prior to commencing patient recruitment. Proof of IRB approval is MANDATORY (or an explanation for exemption or waiver). Authors should refer to the CONSORT statement (<http://www.consort-statement.org/>), including the flow diagram and checklist (<http://www.consort-statement.org/consort-statement/overview0/#checklist>) when preparing a manuscript reporting RCT. The flow diagram should be included as Figure 1 in the document.

Results

Results concerning the primary testable hypothesis should be presented first. Do not 'save the best for last'. Data should be presented as concisely as possible, if appropriate in the form of tables and/or graphs, although very large tables should be avoided. If authors wish to present the full data of the study, and any technical details, these can be included as Electronic Supplementary Material.

Discussion

The following paragraph structure is recommended:

- Summarize the main findings from most to least important, including a statement whether the results are consistent with the stated hypothesis.

- Discuss how the results confirm or contrast with published literature.
 - If the results differ, discuss the possible reasons for this. Details of methodology and results of published literature may be appropriate here. Avoid reviewing literature outside the scope of the study.
 - Discuss the significance and implications of this new data. Having developed the rationale to define the limits of current knowledge, how does this new information advance understanding?
 - Write a paragraph concerning the limits of the study – this is critical. The inferences made throughout the Discussion must be written bearing in mind the constraints of the methodological limitations of the work. Papers written without this section will not be considered for publication.
 - Summarize and Conclude. The conclusion is an inference. Within the constraints of the limitations of the study, the authors may boldly speculate regarding the significance of the findings and future research.

Acknowledgements

The acknowledgements should be as brief as possible. They should include the specific contributions of all persons who have substantially contributed to the work reported, e.g. technical assistance, data collection, analysis, writing or editing assistance, but who do not fulfill authorship criteria. Authors should obtain written permission from all persons listed in the Acknowledgement section. All institutional and corporate funding sources should be mentioned. The names of funding organizations should be written in full.

Funding

Authors are expected to disclose any commercial or other associations that might pose a conflict of interest in connection with submitted material. All funding sources supporting the work and institutional or corporate affiliations of the authors should be acknowledged even if there are no conflicts of interest or disclosures and must be clearly stated within the manuscript file.

Citation

Reference citations in the text should be identified by numbers in square brackets. Some examples:

1. Negotiation research spans many disciplines [3].
2. This result was later contradicted by Becker and Seligman [5].
3. This effect has been widely studied [1-3, 7].

Reference list

The list of references should only include works that are cited in the text and that have been published or accepted for publication. Personal communications and unpublished works should only be mentioned in the text. Do not use footnotes or endnotes as a substitute for a reference list.

The entries in the list should be numbered consecutively.

- Journal article

Gamelin FX, Baquet G, Berthoin S, Thevenet D, Nourry C, Nottin S, Bosquet L (2009) Effect of high intensity intermittent training on heart rate variability in prepubescent children. *Eur J Appl Physiol* 105:731-738. doi: 10.1007/s00421-008-0955-8

Ideally, the names of all authors should be provided, but the usage of “et al” in long author lists will also be accepted:

Smith J, Jones M Jr, Houghton L et al (1999) Future of health insurance. *N Engl J Med* 341:325–329

- Article by DOI
Slifka MK, Whitton JL (2000) Clinical implications of dysregulated cytokine production. *J Mol Med*. doi:10.1007/s001090000086
- Book
South J, Blass B (2001) *The future of modern genomics*. Blackwell, London
- Book chapter
Brown B, Aaron M (2001) The politics of nature. In: Smith J (ed) *The rise of modern genomics*, 3rd edn. Wiley, New York, pp 230-257
- Online document
Cartwright J (2007) Big stars have weather too. IOP Publishing PhysicsWeb. <http://physicsweb.org/articles/news/11/6/16/1>. Accessed 26 June 2007
- Dissertation
Trent JW (1975) *Experimental acute renal failure*. Dissertation, University of California

Always use the standard abbreviation of a journal’s name according to the ISSN List of Title Word Abbreviations, see

- www.issn.org/2-22661-LTWA-online.php

For authors using EndNote, Springer provides an output style that supports the formatting of in-text citations and reference list.

- [Endnote style \(zip, 2kB\)](#)

Authors preparing their manuscript in LaTeX can use the bibtex file `spbasic.bst` which is included in Springer’s LaTeX macro package.

