Instructions for authors

Annals of COLOPROCTOLOGY

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Annals of Coloproctology (Ann Coloproctol, ACP) is the official journal of the Korean Society of Coloproctology (KSCP), the Asia Pacific Federation of Coloproctology (APFCP), and the Unitary Italian Society of Colon-Proctology-ETS (SIUCP-ETS). Established in 1985, ACP became the official journal of APFCP in 2019 and was designated as the official journal of SIUCP-ETS in 2024.

As an international, peer-reviewed, open access journal, ACP aims to contribute to the in-depth development, cure of colorectal diseases, and improvement of public health. The scope of ACP includes basic and clinical research in colorectal surgery, physiology, epidemiology, and pathophysiology. ACP is mainly interested in surgical issues of diseases originating from the lower digestive system such as colon, rectum, anus, and small bowel. These diseases include colorectal cancer, anal cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, benign colonic disease, anorectal disorders, functional diseases, and pelvic floor disorders. In addition, ACP has a regional focus on Asia but welcomes submissions from researchers worldwide.

Contents of ACP is primarily aimed at doctors, nurses, basic researchers, and other health professionals involved in the management of colorectal disease, including colorectal surgeons, surgical oncologists, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, colorectal pathologists, radiologists, and gastroenterologists. Its contents are also relevant to researchers and clinicians interested in lower gastrointestinal tract disease. ACP may also be of interest to administrators, policy makers, and students seeking to understand recent trends in the field of colon and rectal issues.

ACP publishes original articles, reviews, technical notes, brief communications, guidelines, editorials, letters to the editor, and videos related to the field of coloproctology. ACP is published bimonthly on the last day of February, April, June, August, October, and December.

Manuscripts for submission to ACP should be prepared according to the following instructions. ACP follows the Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly work in Medical Journals (https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/) from the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

ARTICLE PROCESSING CHARGES

Accepted manuscripts are published with the understanding that the author(s) will cover the costs of publication, including page charges. The basic page charge for published manuscripts is US $500. Any photographs, electron micrographs, color plates, and other special illustrations will also be reproduced at the author's expense at cost prices.

ACP offers waivers and discounts to papers whose authors are based in countries classified by the World Bank (https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519) as low-income economies as of July in the year prior to submission. Requests for waivers should be made at the time of submission. Please contact the Editorial Office (editor@coloproctol.org) to request a waiver. In order to ensure that a paper's waiver status does not influence the editor's decision, editors are not informed when a waiver has been granted.

MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

ACP focuses on original articles containing clinical and experimental studies, editorials, brief communications, technical notes, letters to the editor, video, invited review articles, and guidelines. Any physicians or researchers throughout the world can submit a manuscript provided its scope is appropriate. Manuscripts should be submitted in English. Medical terminology should be written in accordance with the most recent edition of *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*.

General guidelines

- Manuscripts should be prepared using Microsoft Word (doc or docx format). They should be formatted on A4 (21.0×29.7 cm)

or US Letter (21.6×27.9 cm) paper, with margins of at least 2.54 cm (1 inch) on all sides.

- Texts should be double-spaced with the same normal, plain font throughout, preferably 11-point Times New Roman.
- The cover letter should confirm that neither the submitted material nor portions thereof have been published previously or are under consideration for publication elsewhere. It should also state any potential conflict of interest that could influence the authors' interpretation of the data, such as financial support from or connections to pharmaceutical companies, political pressure from interest groups, or academically related issues.
- All manuscript pages should be numbered consecutively, beginning with the abstract as page 1.
- Neither authors' names nor their affiliations should appear on any of the manuscript pages.
- Abbreviations should be spelled out at first use, the abbreviation following in parentheses, and should be used consistently thereafter. Use only standard abbreviations, as the use of nonstandard abbreviations can be confusing to readers. Avoid using abbreviations in the manuscript title.
- The names of the manufacturers of equipment and nongeneric drugs should be given.
- When quoting from other sources, give a reference number after the author's surname or at the end of the quotation.
- Authors should express all measurements in conventional units, using International System of Units (SI units).
- Authors should report results using 3 decimal places or fewer, with trailing zeros.
- To make papers more readable and informative, the following should be written in italics:
  - Biological names of organisms, e.g., *Saccharomyces cerevisiae, E. coli*
  - Restriction enzymes and some other of enzymes, e.g., *EcoRI, Taq polymerase*
  - Names of genes, e.g., *src, c-H-ras, myc*
  - Words of Latin origin, e.g., *in vivo, in vitro, in situ*
  - Centrifugation force, e.g., 100,000 *g*

