

Scientific integrity within *Fertility and Sterility* and formation of the Research Integrity Committee

Fertility and Sterility recognizes that research integrity is the bedrock of scientific research. Integrity in scientific research refers to adherence to ethical principles, accuracy, and commitment to truthfulness in all aspects of the research process. Integrity forms the foundation on which credibility, validity, and trustworthiness are built. Upholding these principles is of paramount importance. Integrity is crucial in scientific research to maintain the following:

Credibility and Trust

Scientific research is conducted with the goal of advancing knowledge. For this knowledge to be accepted and trusted by the scientific community and society at large, it is imperative that researchers conduct their work with the highest level of integrity. Falsification, fabrication, or manipulation of data undermines the credibility of the research and erodes trust.

Replicability

The scientific method relies on the ability of other researchers to replicate and verify experimental findings. Integrity ensures that researchers report their methods, results, and conclusions accurately and honestly, allowing others to reproduce the study's outcomes.

Advancement of Knowledge

Scientific progress is based on the cumulative nature of research findings. Each new study builds on the work of others, contributing to an evolving body of knowledge. If one study's integrity is compromised, it can lead to incorrect conclusions being incorporated into subsequent research or summarized as a part of meta-analyses. Breaches of integrity will potentially lead to ineffective treatment or harm.

Public Confidence

Scientific research has profound implications for public policy, health, technology, and various aspects of society. The public relies on accurate and honest research to make informed decisions and trust in the guidance provided by experts. Breaches of integrity can result in a loss of public confidence in scientific institutions.

Ethical Considerations

Medical research involves experimentation on healthy volunteers or patients. Maintaining integrity is essential to uphold the ethical treatment of subjects, ensuring their rights and well-being are respected. Falsifying data or misrepresenting methods can lead to harm or unjustified risks for these subjects.

Educational Value

Integrity is not only essential for established researchers but also for training the next generation of scientists. Emphasizing the importance of ethical conduct and scientific integrity ensures that these principles are upheld in the future.

Fertility and Sterility and its family of journals take pride in being at the forefront of ensuring high ethical standards in scientific publishing. To that end, *Fertility and Sterility* requires all submitted articles to disclose all relationships/activities/interests related to the content of the manuscript, and investigators are required to attest the following:

- The subjects in this trial have not been involved concomitantly in other randomized trials.
- Data involving any of the subjects in the study has not been published previously.
- Data will be made available to the editors of the journal for review or query on request.

In addition, the *Fertility and Sterility* family of journals reviews allegations of misconduct in papers already published in our journals. To ensure ethical integrity, objectivity, due process, requisite expertise, impartiality, and discretion and confidentiality, a standing committee has been formed in conjunction with the American Society for Reproductive Medicine. This Research Integrity Committee, in conjunction with the Editor-in-Chief, will review allegations of misconduct. The committee follows COPE guidelines. *Fertility and Sterility* has and will continue to retract previously published articles, issue expressions of concern, or publish errata to correct errors to maintain the highest level of scientific integrity.

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