



Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences (Lahore)

Editorial and Publication Policy Document

Full title	Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences (Lahore)
Abbreviation	PJHS
ISSN	2790-9352 (Online); 2790-9344 (Print)
Owner	Lahore Medical Research Center LLP, Lahore, Pakistan
Publisher	CrossLinks International Publishers LLC, USA, publishing on behalf of the owner
Frequency	Monthly
Access model	Fully open access (no subscription or registration needed to read)
Peer review	Double-blind, pre-publication, by at least two external reviewers
Licence	Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0); authors retain copyright
Website / Email	https://thejas.com.pk/index.php/pjhs · editor@thejas.com.pk
Standards followed	COPE Core Practices; ICMJE Recommendations; WAME policy statements; DOAJ / COPE / OASPA / WAME Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing; HEC Journals and Publications Policy
Document status	Revised October 2026. Supersedes all earlier versions of the PJHS policy document, author guidelines, flowcharts and authorship forms.

Contents

1. About the Journal
 2. Publication Ethics Standards
 3. Submission Policies
 4. Authorship and Contributor ship
 5. Research Ethics and Reporting
 6. Conflicts of Interest and Funding
 7. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)
 8. Plagiarism and Similarity Checking
 9. Peer Review and Editorial Process
 10. Handling Allegations of Misconduct
 11. Appeals and Complaints
 12. Post-Publication Changes (Crossmark Policy)
 13. Copyright and Licensing
 14. Archiving, Self-Archiving and Indexing
 15. Fees and Waivers
 16. Advertising and Marketing Policy
 17. Privacy Statement
 18. Instructions for Preparing Manuscripts
- Document Approval
- Annexure A: Letter of Authorship and Declarations
-

1. About the Journal

1.1 Aims and Scope

Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences-Lahore (PJHS) aims to advance scientific knowledge, promote evidence-based research and support the practical application of findings to improve health outcomes. PJHS covers all areas of health sciences, including clinical medicine, biomedical sciences, health systems and policy, nursing and allied health sciences, and public health, including preventive measures and community-level health initiatives.

The journal is intended for medical and health-science graduates, postgraduates, postdoctoral researchers and health professionals. Anyone who meets the authorship criteria in Section 4 may submit; there is no requirement for a particular degree or institutional appointment.

1.2 Article Types

PJHS publishes original research articles, systematic reviews, narrative reviews, case reports, short communications, special communications, editorials and letters to the editor. Word limits and structure for each type are given in Section 18.

1.3 Open Access Statement

PJHS is a fully open access journal. All articles are freely available to everyone immediately on publication, without subscription, registration or any other barrier. In line with the Budapest Open Access Initiative, users may read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, link to the full text, use for text and data mining and use for any other lawful purpose, without asking prior permission from the publisher or the authors, provided the original work is properly cited under the CC BY 4.0 licence (Section 13). Printed copies are available on subscription (Section 15); this does not restrict online access.

1.4 Ownership and Management

PJHS is owned by Lahore Medical Research Center LLP (LMRC), Lahore, Pakistan, and published on its behalf by CrossLinks International Publishers LLC, USA, which provides publishing services. Editorial decisions are made independently by the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board; neither the owner nor the publisher influences decisions on individual manuscripts. The names and affiliations of the Editor-in-Chief, Editorial Board, Advisory Board and committee members are published on the journal website.

2. Publication Ethics Standards

PJHS follows, and expects authors, reviewers and editors to follow:

- the **Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)** Core Practices, flowcharts and guidance, including the COPE Retraction Guidelines;
- the **International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)** *Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals* (www.icmje.org);
- the **World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)** policy statements, including those on authorship, conflicts of interest and chatbots/generative AI;

- the **Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing** (COPE, DOAJ, OASPA and WAME);
- the **Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan Journals and Publications Policy 2024** (as amended w.e.f. 5 November 2025, Version 2.0), and the relevant requirements of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC).

Where these documents differ, PJHS applies the stricter requirement. Suspected misconduct is handled using the COPE flowcharts (Section 10).

3. Submission Policies

3.1 Originality and Prior Publication

Manuscripts submitted to PJHS must be original. The work or substantial parts of it, must not have been published previously and must not be under consideration by another journal while it is under review at PJHS. Any overlap with the authors' other published or submitted work must be cited in the manuscript and explained in the cover letter.

The following do **not** count as prior publication:

- **Preprints.** Manuscripts posted on a recognized preprint server (e.g., medRxiv, bioRxiv, Research Square, SSRN) may be submitted. Authors must give the preprint DOI on submission and, after publication, update the preprint to link to the PJHS article.
- **Conference abstracts and posters** provided the full paper has not been published in conference proceedings or elsewhere.
- **Theses and dissertations** deposited in an institutional repository.
- **Press reports of a scientific meeting**, provided they do not reproduce tables, figures or data beyond the abstract.

Submitting the same work to more than one journal at the same time, or publishing it twice, is duplicate (redundant) publication. It will be handled under Section 10 and may be reported to the authors' institutions, PMDC and HEC.

3.2 Reuse of Previously Published Material

Authors who reproduce a table, figure or substantial text from a previous publication must cite the original source and obtain written permission from the **copyright holder** (often the publisher; for open access works, usually the authors). Material published under a Creative Commons license may be reused on the terms of that license, with attribution. Manuscripts containing material that infringes copyright will not be published until the material is removed or permission is supplied.

3.3 How to Submit

All manuscripts must be submitted through the journal's online submission system (Open Journal Systems) at <https://thejas.com.pk/index.php/pjhs> or email at editor@thejas.com.pk. The corresponding author creates an account (or logs in) and completes the five-step submission process. Hard copies are not required; all documents are uploaded electronically.