Title page

The title page should include the following items:

- **Title:** The article title should be concise and precise. The title should be written in sentence case, meaning the first letter of the first word and any proper nouns are capitalized, as in a typical sentence. Generic drug names should be used in the title, not brand names. The title should also indicate the study design. If the study involved human participants, the country where the study was conducted should be included.
- **Authors and affiliations:** First, middle, and last names should be included for each author. For authors with different affiliations, the authors should be indicated by superscripted Arabic numerals (e.g., 1, 2, 3, etc.) at the top-right-hand corner of the author's name and before the affiliation. If authors are affiliated with multiple departments and hospitals, affiliations should be arranged in the order of authors and demarcated with a number.
- **ORCID:** All authors are required to provide their ORCIDs. If an author does not have an ORCID, they can register for one at the ORCID website (https://orcid.org/). Registration is free to all researchers.
- **Corresponding author:** The corresponding author's name, academic degree, affiliation, address (with postal code), and email address should be included.
- **Author contributions:** The contributions of all authors must be described using CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy; https://credit.niso.org/).
- **Conflict of interest:** Authors should disclose any potential conflict of interest. If there are no conflicts of interest to declare, authors should include the following sentence: "The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare."
- **Funding:** All sources of funding applicable to the study should be explicitly stated. Providing a FundRef ID is suggested, including the name of the funding agency, the country, and, if available, the grant number provided by the funding agency. If the funding agency does not have a FundRef ID, please ask the agency to contact the FundRef registry (fundref. registry@crossref.org). A detailed description of the FundRef policy can be found at at the Crossref website (https://www.crossref.org/services/funder-registry/).
- **Acknowledgments:** All persons who have made substantial contributions, but do not meet the criteria for authorship, should be acknowledged here.
- If any of the sections in the manuscript are not applicable, please include the heading and write "Not applicable." for that section.

Article types

The type of articles published in ACP are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of published article types

Article type	Abstract	Text[a]	Reference
Original article	Structured (Purpose, Methods, Results, Conclusion; maximum: 250 words)	Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion (maximum Tables and Figures: 7)	50
Review article[b]	Unstructured (maximum: 200 words)	Introduction, Body text, Conclusion (maximum: 7,500 words)	100
Technical note	Not required	Introduction, Technique, Discussion (maximum: 1,500 words)	15
Brief communication	Not required	Maximum: 1,500 words	15
Guideline	Unstructured (maximum: 250 words)	Introduction, Body text, Conclusion (maximum: 7,500 words)	No limit
Editorial[b]	Not required	Maximum: 2,000 words	10
Letter to the editor	Not required	Maximum: 1,000 words	10
Video	Not required	Maximum: 1,500 words	15

[a]The maximum words excludes the abstract, references, tables, and figure legends. [b]Invited only.

1. ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Original articles report basic or clinical investigations. Original articles should be organized in the following sequence: Title page, Abstract and Keywords, Main text (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion), References, Tables, Figure legends, and Figures. Original articles should not include more than a total of 7 tables or figures.

- **Abstract and Keywords:** The abstract should be concise, containing no more than 250 words, with the following headings: Purpose, Methods, Results, and Conclusion. Up to 5 keywords should be listed at the bottom of the abstract to be used as index terms. ACP strongly recommends using Medical Subject Headings (MeSH; https://meshb.nlm.nih.gov/) keywords.
- **Main text:** Original articles should be structured into following main sections:
  - *Introduction:* Briefly describe the purpose of the investigation, including relevant background information.
  - *Methods:* Describe, in the following order, the research plan, materials (or subjects), and methods used. Explain, in detail, how the disease was confirmed and how subjectivity in observations was controlled. When an experimental methodology is the paper's main focus, describe the process in detail so as to recreate the experiment as closely as possible. The sources of special chemicals or reagents should be given, along with the company name. Methods of statistical analysis and criteria for statistical significance should be described. Studies performed using clinical samples or data, and those involving animals, must include information on the approval or waiver from the ethics committee and informed consent. An example is as shown in the following: "We conducted this study in compliance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. The study's protocol was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of OO (No. OO). Written informed consents were obtained from the patients./The requirement for informed consent was waived."
  - *Results:* The results should be presented in a logical sequence in the text. Tables and illustrations repetitively presenting the same data in different forms should be avoided. The results should not include materials appropriate for Discussion.
  - *Discussion:* Observations pertaining to the results of research and other related materials should be interpreted for your readers. Emphasize new and important observations; do not merely repeat the contents of the results. Explain your interpretation of the observations, along with the limits of their application; connect any conclusions to the purpose of the research. In a concluding paragraph, summarize the results and what they mean.
- **References:** In the text, references should be cited with Arabic numerals in brackets, numbered in the order of appearance. In the References, the references should be numbered and listed in the order of appearance in the text. List all authors for sources with no more than 6 authors; if there are more than 6, list the first 6 authors followed by "et al." If an article has been published online, but not yet assigned an issue or page numbers, the DOI should be supplied. Journal titles should be abbreviated following the NLM title abbreviation. Other types of references not described below should follow NLM's Samples of Formatted References for Authors of Journal Articles (https://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html). The number of references for original articles are limited to 50. Exceptions can be made only with the agreement of the Editor.

