

EDITORIAL POLICY

Aligned with ICMJE Recommendations, COPE Guidelines, HEC & PMDC Standards

Effective: 2025 | Version 1.0

1. AIMS & SCOPE

The Journal of Bashir Institute of Health Sciences (JBIHS) is a peer-reviewed, open-access, multidisciplinary journal publishing original research, reviews, and case reports across the medical and health sciences. The journal covers the following disciplines:

- Medicine and Surgery
- Dentistry and Oral Health Sciences
- Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Nursing and Midwifery
- Rehabilitation and Physiotherapy
- Allied Health Sciences

JBIHS aims to promote evidence-based healthcare, advance scientific inquiry, and foster a culture of research and scholarly communication among students, clinicians, and academicians in Pakistan and internationally.

2. PUBLICATION FREQUENCY & FORMAT

Publication Schedule

JBIHS is published biannually — two issues per year.

Issue 1: June | Issue 2: December

Format: Open-access online (with print version where applicable)

Special issues or supplements may be published at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief in consultation with the Editorial Board, subject to sufficient manuscript volume and thematic relevance.

3. EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

All editorial decisions at JBIHS are made solely on academic merit, originality, and compliance with journal policies — independent of any commercial, institutional, political, or personal influence. The Editor-in-Chief holds full authority over editorial content, peer review assignments, and publication decisions.

COPE Principle: *The Editor-in-Chief must not allow commercial partners, institutional funders, or advertisers to influence editorial decisions. JBIHS upholds this principle in full compliance with COPE's Core Practices on Editorial Independence.*

No manuscript submitted by members of the Editorial Board will be handled by the submitting editor. Such submissions are assigned to an independent editor or senior reviewer to ensure complete impartiality.

4. MANUSCRIPT CATEGORIES & REPORTING GUIDELINES

JBIHS accepts the following manuscript types. Authors must adhere to the relevant international reporting guideline and submit the completed checklist with their manuscript:

Manuscript Type	Reporting Guideline	Checklist Required
Original Research Articles	<i>ICMJE Recommendations</i>	Yes
Randomised Controlled Trials	<i>CONSORT</i>	Yes
Observational Studies	<i>STROBE</i>	Yes
Systematic Reviews & Meta-Analyses	<i>PRISMA</i>	Yes
Case Reports / Case Series	<i>CARE</i>	Yes
Diagnostic / Accuracy Studies	<i>STARD</i>	Yes
Review Articles	<i>ICMJE Recommendations</i>	Yes
Animal Research	<i>ARRIVE</i>	Yes
Short Communications	<i>ICMJE Recommendations</i>	Yes
Letters to the Editor	<i>ICMJE Recommendations</i>	No
Editorials	<i>Editorial Board Invitation</i>	No

Reporting guideline checklists and templates are available at www.equator-network.org. Submissions that do not include the required checklist may be returned without peer review.

5. PEER REVIEW

All submitted manuscripts (except editorials and invited commentaries) undergo a double-blind peer review process, in which the identities of authors and reviewers are concealed from each other throughout the review. This process is conducted in accordance with PMDC recognition requirements and COPE guidelines for ethical peer review.

Manuscripts are assessed on scientific merit, originality, clarity, ethical compliance, and relevance to the journal's scope. The editorial decision following peer review may be:

- Accept without revision
- Minor revision required
- Major revision required
- Reject (with or without encouragement to resubmit)

For a detailed description of the peer review process, reviewer obligations, and editorial decision timelines, refer to the separate JBIHS Peer Review Policy.

6. ETHICAL STANDARDS

6.1 Governing Frameworks

JBIHS requires all submitted manuscripts to comply with the following ethical standards and guidelines:

- ICMJE Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals
- COPE Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors
- Declaration of Helsinki (1975, revised 2013) for all research involving human subjects

- PMDC regulations for recognized health sciences journals in Pakistan
- HEC Anti-Plagiarism Policy Version 2.0 (2023)

6.2 Ethical Approval

All research involving human participants, patient data, or animal subjects must include a statement of ethical approval from a recognized Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethical Review Committee (ERC), including the approval reference number. Manuscripts without this statement will not be sent for peer review. Refer to the JBIHS Ethics Policy for full requirements.