Standardization articles

If referencing standardization articles that are in collaboration with the International Continence Society please use the following references:

- Haylen, B.T., Freeman, R.M., Swift, S.E., Cosson, M. and Davila, G.W. *et al* (2011) **An International Urogynecological Association (IUGA) / International Continence Society (ICS) joint terminology and classification of the complications related directly to the insertion of prostheses (meshes, implants, tapes) & grafts in female pelvic floor surgery**. *Int Urogynecol J* 22:3-15. doi: 10.1007/s00192-010-1324-9.
- Toozs-Hobson, P., Freeman, R., Barber, M., Maher, C. and Haylen, B. *et al.* (2012) **An International Urogynecological Association (IUGA)/International Continence Society (ICS) joint report on the terminology for reporting outcomes of surgical procedures for pelvic organ prolapse**. *Int Urogynecol J* 23:527-535. doi:

10.1007/s00192-012-1726-y

- Haylen, B.T., de Ridder, D., Freeman, R.M., Swift, S.E. and Berghmans, B. *et al.* (2010) **An International Urogynecological Association**

(IUGA)/International

Continence Society (ICS) joint report on the terminology for female pelvic floor dysfunction. Int Urogynecol J 21: 5-26. doi: 10.1007/s00192-009-0976-9

- Bernard T. Haylen, B.T., Freeman, R.M., Lee, J., Swift, S.E. and Cosson, M. *et al.* (2012) **An International Urogynecological Association**

(IUGA)/International Continence Society (ICS) joint terminology and classification

of the complications related to native tissue female pelvic floor surgery. Int

Urogynecol J 23: 515-526. doi: 10.1007/s00192-011-1659-x

Illustrations

A **Legend of Figures** is required when using figures (to follow the References on a separate page). Each figure must be listed with a succinct, self-sufficient explanation of the photographs, graphs or diagrams. All abbreviations and symbols used in the figure should be explained. All figures must be cited in the text, and each numbered consecutively throughout. Figure parts should be identified by lower-case roman letters.

Figures should not be included in the main manuscript document but rather submitted as separate image files on Editorial Manager.

Details that might identify patients should be omitted unless absolutely necessary for scientific reasons. Falsification or altering of data should never be used as a means of ensuring anonymity; masking of the eye region in photographs of patients may be inadequate. If identification of patients is unavoidable, the author must guarantee that the reproduction of illustrations in which a patient is recognizable is approved either by the patient him-/herself or by his/her legal representative.

If submitted material has been previously published, acknowledgement to the original source must be made and written permission from the copyright holder must be submitted with the illustration. Obtaining copyright permission is the author's responsibility. If copyright is not obtained from a figure reused from a previously published source, the figure will be omitted. The copyright holder is typically the *publisher* of the journal that published the source item, and most publishers have permission requests on their websites.

All illustrations should be submitted as electronic files with a minimum resolution of 800 dpi for line drawings and 300 dpi for digital half-tones. It is recommended that individual file sizes are no more than 500 KB and not exceeding 2 MB, with the total size for all files no exceeding 25 MB. Store color illustrations as RGB (8 bits per channel) in TIFF format. Color illustrations in the print journal incur a charge (€ 950, plus VAT) and the authors will be expected to make a contribution towards the extra costs, irrespective of the number of color figures (this is for print only - online publication of color figures does not require extra cost).

Tables

All tables should be cited in the text and each numbered consecutively throughout. Data presented in tables should not be repeated in the text. Each table should appear on a separate page, following the Legend of Figures, and listed numerically. Tables should have

a title and a legend explaining any abbreviations used in that table. Footnotes to tables should be indicated in superscript lower-case letters or asterisks for significance values and other statistical data, and explained at the bottom of each table.

Appendices

If there is more than one appendix, they should be numbered consecutively. Equations in appendices should be designated differently from those in the main body of the paper, e.g. (A1), (A2) etc. In each appendix, equations should be numbered separately.

Electronic Supplementary Material

Electronic supplementary material (ESM) for an article in the journal will be published in SpringerLink provided the material is:

- Submitted to the Editor(s) in electronic form together with the paper
- Subject to peer review
- Accepted by the journal's Editor(s)

ESM may consist of:

- Information that cannot be printed: animations, video clips, sound recordings.
 - Information that is more convenient in electronic form: sequences, spectral data, etc.
 - Large original data that relate to the paper, e.g. additional tables, illustrations (color and black & white), etc.
- Expanded Methods section

After a manuscript has been accepted, ESM will be published as received from the author in the online version only. References will be given in the printed version.