  - *Journal articles:*

1. Yoo HY, Choi J, Kim J, Chai YJ, Shin R, Ahn HS, et al. Unex-

pected appendiceal pathologies and their changes with the expanding use of preoperative imaging studies. Ann Coloproctol 2017;33:99–105.

2. Caselli RJ, Dueck AC. Longitudinal modeling of age-related memory decline and the APOE epsilon4 effect. N Engl J Med 2009;361:255–63.
3. Son GM, Ahn HM, Lee IY, Ha GW. Multifunctional indocyanine green applications for fluorescence-guided laparoscopic colorectal surgery. Ann Coloproctol 2021 Jun 9 [Epub]. https://doi.org/10.3393/ac.2021.05.07

- Entire book:

4. Gordon PH, Nivatvongs S, editors. Principles and practice of surgery for the colon, rectum, and anus. 3rd ed. Informa Healthcare USA; 2007.

- Part of a book:

5. Maa J, Kirkwood KS. The appendix. In: Townsend CM Jr, Beauchamp RD, Evers BM, Mattox KL, editors. Sabiston textbook of surgery: the biological basis of modern surgical practice. 19th ed. Elsevier Saunders; 2012. p. 1279–93.

- Dissertation:

6. Hong GD. The relationship between low serum cholesterol level and cancer mortality [Dissertation]. Seoul National University; 2017.

- Conference paper:

7. Rice AS, Brooks JW. Cannabinoids and pain. In: Dostorovsky JO, Carr DB, editors. Proceedings of the 10th World Congress on Pain; 2002 Aug 17-22; San Diego, CA, USA. IASP Press; 2003. p. 437–46.

- Online sources:

8. American Cancer Society. Cancer A-Z [Internet]. American Cancer Society; c2017 [cited 2017 Sep 15]. Available from: https://www.cancer.org/cancer.html
9. National Cancer Information Center. Cancer incidence [Internet]. National Cancer Information Center of Korea; c2017 [cited 2021 Sep 20]. Available from: https://ncc.re.kr/main.ncc?uri=english/sub04_Statistics

- **Tables:** Tables must be numbered in the order in which they are cited in the text. The table title, placed immediately above the table, should concisely describe its contents to enable the readers to understand the table without referring to the text. Each table must be simple and typed on a separate page. Explanatory matters should be placed in footnotes below the tabular matter, and not included in the title. All nonstandard abbreviations should be also explained in the footnotes. Footnotes should be indicated by superscripted lowercase letters (e.g., [a], [b], [c], etc.). Statistical measures, such as standard deviation or standard error, should be identified. Vertical and horizontal rules between entries should be omitted.
- **Figures:** Figures should be submitted as separate files. All file types (TIFF, GIF, JPEG, or PPT) may be submitted for evaluation by reviewers. However, if an article receives approval for publication, files must be submitted as TIFF or PDF files. In the case of color photos, they must be saved and submitted in CMYK formats. Black-and-white pictures, such as CT and MRI images, must be submitted in grayscale mode. It should have a minimum width of 107 mm and a minimum resolution of 300 dpi for color figures, 500 dpi for black-and-white figures, and 1,000 dpi for line art figures. Full color drawings and pictures are recommended. For multiple prints bearing the same figure number, use English letters after numerals to indicate the correct order (e.g., Fig. 1A, Fig. 1B). Figures should be numbered, using Arabic numerals, in the order in which they are cited. Figure legends should be a 1-sentence description, rather than a phrase or a paragraph.
- If any tables or figures are taken or modified from other papers, authors should obtain permission through the Copyright Clearance Center (https://www.copyright.com/) or from the individual publisher, except where the materials concerned have been published in an open access journal under the Creative Commons License. For tables or figures from an open access journal, simply verify the source of the journal precisely in the accompanying footnote. Please note the distinction between a free access journal and an open access journal: it is necessary to obtain permission from the publisher of a free access journal for using tables or figures published therein. Examples are shown in the following: "Reprinted/Modified/Adapted from Tanaka et al. [48], with permission of Elsevier." OR "Reprinted/Modified/Adapted from Weiss et al. [2], available under the Creative Commons License."