3.4 Documents Required at Submission

Document	Requirements
Title page (separate file)	Title; full names, highest qualifications, department, institution, city and country of every author; ORCID iDs (strongly recommended); corresponding author's email and phone number; running title; word count; number of tables and figures.
Blinded manuscript	Main text with no author names, affiliations, institution names, acknowledgements, funding details or other identifying information (see Section 9.1).
Letter of Authorship and Declarations	Annexure A, signed by all authors. Confirms ICMJE authorship criteria, contributions (CRediT roles), originality, licence to publish, conflicts of interest, funding, ethics, consent and use of AI.
ICMJE Disclosure Form	One form per author (www.icmje.org/disclosure-of-interest).
Ethics approval	Letter of approval (or formal exemption) from the institutional ethics/review committee, for all research involving human participants, identifiable human data or material, or animals (Section 5).
Trial registration	Registration number and registry name for clinical trials (Section 5.4).
Reporting checklist	The completed checklist for the relevant reporting guidelines (e.g., CONSORT, STROBE, PRISMA, CARE) (Section 5.5).
Patient consent	Signed consent for publication where any individual could be identified, including all case reports (Section 5.2).
Other	Questionnaires/data-collection forms, permissions for reused material, and proof of payment of the processing fee (Section 15).

Manuscripts that are incomplete or do not follow these instructions are returned to the corresponding author before peer review begins.

4. Authorship and Contributor ship

4.1 Authorship Criteria

PJHS follows the ICMJE definition of authorship. **Every** person listed as an author must meet **all four** of the following 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 reviewing 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, ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

All authors, not only the corresponding author, are jointly responsible for ensuring that everyone listed meets these criteria and that everyone who meets them is listed. Acquisition of funding, general supervision of a research group, general administrative support, and writing assistance, technical editing, language editing or proofreading do not on their own justify authorship.

4.2 Contributors and Acknowledgements

Each author's contribution must be described using the CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy) roles in the Letter of Authorship; contributions are published with the article. Contributors who do not meet all four criteria must be listed in the Acknowledgements with their contribution, and authors must have their written permission to be named. Any professional medical writing or editing assistance, and its funding source, must be declared.

4.3 Group Authorship

For large multi-centre groups, the manuscript must name the individuals who take direct responsibility for the work and meet all four criteria; the group name may appear in the byline. Other members of the group are listed in the Acknowledgements or a supplementary file. The corresponding author must identify all individual authors at submission.

4.4 Changes to Authorship

The author list and order should be final at submission. Any change (addition, removal or re-ordering) requested afterwards is handled according to the COPE flowcharts on changes in authorship:

- **Before acceptance:** the corresponding author must send a written request to the Editor-in-Chief explaining the reason, together with a statement of agreement signed by **all** authors, including any author being added or removed. Peer review is paused until the matter is resolved.
- **After acceptance and before publication:** changes are made only in exceptional, well-justified cases, with the same documentation, and at the Editor-in-Chief's discretion.
- **After publication:** an error in the author list is corrected by a corrigendum (Section 12.2), with the agreement of all authors.

4.5 Authorship Disputes

PJHS does not adjudicate authorship disputes. Consistent with COPE guidance, the editors will not change the author list without the agreement of all authors. If the authors cannot agree, the journal will ask the authors' institution(s) to investigate, and will pause processing (or, for published articles, consider an expression of concern) until the dispute is resolved.

5. Research Ethics and Reporting

5.1 Research Involving Human Participants

All research involving human participants, identifiable human data or human tissue or samples — whether interventional or observational, prospective or retrospective — must have been approved in advance by an appropriate institutional ethics or research review committee and must comply with

the Declaration of Helsinki. Where a committee formally exempts a study from review, the exemption letter must be provided. The Methods section must name the committee, give the approval reference number and date, and state how informed consent was obtained (or why the committee waived consent).

For multi-center studies, the editors may ask for approval or permission letters from each participating site.

5.2 Informed Consent and Patient Privacy

Patients have a right to privacy. Identifying information — names, initials, hospital numbers, dates, or photographs — must not be published unless it is essential for scientific purposes **and** the patient (or parent/legal guardian) has given written informed consent for publication. The patient must be shown the manuscript to be published. Masking the eye region in photographs does **not** protect anonymity and is not an acceptable substitute for consent. Written consent for publication is required for all case reports and case series in which a patient could be identified. Non-essential identifying details must be removed, and data must not be altered to achieve anonymity.

5.3 Clinical Trial Registration

In line with ICMJE, clinical trials must be registered in a public trials registry (a WHO ICTRP primary registry or ClinicalTrials.gov) **at or before the time of first patient enrolment**. The registry name and registration number must be given at the end of the abstract. Trials that were not registered prospectively will not normally be considered.

5.4 Reporting Guidelines

Authors should follow the reporting guideline appropriate to their study design (see www.equator-network.org) and upload the completed checklist, for example: CONSORT (randomised trials), STROBE (observational studies), PRISMA (systematic reviews), STARD (diagnostic accuracy), CARE (case reports), SRQR or COREQ (qualitative research) and ARRIVE (animal studies).

5.5 Data Sharing

All research articles must include a Data Availability Statement saying whether and how the underlying data can be accessed (e.g., public repository with identifier, available from the corresponding author on reasonable request, or not available with the reason). Clinical trials must include a data-sharing statement as required by ICMJE. The editors may ask to see the raw data during review.