Proofreading

Proofreading is the responsibility of the author. Corrections should be clear and standard correction marks should be used. Corrections that lead to a change in the page layout should be avoided. The author is entitled to formal corrections only. Substantial changes in content, e.g. new results, corrected values, title and authorship, are not allowed without the approval of the editor. In such a case, please contact the Editorial Office before returning the proofs to the publisher.

Proprietary Substances and Materials, and Instruments

The correct designation and the manufacturer's name should be given. Where the manufacturer is not well known, the city and country should also be included.

Units of measure

Please adhere to internationally agreed standards such as those adopted by the commission of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) or defined by the International Organization of Standardization (ISO). Metric SI units should be used throughout except where non-SI units are more common [e.g. litre (l) for volume].

Drug Names

When drugs are mentioned, the international (generic) name should be used. The proprietary name, chemical composition, and manufacturer should be stated in full in Materials and Methods. The source of any new and experimental preparation should also be given. Generic names of drugs and pesticides are preferred; if trade names are used, the generic name should be given at first mention.

Ethical Responsibilities of Authors

This journal is committed to upholding the integrity of the scientific record. As a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) the journal will follow the COPE guidelines on how to deal with potential acts of misconduct.

Authors should refrain from misrepresenting research results which could damage the trust in the journal and ultimately the entire scientific endeavour. Maintaining integrity of the research and its presentation can be achieved by following the rules of good scientific practice, which includes:

- The manuscript has not been submitted to more than one journal for simultaneous consideration.
- The manuscript has not been published previously (partly or in full), unless the new work concerns an expansion of previous work (please provide transparency on the re-use of material to avoid the hint of text-recycling (“self-plagiarism”).
- A single study is not split up into several parts to increase the quantity of submissions and submitted to various journals or to one journal over time (e.g. “salami-publishing”).
- No data have been fabricated or manipulated (including images) to support your conclusions
- No data, text, or theories by others are presented as if they were the authors own (“plagiarism”). Proper acknowledgements to other works must be given (this includes material that is closely copied (near verbatim), summarized and/or paraphrased), quotation marks are used for verbatim copying of material, and permissions are secured for material that is copyrighted.

Important note: the journal may use software to screen for plagiarism.

Consent to submit has been received from all co-authors and responsible authorities at the institute/organization where the work has been carried out before the work is submitted.

Authors whose names appear on the submission have contributed sufficiently to the scientific work and therefore share collective responsibility and accountability for the results.

In addition:

- Changes of authorship or in the order of authors are not accepted after acceptance of a manuscript.
- Requests to add or delete authors at revision stage or after publication is a serious matter, and may be considered only after receipt of written approval from all authors and detailed explanation about the role/deletion of the new/deleted author. The decision on accepting the change rests with the Editor-in-Chief of the journal.
- Upon request authors should be prepared to send relevant documentation or data in order to verify the validity of the results. This could be in the form of raw data, samples, records, etc.

If there is a suspicion of misconduct, the journal will carry out an investigation following the COPE guidelines. If, after investigation, the allegation seems to raise valid concerns, the accused author will be contacted and given an opportunity to address the issue. If misconduct has been proven, this may result in the Editor-in-Chief's implementation of the following measures, including, but not limited to:

- If the article is still under consideration, it may be rejected and returned to the author.
- If the article has already been published online, depending on the nature and severity of the infraction, either an erratum will be placed with the article or in severe cases complete retraction of the article will occur. The reason must be given in the published erratum or retraction note.
- The author's institution may be informed.
- A ban in participating in any of the journal's publications for a period of between 3 years and indefinitely
- Informing Chief editors of other Springer journals about the perpetrated act and related decision
- An erratum reporting the conflict is published
- A full retraction of the article is undertaken. The nature of retraction will depend on
- whether the article is online first, or has already been published in a print issue.

→*Online First Publication*: The article will be fully retracted from SpringerLink, Springer's online full-text journal platform- the PDF will no longer be available and no related articles, abstracts, and references will be found on SpringerLink. The initial PDF document will be replaced by a retraction note. Springer will pursue the retraction of this article from other online services besides SpringerLink. Please note that the metadata of the article (author's name and title) will still be findable on SpringerLink.

→*Print publication in journal issue*: Since the article is already published, a retraction is no longer possible. The content will remain in its existing print form. However, in the next issue of the journal a retraction note referring to the article will be published. In addition, the title and each page of the related online article will be marked with a clear "RETRACTED" stamp

(For full policy document, go the IUJ Springer Homepage:

<http://www.springer.com/medicine/gynecology/journal/192>)

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