2. REVIEW ARTICLES

Review articles are invited by the editor and should be about comprehensive analyses of specific topics. Review articles should be organized in the following sequence: Title page, Abstract (unstructured) and Keywords, Main text (Introduction, Body text, and Conclusion), References, Tables, Figure legends, and Figures. The abstract should not exceed 200 words. Systematic reviews are considered as review articles but should follow the format of original articles, including a structured abstract (Purpose, Methods, Results, Conclusion) and a main text organized into Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion sections. The length of the text, excluding references, tables, and figures, should not exceed 7,500 words. The number of references for review articles is limited to 100. Exceptions can be made only with the agreement of the Editor.

3. TECHNICAL NOTES

Technical notes are brief reports of new surgical technique(s) in the field of colorectal disease. Images should be included in contents. Videos may be included with submission but video clips longer than 2 minutes are recommended to be submitted as a Video. Technical notes should not exceed 1,500 words and include no more than 15 references. Technical notes should be organized in the following sequence: Title page, Main text (Introduction, Technique, and Discussion), References, Tables, Figure legends, and Figures. While patient results may be included, individual case reports or case series should not be included in the text. The focus of the manuscript should be on the technique itself.

4. BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

Brief communications are concise descriptions of new findings of general interest. They are are organized in the following sequence: Title page, Main text, References, Tables, Figure legends, and Figures. They should not exceed 1,500 words and include no more than 15 references.

5. GUIDELINES

Guidelines are similar to original articles, but focus on providing evidence-based recommendations that will influence clinical research and practice. These can be consensus-based statements of reporting standards or clinical practice guidelines. They are organized in the following sequence: Title page, Abstract (unstructured) and Keywords, Main text (Introduction, Body text, and Conclusion), References, Tables, Figure legends, and Figures. The abstract should not exceed 250 words. The length of the text, excluding references, tables, and figures, should not exceed 7,500 words. There is no limit to the number of references for guidelines.

6. EDITORIALS

Editorials are invited by the editor and should be commentaries on articles published recently in the journal. Editorial topics could include active areas of research, fresh insights, and debates in all fields of coloproctology. Editorials should not exceed 2,000 words, excluding references, tables, and figures. The number of references should not exceed 10.

7. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor should include brief important comments, useful to readers, concerning previously published articles in the journal. They should not exceed 1,000 words. The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit letters to the editor and decide whether they should be accepted or rejected for publication. The number of references should not exceed 10.

8. VIDEOS

Video clips are submissions where the video is the major component of the article. Text for a video should not exceed 1,500 words. The number of references should not exceed 15. Text should be limited to that which provides a brief introduction to the video only and should not include case reports or results. Any editing of the video will be the responsibility of the author(s). The file resolution must be 16:9 or 4:3. Only avi, wmv, mpg, mpeg, mpg-2, mp4, mov, swf, and flv format files are accepted. Upon acceptance for publication of the paper with the related video file, all copyrights in the video file will automatically transfer to KSCP.

Supplementary materials

Supplementary material refers to files related to a specific article, provided by the authors for publication alongside their article. These materials typically include additional content that could not be included in the print version, such as appendices or extra tables. All supplementary materials will be available online alongside the full-text article. Include a listing of supplementary materials at the end of the manuscript file, and ensure they are cited consecutively in the text of the manuscript.

Reporting guidelines for specific study designs

For specific study designs, such as randomized control studies, studies of diagnostic accuracy, meta-analyses, observational studies, and nonrandomized studies, authors should follow the relevant reporting guidelines (Table 2). The submission of the checklists as supplementary materials is recommended; checklists should list which page of your research article each checklist item appears. Recommended sources include the EQUATOR Network (https://www.equator-network.org/) and the US National Library of Medicine (NLM; https://www.nlm.nih.gov/services/research_report_guide.html).