5.6 Drug and Device Names

Use generic (non-proprietary) names for drugs. A brand name may be given in brackets only where necessary. For equipment and devices, give the name, model, manufacturer, city and country.

6. Conflicts of Interest and Funding

6.1 Authors

All authors must disclose any financial and non-financial relationships or activities that could be seen as influencing the work, using the ICMJE Disclosure Form, and the manuscript must contain a “Conflicts of Interest” statement. If there are none, the statement reads: “The authors declare no conflicts of

interest.” A declared interest does not prevent publication; it gives reviewers and readers full transparency. Examples include:

- employment, consultancy, honoraria, grants, salary or other payment from an organization that may gain or lose financially from publication;
- stocks or shares, or patents held or applied for, by the author, their funder or employer;
- personal relationships, academic rivalry, or membership of interest groups related to the content;
- political, religious or ideological interests relevant to work.

Authors from pharmaceutical or other commercial organizations that sponsor research must declare this and explain each author’s relationship to the organization. Industry-sponsored research should follow Good Publication Practice (GPP 2022). All sources of funding, and the role of the funder (if any) in study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation and the decision to publish, must be stated in a “Funding” section. Articles must not contain content that advertises a commercial product.

6.2 Reviewers

Reviewers must decline to review or declare their interests to the editor, if they have a conflict — for example, a recent collaboration, shared institution, personal relationship, rivalry or financial interest related to the manuscript.

6.3 Editors and Editorial Board Members

Own research. In accordance with HEC policy, the Editor-in-Chief, editors and Editorial Board members do not publish their own research articles in PJHS. A research manuscript that lists any of them as an author will not be considered. This does not apply to editorials written or commissioned by the Editor-in-Chief under Section 9.4.

Conflicts of interest. An editor who has a conflict of interest with a manuscript takes no part in its handling; an editor with no conflict oversees the peer review and the decision.

Owner and publisher interests. Editors who hold a role at the owner (Lahore Medical Research Center LLP) or the publisher (CrossLinks International Publishers LLC) take no part in handling manuscripts in which the owner or publisher has an interest. Such manuscripts are handled entirely by an unaffiliated editor.

Editorial staff. Managing editorial staff has no role in decisions on manuscripts.

6.4 Editorial Independence from Fees

Payment status, waiver requests and any commercial considerations play no part in editorial decisions. Editors and reviewers are not told whether an author has paid fees or requested a waiver (Section 15).

7. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

7.1 Authors

- AI tools, including large language models and chatbots, **cannot be listed as authors**, because they cannot meet the authorship criteria or take responsibility for the work.
- Authors who use AI tools for writing, language editing, data analysis, or any other part of the work must disclose this: in the Acknowledgements for writing assistance, and in the Methods

when AI is part of the research. The disclosure must name the tool, its version and how it was used.

- Authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality and integrity of all content, including any produced with AI help. AI-generated text must be checked for errors and for plagiarism.
- AI must not be cited as a primary source, and all references must be checked by the authors to confirm that they exist and support the statements made.

7.2 Figures, Images and Artwork

Generative AI or AI-assisted tools must not be used to create, alter or manipulate images or figures in submitted manuscripts, including enhancing, obscuring, moving, removing or adding elements. Adjustments to brightness, contrast or color balance are acceptable only if they are applied to the whole image and do not obscure or remove any information in the original. Manuscripts may be screened with image-forensics software.

The only exception is where AI is an integral part of the research methods (for example, AI-assisted imaging used to generate or interpret data). In such cases the Methods must describe, reproducibly, how the AI tool was used, the name and version of the model or tool and its manufacturer and confirm compliance with the tool's usage terms. Authors may be asked to provide the original, unaltered images or raw files.

AI must not be used to produce graphical abstracts or other illustrative artwork. Exceptions for cover art require prior approval from the editor and publisher, and evidence that all usage rights have been secured and appropriate attribution is given.

7.3 Reviewers and Editors

Manuscripts under review are confidential. Reviewers and editors must not upload manuscripts, or any part of them, or their review reports, into generative AI tools, including for language improvement, because this may breach authors' confidentiality, proprietary rights and data privacy. Peer review requires human expertise, judgement and accountability; AI must not be used to perform or assist the scientific evaluation of a manuscript.

8. Plagiarism and Similarity Checking

Plagiarism is presenting another person's words, ideas, data, images or other work as one's own without appropriate attribution. It includes verbatim copying, close paraphrasing without citation, and "text recycling" or redundant publication of the authors' own previously published work without disclosure and citation. Splitting one study into several minimal papers ("salami slicing") is also unacceptable.

All submissions are checked with Turnitin (and/or Crossref Similarity Check). In line with HEC requirements, PJHS uses the following **screening thresholds**, calculated after excluding the reference list and properly quoted material:

- overall similarity index **below 19%**; and
- similarity with any **single source below 5%**.

A similarity score is a screening aid, not a verdict. Every report is read by an editor, who judges where the overlap is, what it consists of and whether it is properly attributed. Manuscripts above the

thresholds, or with unattributed overlap in key sections, are returned to the authors for revision before review. Where the editor finds evidence of substantial plagiarism, the manuscript is rejected and the case is handled under Section 10. Authors may upload their own similarity report as a supplementary file, but the journal will run its own check.

Plagiarism discovered after publication is handled according to the COPE flowcharts and may lead to correction or retraction (Section 12). Verbatim copying without attribution is regarded as the most serious form; unattributed paraphrasing is also plagiarism.

