Research and Publication Ethics

Journal of Liver Cancer (JLC) adheres to the ethical guidelines for research and publication described in Guidelines on Good Publication (http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines) and the ICMJE Guidelines (http://www.icmje.org).

1. Authorship

Authors are responsible for the whole content of each article. Co-authorship should be based on the following 4 criteria:

(1) Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
(2) Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
(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 the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

For any persons who do not meet above four criteria, they may be placed as contributors in the Acknowledgments section. Description of co-first authors or co-corresponding authors is also accepted if corresponding author believes that their roles are equally contributed.

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 forms and statements, are properly completed, although these duties may be delegated to one or more coauthors. The corresponding author should be available throughout the submission and peer review process to respond to editorial queries in a timely way, and should be available after publication to respond to critiques of the work and cooperate with any requests from the journal for data or additional information should questions about the paper arise after publication.

After the initial submission of a manuscript, any changes in authorship (adding author(s), deleting author(s), or re-arranging the order of authors) must be explained by a letter to the Editor-in-Chief from the authors concerned. This letter must be signed by all authors of the paper. Copyright transfer and conflict of interest disclosure forms must also be completed by every author. JLC does not correct authorship after publication unless a mistake has been made by the editorial staff.

2. Originality, plagiarism and duplicate publication

Submitted manuscripts must not have been previously published or be under consideration for publication elsewhere. No part of the accepted manuscript should be duplicated in any other scientific journal without the permission of the Editorial Board. Submitted manuscripts are screened for possible plagiarism or duplicate publication by Similarity Check upon arrival. If plagiarism or duplicate publication is detected, the manuscripts may be rejected. There will be penalties for the authors, and their institutions will be informed.

The Council of Science Editors defines redundant publication as "reporting (publishing or attempting to publish) substantially the same work more than once, without attribution of the original source(s)" (CBE Views 1996;19:76–77). Characteristics indicating possible redundant (duplicate) publication are as follows: (1) if more than one author is the same author in both studies, (2) the research topic or the subject of the study is the same or similar, (3) the methodology is similar or nearly identical, (4) when the results or interpretations are almost the same.

Regulations on duplicate publications follow the guidelines described in the International Standards for Editors and Authors of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (https://publicationethics.org/resources/resources-and-further-reading/international-standards-editors-and-authors). If an editor raises questions about duplicate publishing, the author will be asked to submit a written confirmation. In addition, the editor will ask for opinions of the Editorial Board, reviewers and/or the Ethics Committee of Korean Liver Cancer Association (KLCA) to make a judgment on duplicate publication. In the case of duplicate publications, the author will be notified and will be subject to the following sanctions: (1) the author will be prohibited from submitting to this journal for the next 5 years; (2) the duplicate publication will be notified to the other journal(s) where the similar manuscript is submitted or

published; (3) the duplicate publication will be notified to the head of the author's department; (4) the duplicate publication will be notified to the institution of the author. When submitting a manuscript, the author must submit the corresponding manuscripts in such a way as to allow the editor to determine the likelihood of duplicate publication if there is a possibility of duplication with the manuscript which is already published (or under reviewed) in other journals.
Publication of abstracts or posters does not constitute duplicate publication, but must be indicated on the cover sheet when submitting.
A letter of permission is required for reproduction of any and all material that has been published previously. It is the responsibility of the author to request permission from the publisher for any material that is being reproduced. This requirement applies to text, figures, and tables.

3. Secondary publication

It is possible to republish manuscripts if the manuscripts satisfy the conditions of secondary publication of the ICMJE Recommendations (https://www.icmje.org/recommendations/).

4. Conflict of interest statement

The corresponding author must inform the Editor of any potential conflicts of interest that could influence the authors' interpretation of the data. Examples of potential conflicts of interest are financial support from or connections to companies, political pressure from interest groups, and academically related issues. In particular, all sources of funding applicable to the study should be explicitly stated.