Table 2. Reporting guidelines for specific study designs

Guideline	Type of study	Source
CONSORT	Randomized controlled trials	https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/consort/
STROBE	Observational studies	https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/strobe/
PRISMA	Systematic reviews and	https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/prisma/

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION ETHICS

ACP adheres to the guidelines and best practices published by

professional organizations, including ICMJE Recommendations (https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/); the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (https://doaj.org/apply/transparency/), a joint statement by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), and Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA); and the Good Publication Practice Guideline for Medical Journals (https://www.kamje.or.kr/board/view?b_name=bo_publication&bo_id=13/). All processes of handling research and publication misconduct shall follow the applicable COPE flowchart (https://publicationethics.org/guidance/Flowcharts/).

Authorship

Authorship credit should be based on the 4 ICMJE criteria: (1) substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, and/or analysis and interpretation of data; (2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; (3) final approval of the version to be published; and (4) agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of it are appropriately investigated and resolved. All authors should meet all 4 criteria. The corresponding author must complete and sign the copyright transfer agreement and conflict of interest disclosure form.

- **Correction of authorship:** After the initial submission of the manuscript, any changes regarding authorship, such as adding or deleting author(s) or changing the order of authors, must be explained in a letter to the editor from the authors involved. The letter must include the following from the corresponding author: (1) an explanation for the change in authorship and (2) a written confirmation (email or letter) from all authors that they agree with the change in authorship. This letter must be signed by all authors of the paper including the author(s) being added or removed. ACP does not alter authorship after publication unless a mistake has been made by the editorial staff. Any changes will be done in accordance with COPE flowcharts, and a correction may be published as a result.
- **Contributors:** Any researcher who have made substantial contributions to the study in terms of idea development, manuscript writing, conducting research, data analysis, and financial support, but do not meet all 4 ICMJE criteria for authorship, should have their contributions acknowledged in the Acknowledgments section of the article. ACP encourages authors to properly acknowledge the contributions of patients and the public to their research when appropriate.
- **Role of corresponding author:** The corresponding author takes primary responsibility for communication with the journal during the manuscript submission, peer review, and publication process, and typically ensures that all the journal's administrative requirements, such as providing details of authorship, ethics committee approval, clinical trial registration documentation, and gathering conflict of interest statement forms, are properly completed. The corresponding author should be available throughout the submission and peer review process to respond to editorial queries in a timely manner, and after publication, should be available to respond to critiques of the work and cooperate with any requests from the journal for data or additional information or questions about the article.
- **Recommendations for working with people with personal connections:** Authors who intend to include minors (under the age of 19 years) or their family members (such as spouse, children, or relatives) in their research, including publishing or presenting papers together, should clearly indicate this in the cover letter. For further information, please refer to the Guidelines for Preventing Illegitimate Authorship by the National Research Foundation of Korea (https://www.cre.re.kr/).
- **Use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technologies:** ACP adheres to ICMJE guidelines regarding the use of AI in manuscript prepartion. AI-assisted technologies, including chatbots, cannot be listed as authors. However, genrerative AI tools may be used to improve readability and language accuracy but not for creating or altering images in submitted manuscripts, except for adjustments like brightness, contrast, or color balance, which must not obscure original information. If AI is integral to the research, details should be included in the Methods section. Authors must disclose any use of AI tools in manuscript preparation, specifying the tools used, their versions, and their role. It must be clearly reported in a dedicated section of the Methods, or in the Acknowledgements section for article types lacking a Methods section. Plagiarism of text or images by AI is strictly prohibited, and AI-generated material cannot be cited as a primary source.

Originality and duplicate publication

All submitted manuscripts must be original and should not be under consideration for publication by other scientific journals at the same time. Duplication of any part of an accepted manuscript in another scientific journal without the approval of the Editorial Board is strictly prohibited. If any instances of duplicate publication are discovered, the authors will be publicly acknowledged in the journal, their affiliated institutions will be notified, and appropriate penalties will be imposed on the authors.

Secondary publication

Manuscripts may be republished if they satisfy the conditions for secondary publication outlined by the ICMJE Recommendations (https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/).