9. Peer Review and Editorial Process

9.1 Double-Blind Peer Review

PJHS operates double-blind, pre-publication peer review: authors and reviewers do not know each other's identities. Authors must remove all identifying information from the blinded manuscript and its file properties, including names, institutions, cities where these reveal identity, acknowledgements, funding details and self-citations written in the first person. Author information is entered in the submission metadata and on the separate title page only. Reviewers' identities are kept confidential, and review reports are not published.

9.2 Editorial Workflow

1. **Pre-check** by the editorial office: completeness of documents, formatting, scope, and similarity check (Section 8).
2. **Editorial screening** by the Editor-in-Chief or a handling editor for scope, originality, methodological soundness and ethics. Manuscripts may be desk-rejected at this stage with reasons.
3. **External peer review** by at least **two** independent reviewers with relevant expertise who are not members of the journal's editorial office and have no conflict of interest. If reviewers' recommendations conflict, a third review may be sought.
4. **Editorial decision:** accept, minor revision, major revision, or reject. Revised manuscripts are judged on how well the authors respond to the reviewers' and editors' comments and may be sent back to reviewers.
5. **Technical check** of accepted manuscripts for statistics, ethics documentation and references.
6. **Production:** copy-editing, language editing and typesetting, followed by author proofs (Section 18.12), invoicing of the publication fee, and online publication.

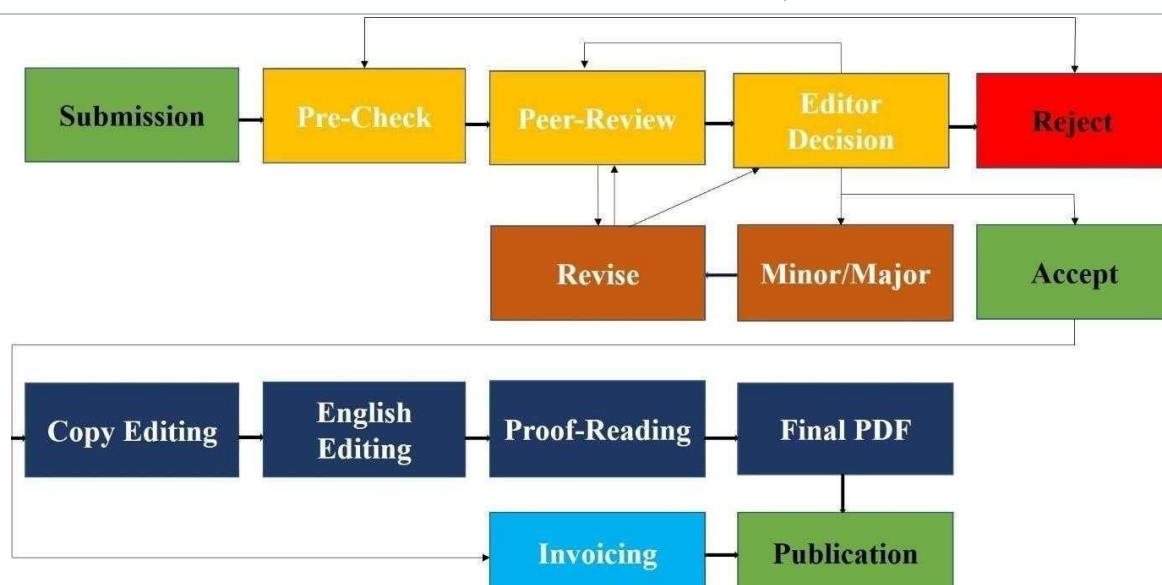


Figure 1. PJHS editorial workflow.

9.3 Decisions

The final decision to accept or reject a manuscript rests with the **Editor-in-Chief**, based on the reviewers' reports and the handling editor's recommendation. Decisions are communicated with the reviewers' comments. Authors may appeal under Section 11.

9.4 Editorials

Editorials are written or commissioned by the Editor-in-Chief. Unsolicited guest editorials are first assessed internally by the Editor-in-Chief or an editor and then reviewed by an external expert in the field. The final decision rests with the Editor-in-Chief.

9.5 Reviewer Responsibilities

Reviewers must keep manuscripts confidential, must not use or share any information from them, must declare conflicts of interest (Section 6.2), must follow the AI policy (Section 7.3), and should return reports within the time agreed. Reviewers who cannot meet these obligations should decline the invitation.

9.6 False Information

Providing false information — such as a fictitious name or email address for an author or a suggested reviewer — will lead to rejection and will be handled under Section 10.

9.7 Timelines and Scheduling

A first decision is usually reached within 60–90 days of submission. Authors of accepted manuscripts are told the volume and issue in which their article is scheduled. Because the HEC Journals and Publications Policy 2024 (as amended w.e.f. 5 November 2025, Version 2.0) limits regular issues to a maximum of 30 articles, an accepted article may be scheduled for a later issue.

10. Handling Allegations of Misconduct

PJHS takes all allegations of research or publication misconduct seriously, including plagiarism, data fabrication or falsification, image manipulation, duplicate publication, undisclosed conflicts of

interest, authorship manipulation, citation manipulation, peer-review manipulation, and submission of false documents. Cases are handled according to the relevant COPE flowcharts.

- Allegations may be made by anyone, including anonymously, to editor@thejas.com.pk. They should be as specific as possible and include any supporting evidence. Anonymous allegations are considered if they contain enough specific evidence to investigate.
- Whistleblowers are protected: the journal will not take action against anyone for raising a concern in good faith, and their identity will be kept confidential where possible.
- Authors are always informed of the concern and given an opportunity to respond before any decision is made.
- Where an investigation needs access to data, records or people outside the journal's control, the journal will ask the authors' institution(s) to investigate.