5. Statement of human and animal rights

All studies on human subjects follow the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki (https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/), and the authors should provide an affirmation that the studies have been approved by the appropriate institutional review board (IRB) and/or national research ethics committee with relevant reference numbers and dates. The following statement should be included in the text at the end of the Methods section: "All procedures performed in the current study were approved by IRB and/or national research ethics committee (reference number and date) in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments." Clinical studies that do not meet the Helsinki Declaration will not be considered for publication. The name or initials of the patient should not be displayed and the patient's identity should not be known when submitting photographs related to the patient. If there is a possibility that the patient's identity may be exposed, it should be stated that the patient has given written consent.
The correct use of the terms sex (when reporting biological factors) and gender (identity, psychosocial or cultural factors) should be ensured:

- Unless inappropriate, report the sex and/or gender of study participants
- Describe the methods used to determine sex and gender
- Include the subject of both sexes (male and female), and analyze data by sex
- If the study was done involving an exclusive population, for example in only one sex, authors should justify why, except in obvious cases (e.g., prostate cancer).

All studies involving animals must be conducted according to internationally-accepted standards. Authors must obtain prior approval from their Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) or equivalent ethics committee(s). The name of the IACUC or equivalent ethics committee, as well as relevant permit numbers, in addition to any other pertinent experimental details, must be provided at submission. Copies of the protocol approved by institutional AEC or equivalents must be available for review by the editor if necessary. Additionally, in the Methods section of the manuscript text, authors must include all relevant information on animals or cells used for the experiments, such as sex of mice (or other in vivo models) or cells, and characteristics (source, certification, genetic backgrounds, etc.) of animals or cells. Describe the methods used to determine sex. We recommend that all data for both sexes (male and female) in mice (or other in vivo models) or cells in the experiments are included, and analyzed by sex. If the study was done involving an exclusive population, for example in only one sex, authors should justify why, except in obvious cases (e.g., prostate cancer).
All studies dealing with clinical trials should be registered on the primary national clinical trial registration site, such as Korea Clinical Research Information Service (CRiS, http://cris.nih.go.kr), other primary national registry sites accredited by World Health Organization or ClinicalTrials.gov (http://clinicaltrials.gov/), a service of the United States National Institutes of Health.

6. Statement of informed consent and institutional review board approval

Authors should have obtained written informed consent from all participants prior to inclusion in the study, and copies of written informed consent documents should be kept for studies on human subjects, which includes identifiable information or sensitive information. For clinical studies of human subjects, a certificate, agreement, or approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the author's institution is required. For studies involving the participation of vulnerable populations, such as underage children or persons with cognitive or intellectual disabilities, written consent forms may be obtained from the legal guardian or person with legal authority. However, particular care should be taken with obtaining fully informed consent without coercion in these instances. In the case of a child, if parents or guardians disagree on the use of images of that child, then consent should be deemed not to have been given, and those images should not be used. If necessary, the editor or reviewers may request copies of these documents to resolve questions about IRB approval and study conduct.

The following statement should be included at the end of the Methods section after the IRB approval statement: "Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study." Identifying details of the participants (e.g. names, dates of birth, and unit numbers) should not be published in written descriptions, photographs, and genetic profiles. In cases where identifying details are essential for scientific purposes, the participant should have given written informed consent for the identifying information to be published and it should be stated separately as following: "Additional informed consent was obtained from all individual participants for whom identifying information is included in this article."

Waiver of the informed consent can only be granted by the appropriate IRB and/or national research ethics committee in compliance with the current laws of the country in which the study was performed, and this should be separately stated as following: "Formal written informed consent was not required with a waiver by the appropriate IRB and/or national research ethics committee."

It should be noted that manuscripts that do not contain statements on IRB approval and patient informed consent can be returned to the authors before the review process.

For autopsy case reports, an informed consent is not required on the premise that consent was previously obtained for the autopsy to be conducted and that the strict anonymity of the patient has been respected.

7. Process for managing research and publication misconduct

When JLC faces suspected cases of research and publication misconduct such as a redundant (duplicate) publication, plagiarism, fabricated data, changes in authorship, undisclosed conflicts of interest, an ethical problem discovered with the submitted manuscript, a reviewer who has appropriated an author's idea or data, complaints against editors, and other issues, the resolving process will follow the flowchart provided by the Committee on Publication Ethics (https://publicationethics.org/guidance). The Ethics Committee of KLCA (https://www.e-jlc.org/policy/ethics_committee.php) will discuss the suspected cases and reach a decision. The Editorial Board will not hesitate to publish errata, corrigenda, clarifications, retractions, and apologies when necessary.