6.3 Informed Consent

Authors must confirm that written informed consent was obtained from all human participants, or from guardians in the case of minors. For case reports, written patient consent for publication must be submitted with the manuscript.

7. AUTHORSHIP POLICY

Authorship must be based on all four of the following ICMJE criteria:

- Substantial contribution to the conception, design, data acquisition, analysis, or interpretation
- Drafting or critically revising the manuscript for important intellectual content
- Approval of the final version to be published
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work

PMDC & HEC Warning: *Gift authorship (listing non-contributors) and ghost authorship (omitting genuine contributors) are considered research misconduct under PMDC professional code and HEC Anti-Plagiarism Policy 2023. Confirmed violations may result in rejection, retraction, and institutional notification.*

A completed Authorship Declaration Form must be submitted alongside every manuscript. Changes to the author list after submission require written justification from all authors and approval by the Editor-in-Chief.

8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors, reviewers, and editors must disclose any financial or non-financial conflict of interest that could influence their assessment or interpretation of the submitted manuscript. This includes funding from commercial entities, employment, consultancy, patents, or personal relationships related to the research. Where no conflict exists, a declaration to that effect must be included.

Editors and reviewers must recuse themselves from any manuscript where a conflict of interest exists. Undisclosed conflicts of interest identified after publication will be subject to investigation and may result in a correction notice or retraction.

9. PLAGIARISM & ORIGINALITY

All manuscripts are screened through Turnitin or iThenticate (HEC-approved tools) before entering peer review. JBIHS enforces the following mandatory thresholds per HEC Anti-Plagiarism Policy 2023:

- Overall similarity index: must not exceed 19%
- Similarity from any single source: must not exceed 5%
- Results and conclusions section: must not exceed 9%

Manuscripts exceeding these thresholds will be returned or rejected. Authors found to have submitted plagiarised work will be blacklisted from JBIHS and the matter may be referred to HEC, PMDC, and the author's institution. For full details, refer to the JBIHS Plagiarism & Publication Policy.

10. OPEN ACCESS & LICENSING

JBIHS is a fully open-access journal. All articles are published under the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Authors retain copyright of their work. By submitting to JBIHS, authors grant the journal a non-exclusive licence to publish, distribute, index, and archive the article in perpetuity. There are no article processing charges (APCs) for submission or publication unless otherwise stated.

11. DATA SHARING & TRANSPARENCY

JBIHS encourages authors to make their research datasets, protocols, analysis codes, and supplementary materials openly available in a recognised repository (e.g., Figshare, Zenodo, OSF) and to include a data availability statement in the manuscript. Where data sharing is not possible (e.g., due to patient confidentiality), authors must clearly state this.

Authors may be requested by the editorial office to provide original raw data at any stage of the review or post-publication process to verify findings.

12. CORRECTIONS, RETRACTIONS & ERRATA

JBIHS follows COPE Retraction Guidelines for all post-publication changes. The journal distinguishes between:

- **Corrigendum:** A correction of an error introduced by the author(s).
- **Erratum:** A correction of an error introduced by the journal or publisher.
- **Retraction:** Withdrawal of a published article due to confirmed misconduct, unreliable findings, or ethical violations.
- **Expression of Concern:** A public notice issued when an investigation is ongoing and a definitive outcome has not yet been reached.

Retracted articles remain visible online with a clear retraction watermark. Post-publication corrections require written consent of the corresponding author. Changes to the author list after publication require consent from all authors.

13. ADVERTISING & SPONSORSHIP

Any advertising or sponsorship associated with JBIHS will be clearly identified and kept completely separate from editorial content. Advertising and sponsorship arrangements will have no influence on editorial decisions. The Editor-in-Chief retains the right to reject any advertisement deemed inappropriate or inconsistent with the journal's professional and ethical standards.

14. POLICY REVIEW

This Editorial Policy will be reviewed at minimum every two years, or sooner in response to updates in ICMJE recommendations, COPE guidelines, PMDC regulations, or HEC requirements. The most current version will

JOURNAL OF BASHIR INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SCIENCES (JBIHS)

Editorial Policy

be published on the JBIHS website. Authors, reviewers, and editors are advised to consult the current version at the time of engagement with the journal.

For queries, contact the Editorial Office — Bashir Institute of Health Sciences, Pakistan | editor.in.chief@bashir.edu.pk