10.1 Verification of Documents

Authors must submit accurate and complete documentation. The journal may verify the authenticity of any submitted document — including ethics approval letters, consent forms, data-collection permissions, trial registration and authorship declarations — by contacting the issuing institution or authority, checking public databases, or asking the authors for clarification. Authors are expected to cooperate promptly; failure to do so may result in rejection.

10.2 Possible Outcomes

Depending on the seriousness of the case and following COPE guidance, outcomes may include one or more of the following: a request for clarification or correction; rejection of the manuscript; a correction, expression of concern or retraction of a published article; notification of the authors' institution(s), funder, PMDC or HEC; and a ban on submissions to PJHS for a defined period (normally at least three years for submission of false or forged documents).

11. Appeals and Complaints

11.1 Appeals against Editorial Decisions

Authors who believe a decision was wrong may submit **one** appeal per manuscript to the Editor-in-Chief at editor@thejas.com.pk within 30 days of the decision. The appeal should explain, point by point, why the decision should be reconsidered, with reference to the reviewers' comments. Disagreement alone is not sufficient grounds. The appeal is examined by the Appeals Committee, which makes a recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief; no member involved in the original decision takes part. The journal acknowledges appeals within 7 working days and aims to communicate a decision within 30 days. The decision on the appeal is final. The Appeals Committee comprises:

- Dr. Asif Nadeem
- Dr. Aditya Mojumdar
- Dr. Shahbaz Ahmad Zakki

11.2 Complaints

Authors, reviewers, readers or anyone else may complain about the journal's processes, delays, fees, or the conduct of an author, reviewer, editor or board member, by writing to editor@thejas.com.pk. Complaints are investigated by the Complaints Committee, which makes recommendations to the

Editor-in-Chief. The journal acknowledges complaints within 7 working days and aims to resolve them within 60 days, keeping the complainant informed of progress. The Complaints Committee comprises:

- Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Anwar
- Dr. Rizwan Ullah Khan

Complaints about the Editor-in-Chief Complaints about the Editor-in-Chief should be sent to **Prof. Miguel Muñoz**, Editor, Institute of Biomedicine of Seville (IBiS) and Virgen del Rocío University Hospital, Seville, Spain (complaints@thejas.com.pk), a senior member of the Editorial Board with no role at the journal's owner or publisher. Supported by a Complaints Committee member independent of the matter, he investigates the complaint following COPE guidance. The Editor-in-Chief takes no part in its handling and cannot overrule the outcome.

12. Post-Publication Changes (Crossmark Policy)

12.1 Version of Record and Crossmark

All articles published in PJHS receive a DOI and remain permanently available on the journal website. Once published, an article is the version of record. It is not altered except through a formal, linked notice issued in line with COPE guidance: an erratum, corrigendum, addendum, expression of concern, major correction or retraction. The only other exception is an author name change (Section 12.7).

PJHS participates in Crossmark (DOI: 10.54393/pjhs/crossmark), a multi-publisher service that shows readers whether they are viewing the current version of an article and whether any notices have been issued. Every notice is registered with Crossref and linked to the article it updates.

12.2 Errata and Corrigenda

These notices are used for errors that do not change an article's methodology, results or conclusions.

- An **erratum** corrects an error introduced by the journal during production.
- A **corrigendum** corrects a scientifically relevant error made by the authors. Examples include missing method details, an incorrect figure or table label, a data error that does not change the findings, or an error in the author or contributor list.

Each erratum or corrigendum is published as a separate, citable notice with its own DOI, linked to the original article. The article is updated, and a note on the article page and in the PDF tells readers what was changed and when. Minor spelling or grammatical errors that do not affect meaning or readability do not qualify.

12.3 Addenda

Where important information was omitted from the original article, the authors may submit an addendum. Addenda are reviewed by the editors, published in the current issue and linked to the original article.

12.4 Expressions of Concern

Where there are serious concerns about the integrity of a published article and an investigation is ongoing or inconclusive, the Editor-in-Chief may publish an expression of concern linked to the article. It will be updated or replaced by a correction or retraction once the matter is resolved.

12.5 Retractions

An article is retracted when its findings are unreliable, whether through honest error or through misconduct (for example, data fabrication or falsification). An article is also retracted when it involves plagiarism, duplicate or overlapping publication, unethical research, or an undisclosed conflict of interest that compromises the work. PJHS follows the COPE Retraction Guidelines.

- Retractions may be requested by the authors or initiated by the journal. The editorial office investigates with support from the Editorial Board and, where necessary, the authors' institution(s). Authors are given the opportunity to respond, and the Editor-in-Chief gives final approval.
- Each retraction notice is published as a separate, citable item with its own DOI in the current issue. It is linked to the original article and states the reason for the retraction and who is retracting it (the authors, the editor, or both).
- The retracted article remains on the website, clearly marked "RETRACTED" on every page of the HTML and PDF versions. A retracted article is not "unpublished" and may not be submitted elsewhere.
- A partial retraction may be issued when only part of the article is unreliable.
- Complete removal of content is reserved for rare cases where keeping the article online would be unlawful (for example, defamation, infringement of legal rights, or a court order) or would pose a serious health risk if acted upon. In such cases the bibliographic metadata and a notice explaining the removal remain in place of the article.

12.6 Corrections

Corrections are published for scientifically relevant errors that do not change the article's methodology, results or conclusions, such as adding missing method details or correcting data errors that do not change the findings. Each correction is published as a separate notice. The article is updated, and a note on the article page tells readers what was changed and when.