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest exists when an author (or the author's institution), reviewer, or editor has financial or personal relationships that inappropriately influence (bias) their actions (such relationships are also known as dual commitments, competing interests, or competing loyalties). These relationships vary from being negligible to having great potential for influencing judgment. Not all relationships represent true conflicts of interest. Nevertheless, the potential for a conflict of interest can exist regardless of whether an individual believes that the relationship affects their scientific judgment. Financial relationships (such as employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honorarium, and paid expert testimony) are the most easily identifiable conflicts of interest and the most likely to undermine the credibility of the journal, the authors, and science itself. However, conflicts can also occur from personal relationships, academic competition, or intellectual passion (https://www.icmje.org/disclosure-of-interest/). Conflicts of interest may also arise during the research process; however, the important point is the disclosure itself. To ensure the credibility of the journal and the authors, it is essential that all conflicts of interest are disclosed. If there are any conflicts of interest, authors should inform the editor and disclose them in the manuscript. In particular, all sources of funding applicable to the study should be explicitly stated. Disclosing conflicts of interest allows editors, reviewers, and readers to approach the manuscript with an understanding of the situation under which the research work was performed.

Statement of human and animal rights

Clinical research should be conducted in accordance with the World Medical Association (WMA) Declaration of Helsinki: Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (https://www.wma.net/what-we-do/medical-ethics/declaration-of-helsinki/). Clinical studies that do not meet the Declaration of Helsinki will not be considered for publication. All clinical studies involving human participants should include a certificate, agreement, or approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). For clinical studies with animal subjects, there should be a certificate, agreement, or approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). ACP will not consider any studies involving humans or animals without appropriate approval. If necessary, the editor or reviewers may request copies of these documents to resolve questions about IRB/IACUC approval and study conduct. For human subjects, identifiable information such as names, initials, hospital numbers, dates of birth, or other protected healthcare information should not be disclosed. For animal subjects, research should adhere to the guidelines outlined in the National or Institutional Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and must be performed with ethical consideration for all experimental animals.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent should be obtained from patients who participated in the clinical investigations, unless waived by the IRB. Copies of written informed consents should be kept for studies involving human subjects. Images of human subjects should only be used if the information is essential for scientific purposes and explicit permission has been obtained as part of the consent. Even with consent, identifying details should be omitted if they are not necessary. Authors must ensure that any alterations made to maintain the anonymity of individuals in photographs do not compromise the scientific accuracy of the image. If consent has not been obtained, it is generally not sufficient to anonymize a photograph simply by using eye bars or blurring the face of the individual concerned.

Registration of clinical trial research

Any research involving clinical trials should be registered with the primary national clinical trial registry site, such as the Korea Clinical Research Information Service (CRIS; https://cris.nih.go.kr/), a primary national registry site accredited by the World Health Organization (WHO; https://www.who.int/clinical-trials-registry-platform/network/), or ClinicalTrials.gov (https://clinicaltrials.gov/), a service of the US National Institutes of Health.

Description of participants

Ensure correct use of the terms "sex" (when reporting biological factors) and "gender" (when reporting identity, psychosocial, or cultural factors). Unless inappropriate, the sex and/or gender of study participants, animals, or cells should be reported, and the methods used to determine them should be described. If the study was conduced exclusively in one population, such as one sex, the authors should provide justification for the exclusion of the other population, unless it is obvious (e.g., in the case of prostate cancer). The method used to determine race or ethnicity and its relevance should also be defined by the authors.

Management of research and publication misconduct

In case the journal encounters suspected cases of research and publication misconduct, such as redundant (duplicate) publica-

tion, plagiarism, fraudulent or fabricated data, changes in authorship, an undisclosed conflict of interest, ethical problems with a submitted manuscript, a reviewer who has appropriated an author's idea or data, complaints against editors, and so on, the resolution process will follow the flowchart provided by COPE (https://publicationethics.org/guidance/Flowcharts/). The discussion and decision on the suspected cases are carried out by the Editorial Board in accordance with the Regulations of the Research Ethics Council.

Editorial responsibilities

The Editorial Board is committed to maintaining high standards of publication ethics and will continuously work towards this goal by providing guidelines for retracting articles; preserving the integrity of academic record; prioritizing intellectual and ethical standards over commercial interests; publishing corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when necessary; and preventing plagiarism and fraudulent data. The responsibilities of editors include the authority to accept or reject articles; ensuring that there is no conflict of interest with regards to the articles they accept or reject; promoting the publication of corrections or retractions when errors are discovered; and preserving the anonymity of reviewers.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Data sharing policy

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Archiving policy

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MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION AND PEER REVIEW PROCESS

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