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General Information

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Abstract Information

Abstract Title: Authorship criteria and reporting ethical compliance: an analysis of instructions to authors in Indian biomedical journals
Abstract: Background: Journal's 'instructions to authors' reflect editorial processes and ethics, conforming to existing publication guidelines (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors [ICMJE], Committee on Publication Ethics [COPE] etc.) educating the scientific community. This analysis aimed to assess authorship criteria and guidance on reporting of research ethics, in the 'instructions to authors', in Indian biomedical journals. Methods: We selected 55 PubMed indexed, Indian biomedical journals from different therapeutic areas for this analysis. 'Instructions to authors' from these journals were evaluated for: manuscript preparation and authorship criteria (ICMJE), requirements to indicate the study conduct in accordance with Declaration of Helsinki (DoH)/applicable ethical standards/approval, consent/assent for study participation, and consent for identifiable information. Journal's stance to investigate suspicious misconduct and to allow suggested reviewers, were also
assessed. Data were summarized using descriptive statistics. Results: Overall, 37 (67.3%)/55 journals recommended ICMJE for manuscripts preparation; some (n=16) refer to older versions. Thirty-two of 55 (58.2%) journals defined authorship; only 2 journals defined per latest (2014) ICMJE criteria. ICMJE criteria were included as: first 3 criteria (n=27); first two criteria (n=2) and brief mention of authorship criteria (n=2). Journal recommendations to indicate ethical compliance in article were- conduct of study in accordance with DoH: n=39 (70.9%), ethical approval: n=37 (67.3%), consent: n=26 (47.3%), assent: n=10 (18.2%), and consent for identifiable information: n=31 (56.4%). Most journals referred to DoH version 1975 (n=27) and 1964 (n=9); and revisions of 2000 (n=25), and as later amendments (n=8). Only 8 journals specified that journal may investigate in case of suspicious misconduct; 16 journals allowed authors to suggest potential reviewers. Conclusions: Results indicate an incomplete incorporation of international recommendations and latest updates for improving publication practices in the ‘instructions to authors’ of Indian biomedical journals. Appropriate and updated instructions for manuscript development, authorship and ethics, are essential.