12.7 Major Corrections

A major correction is used when an **honest error** changes the methodology, results or conclusions of an article **and the corrected work remains scientifically valid**. It is not used where the error results from misconduct; such articles are retracted under Section 12.5. If the corrected work no longer supports a valid conclusion, the article is retracted without replacement.

1. The authors submit a corrected manuscript with a full explanation of the error. All authors must agree to the correction. The editors assess the corrected manuscript and, where necessary, send it for further peer review.
2. The corrected article is published as **Version 2** under the **original article's DOI**, so existing citations and links lead to the corrected version.
3. The original article (**Version 1**) is kept permanently available as a **supplementary file** to Version 2. It is clearly marked "Superseded", with the changes highlighted.
4. A **"Major Correction" notice** is published in the current issue with **its own DOI**. It explains the error, what was changed, and how the results or conclusions are affected. The notice and Version 2 are linked to each other.

5. The article page and the PDF of Version 2 carry the statement “Version 2 – Major Correction published [date]”, with a link to the notice. The update is registered with Crossref through Crossmark as a correction.

Major corrections are decided by the Editor-in-Chief following COPE guidance, after the authors have had the opportunity to explain the error.

12.8 Author Name Changes

In line with COPE guidance (2021), authors who change their name for any reason (for example, marriage, divorce or gender identity) may ask the editorial office to update their name on their published articles. After confirming the author’s identity, PJHS updates the article and its metadata (including Crossref and indexing services) without publishing a public notice and without notifying co-authors, to protect the author’s privacy. The DOI does not change. Requests to change another person’s name require that person’s explicit consent.

13. Copyright and Licensing

Authors retain copyright of their articles. All articles are published open access under the **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)**. On submission, authors grant PJHS a non-exclusive license to publish the article, identify itself as the original publisher and distribute it under CC BY 4.0. Authors do not transfer copyright to the journal.

Under CC BY 4.0, anyone may share (copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format) and adapt (remix, transform and build upon the material) for any purpose, including commercially, provided that appropriate credit is given to the authors and the original source, a link to the license is provided, and any changes are indicated. No legal terms or technological measures may be applied that restrict others from doing anything the license permits. The license statement and copyright line (“© The Author(s) [year]”) appear on every published article, in both HTML and PDF.

14. Archiving, Self-Archiving and Indexing

14.1 Digital Preservation

To guarantee permanent access, PJHS content is deposited for long-term digital preservation with PKP Preservation Network (PKP PN) / LOCKSS (<https://thejas.com.pk/index.php/pjhs/gateway/lockss>). Metadata and DOIs are registered with Crossref. The publisher also maintains regular back-ups of the journal’s website and files.

14.2 Self-Archiving (Repository) Policy

Authors may deposit any version of their article — the submitted version (preprint), the accepted manuscript or the published version of record — in an institutional or subject repository, on a personal website or elsewhere, at any time and with no embargo, provided the deposit cites the published article and links to its DOI.

14.3 Indexing

Current indexing and abstracting services are listed on the journal website. <https://thejas.com.pk/index.php/pjhs/indexing/abstracting>

15. Fees and Waivers

Fee	Amount	When payable
Article Processing Fee (national authors)	Rs 5,000 per article	At submission. Non-refundable, because it covers screening and peer review whatever the outcome.
Article Processing Fee (international authors)	-	-
Article Publication Fee (national authors)	Rs 30,000 per article	Only after acceptance, on invoice
Article Publication Fee (international authors)	USD 200 per article	Only after acceptance, on invoice
Printed copies (optional): annual institutional subscription	Rs 20,000 per year	On order
Printed copies (optional): single copy	Rs 2,500	On order

Payment. All fees are payable only to the journal's owner, Lahore Medical Research Center LLP, at the account below. **PJHS has no agents or representatives who collect fees or guarantee publication;** authors who are approached by anyone claiming to act for the journal should report it to editor@thejas.com.pk

Account title	Lahore Medical Research Center LLP
Bank	Meezan Bank
Account number	02840105377903
IBAN	PK36MEZN0002840105377903

Waivers. Authors who cannot pay may request a full or partial waiver at submission by writing to the editorial office with a brief explanation. Requests are decided case by case by the publisher's office, independently of the editors handling the manuscript. Fees should never prevent the publication of worthy work.

Independence. Editors and reviewers are not informed of authors' payment or waiver status, and payment has no influence on editorial decisions (Section 6.4). Payment of the processing fee does not guarantee acceptance.

16. Advertising and Marketing Policy

PJHS articles do not contain advertising, and published content must not promote commercial products. Any advertisement placed on the website or in the print edition is clearly identified as advertising, is separated from editorial content, and has no influence on editorial decisions. The journal does not accept advertisements for products or services that are misleading or harmful to health.

Direct marketing by the journal (for example, calls for papers) is appropriate, well targeted and unobtrusive. PJHS does not send unsolicited invitations that promise acceptance or rapid publication.

17. Privacy Statement

Names, email addresses and other personal information entered in the journal's system are used only for the stated purposes of the journal (manuscript handling, peer review, publication and journal communications) and are not made available to any other party or used for any other purpose. The names, affiliations and corresponding author's email address of published authors appear in the published article. Reviewers' identities are kept confidential.

18. Instructions for Preparing Manuscripts

Manuscripts should be prepared according to the ICMJE Recommendations (www.icmje.org). The following are PJHS's specific requirements.

18.1 Language and Format

- English; British or American spelling may be used consistently.
- Times New Roman, 12-point, single line spacing (1.0), justified, with page and line numbers.
- Tables and figures placed in the text where they are first cited, not at the end.
- SI units throughout.
- Abbreviations: use only standard abbreviations; spell out each in full at first use, followed by the abbreviation in brackets. Avoid abbreviations in the title.