8. Policy for handling cases requiring corrections, retractions, withdrawals, and expressions of concern

a) Correction

If correction is necessary, it will follow the ICMJE Recommendation for Corrections, Retractions, Republications and Version Control available from: http://www.icmje.org/ recommendations/ browse/publishing-and-editorial-issues/ corrections-and-version-control.html as follows:

Honest errors are a part of science and publishing and require publication of a correction when they are detected. Corrections are needed for errors of fact. Minimum standards are as follows: 1) A correction notice will be published as soon as possible detailing changes from and citing the original publication on both an electronic and numbered print page; 2) It will post a new article version with details of the changes from the original version and the date(s) on which the changes were made through CrossMark; 3) It will archive all prior versions of the article, and the archive is directly accessible to readers; 4) Previous electronic versions will contain a note that there are more recent versions of the article via CrossMark.

b) Retraction

JLC is responsible for the integrity of the published articles; therefore, occasions may arise when it is necessary to retract articles. Articles may be retracted on following circumstances:

(1) When there is clear evidence of scientific misconduct (e.g. data fabrication) or honest error (e.g. experimental error) so that the findings and conclusions are judged to be unreliable.

(2) When findings have previously been published elsewhere without proper cross-referencing, permission or justification (i.e. cases of redundant publication).
(3) When there are ethical issues or inappropriate authorship (See COPE discussion document: https://publicationethics. org/files/Authorship_DiscussionDocument.pdf).

JLC follows the retraction process in accordance with COPE guidelines (https://publicationethics.org/retraction-guidelines):

(1) When editors have convincing evidence that a retraction is required, editors may retract publications even if the authors do not agree.
(2) The editors discuss the issue in question and evaluate the authors' answers.
(3) The final decision is then communicated to the author and, if necessary, any other relevant bodies, such as the author's institution on occasion.
(4) The retraction statement is posted on the JLC website and published in the next available issue of the journal with a link to the article being retracted. A 'retracted' watermark will appear on the article, and the article as first published is retained online. The retracted article is identified in all online sources, on the original article, and all bibliographic databases.
(5) The retraction is listed in the contents page, and appears on a numbered page. The text of the retraction explains the reason for being retracted, and is linked to the original article so that anyone who comes across the original article can see the retraction.

c) Withdrawal

When an accepted article contains errors or infringes an ethical code, it may be withdrawn with a withdrawal statement. Bibliographic information about the deleted article is retained for the scientific record, and an explanation is given for the withdrawal.

d) Expression of concern

Editors may consider issuing an Expression of Concern if they feel that readers should be informed of any potentially misleading information contained in an article. However, editors should be aware that an Expression of Concern carries the same risks to a researcher's reputation as a retraction, and it should be issued only if there are strong indicators to suggest that the concerns are valid. See the COPE case at https://publicationethics.org/guidance/case/data-manipulation-and-institutes-internal-review.

9. Editorial responsibilities

The Editorial Board will continuously work to monitor and safeguard publication ethics: guidelines for retracting articles; maintenance of the integrity of the academic record; preclusion of business needs from compromising intellectual and ethical standards; publishing corrections, clarifications, retractions, and apologies when needed; and excluding plagiarism and fraudulent data. The editors maintain the following responsibilities: responsibility and authority to reject and accept articles; avoiding any conflict of interest with respect to articles they reject or accept; promoting publication of corrections or retractions when errors are found; and preservation of the anonymity of reviewers.

For any policies on research and publication ethics that are not covered in this section, the Good Publication Practice Guidelines for Medical Journals (https://www.kamje.or.kr/board/view?b_name=bo_publication&bo_id=7&per_page=, in Korean) or the Guidelines on Good Publication (https://publicationethics.org/guidance/Guidelines) can be applied.