18.2 Article Types and Limits

Article type	Main text	Abstract	Tables/ figures	References
Original article	2,500 words	Structured, 250 words	As needed	20–40 recommended
Systematic / narrative review	3,500 words	Structured (systematic) or unstructured (narrative), 250 words	As needed	As needed
Short communication, special communication, case report	1,250 words	Unstructured, 150 words	Up to 2	Up to 10

Word counts exclude the title page, abstract, references, tables and figure legends. Short communications and case reports should normally have no more than six authors; any more must be justified in the cover letter.

18.3 Title and Keywords

The title should be concise and informative, and should indicate the study design and, where relevant, the population and setting. Avoid abbreviations. Provide 3–6 keywords, preferably from the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) of the U.S. National Library of Medicine (<https://meshb.nlm.nih.gov/>).

18.4 Abstract (Original Articles)

A structured abstract of up to 250 words with the headings **Background, Objective, Methods, Results** and **Conclusion**. Methods should state the design, setting, duration, participants and sampling, main variables and analysis. Results should give the main findings with numbers, estimates and 95% confidence intervals or p-values. The conclusion should follow directly from the results. For clinical trials, give the registry and registration number at the end of the abstract.

18.5 Main Text Structure

Original articles follow the IMRAD structure with the headings **Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion** and **Conclusion**, followed by the end matter in Section 18.10.

Introduction

Summarises the relevant evidence, with quantitative data where available (e.g., prevalence, incidence, distribution or levels of the variables of interest), moving from the global to the regional, national and local context. Clearly state the research problem, the knowledge gap, the research question(s), the objective(s), the hypothesis (where the study tests one) and the significance of the study.

Methods

- **Design, setting and duration:** study design (e.g., cross-sectional, case-control, cohort, randomised trial), department and institution, city and country (in the title page and unblinded version only; use “[blinded]” in the review copy), and study dates (day, month, year).
- **Ethics:** approving committee, reference number and date; how informed consent was obtained (Section 5).
- **Population and sampling:** the target population; sample size calculation with the formula or software used and its assumptions and reference; sampling technique; inclusion and exclusion criteria for each group.
- **Procedures:** all steps from enrolment to the end of the study, including history, examination, investigations and interventions, with details of equipment (name, model, manufacturer, city, country).
- **Variables:** define the outcome, exposure, predictor, confounding and matching variables, how each was measured, and its type (nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio). For categorical variables, state the categories and how they were formed.
- **Data collection instruments:** state whether data came from records, questionnaires, interviews, examination, laboratory or imaging tests. Attach the data-collection form or questionnaire as a supplementary file.
- **Statistical analysis:** as described in Section 18.6, naming the software and version used.

Questionnaires

- Prefer validated instruments; cite their source and confirm permission to use them. For new or adapted questionnaires, describe how items were developed from the literature, how content validity was established, and how the tool was pilot-tested and translated if relevant.

- Report reliability (e.g., Cronbach's alpha) for multi-item scales.
- Describe the response format and scoring (e.g., a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), any reverse-scored items, and how total scores and any categories (e.g., good/poor knowledge) were derived, with cut-offs and their justification.
- Items should be short and clear. Avoid double-barrelled, leading, emotionally loaded or unnecessarily personal questions, technical jargon, questions relying on distant memory, and excessive length.

18.6 Statistical Analysis

- **Descriptive statistics:** categorical variables as frequency and percentage; continuous variables assessed for normality (e.g., Shapiro–Wilk or Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, histogram or Q–Q plot) and summarized as mean $\pm$ standard deviation if approximately normal, or median and interquartile range (Q1–Q3) if skewed.
- **Estimation:** report the main estimates (e.g., prevalence, means, differences, odds ratios, relative risks) with 95% confidence intervals, so that results can be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn. Example: “The prevalence of diabetes mellitus was 15.0% (45/300; 95% CI 11.0–19.0%).”
- **Hypothesis testing:** where the study compares groups or examines associations (including in cross-sectional studies), state the hypotheses and name the statistical test used for each comparison and why; report exact p-values (e.g., $p = 0.032$, not $p < 0.05$) and the significance level.
- **Likert data:** individual Likert items are ordinal and should be analyzed with methods for ordinal data. Summed scale scores from a reliable multi-item scale may be treated as continuous, with this stated and justified.
- **Multivariable analysis:** describe the model, how variables were selected, and how confounding and missing data were handled.

18.7 Results

- Describe participant flow: numbers assessed, enrolled and allocated to each group; withdrawals, deaths, drop-outs (with reasons) and losses to follow-up; missing data; and the number finally analyzed. A flow diagram is expected for trials and cohort studies.
- Present descriptive results, then estimates and hypothesis tests, following the order of the objectives. Do not repeat in the text all the data shown in tables and figures.

18.8 Discussion

- Begin with the principal findings for each objective in turn.
- Compare them with relevant studies (local, national, regional and international), giving for each its location, design, sample size and the relevant figures, and explain similarities and differences. Comparisons should be based on reported estimates and data, not only on general statements.
- Discuss the strengths and **limitations** of the study, including possible bias and confounding, and the generalizability of the findings.
- State the implications for practice, policy or further research.

18.9 Conclusion

A short statement, in plain language, of what the study found in relation to its objectives. It must be supported by the results and must not draw on other authors' findings or speculate beyond the data. Recommendations may be followed in a separate short paragraph.

18.10 End Matter

In the title page / unblinded version, after the Conclusion, include: Acknowledgements; Authors' Contributions (CRediT); Conflicts of Interest; Funding; Ethics Approval and Consent; Data Availability Statement; Use of AI (if applicable); and Trial Registration (if applicable).

18.11 Tables, Figures and References

- Tables and figures are numbered in the order cited and must be understandable without the text. Each **table** has a concise title **above** it; each **figure** has a title and legend **below** it. Explain all abbreviations and symbols in footnotes.
- Figures must be of high resolution (at least 300 dpi); graphs and charts should be supplied in editable form.
- Any table or figure taken or adapted from a published work must be cited, with permission from the copyright holder where required (Section 3.2).
- **References** follow the Vancouver (NLM/ICMJE) style. Number them consecutively in the order first cited, using Arabic numerals in the text. List the first six authors (surname followed by initials without full stops or spaces), then "et al." if there are more. Abbreviate journal titles according to the NLM Catalog. Give the DOI where available, otherwise a stable URL.

Format: Author AA, Author BB, Author CC. Title of article. Abbrev Journal Title. Year;Volume(Issue):first–last page. doi:10.xxxx/xxxxx

18.12 Proofs

Page proofs are sent to the corresponding author **before online publication**. They must be checked and returned within **three working days**, with corrections clearly marked. Only typographical and factual errors may be corrected at this stage; substantial changes to the text are not accepted. The article is published online only after the proofs are approved.

Annexure A: Letter of Authorship and Declarations


<https://thejas.com.pk/index.php/pjhs>

PAKISTAN JOURNAL OF HEALTH SCIENCES (LAHORE)

LETTER OF AUTHORSHIP

Dear Editor:

This is to confirm that the manuscript titled _____ submitted for publication in the Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences-Lahore (PJHS), has been read and approved by all authors. I/We, the author(s), confirm that:

- 1. Originality:** The manuscript is original and has not been published, and is not under consideration elsewhere, in whole or in part. Any prior posting as a preprint, conference abstract or thesis is disclosed below and cited in the manuscript.
- 2. Authorship:** Every author meets all four ICMJE criteria: (i) substantial contribution to conception or design, or acquisition, analysis or interpretation of data; (ii) drafting or critical revision for important intellectual content; (iii) final approval of the version to be published; and (iv) agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work. No one who meets these criteria has been omitted. Contributors who do not meet the criteria are listed in the Acknowledgements, with their written permission. No author is the Editor-in-Chief, an editor or an Editorial Board member of PJHS. Editorials are the only exception.
- 3. Ethics and Consent:** The study was approved by the ethics committee named in the manuscript (or formally exempted) and informed consent was obtained as described. Written consent for publication has been obtained from any individual who could be identified.
- 4. Use of AI:** Any use of AI tools is disclosed below and in the manuscript; no AI tool is listed as an author.
- 5. Data:** We will provide the raw data to the editors on request.
- 6. Accuracy:** All information and documents submitted are genuine and accurate. We understand that false documents will be handled under the journal's misconduct policy.
- 7. Reporting Guideline Checklist:** Authors must submit the appropriate reporting guideline checklist with their manuscript, such as CONSORT, STROBE, PRISMA, STARD, CARE, SRQR, or COREQ, according to the study design.

Sr. No.	Author's Name	Email & ORCID Id	Affiliation	Contributions to the Paper (Please Give Brief Description of the Role of Each Author Separately)	Signature
1.		Email	Designation:		
		ORCID Id	Dpt. Name: Institute Name:		
2.		Email	Designation:		
		ORCID Id	Dpt. Name: Institute Name:		
3.		Email	Designation:		
		ORCID Id	Dpt. Name: Institute Name:		

4.		Email	Designation:		
		ORCID Id	Dpt. Name: Institute Name:		
5.		Email	Designation:		
		ORCID Id	Dpt. Name: Institute Name:		
6.		Email	Designation:		
		ORCID Id	Dpt. Name: Institute Name:		
7.		Email	Designation:		
		ORCID Id	Dpt. Name: Institute Name:		
8.		Email	Designation:		
		ORCID Id	Dpt. Name: Institute Name:		
9.		Email	Designation:		
		ORCID Id	Dpt. Name: Institute Name:		
10.		Email	Designation:		
		ORCID Id	Dpt. Name: Institute Name:		

Name of Corresponding Author: _____ Email ID: _____ Contact Number: _____ Designation: _____

Conflict of Interest Statement

☐ The authors declare no conflict of interest ☐ If any, please narrate: _____

Source of Funding

☐ No specific funding was received ☐ Funded by (with grant number and funder's role): _____

Disclaimer: Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences-Lahore (PJHS) acknowledges original work that holds scientific novelty however, it also reserves the right to remove and retract a plagiarized article upon identification of subtle (simply copy-paste) and/or blatant (paraphrasing) type of plagiarism at any stage before or after acceptance and/or publication.

☐ The Corresponding author should confirm that all authors meet the criteria for authorship as outlined by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) criteria.

Signature & Stamp
(Corresponding Author)

Document Approval

This policy document was reviewed and approved for publication on the journal website.

Name and designation	Signature	Date
Prof. Dr. Syed Amir Gilani Editor-in-Chief, Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences (Lahore)	 Prof. Dr. Syed Amir Gilani Editor-in-Chief Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences (PJHS) Lahore Medical Research Center LLP	October, 2026
Dr. Sidra Khalid Managing Editor	 Dr. Sidra Khalid, Ph.D Managing Editor Pakistan Journal of Health Sciences (PJHS) Lahore Medical Research Center LLP	October, 2026