

## Notice of Policy

During my tenure as editor, we have encountered a number of instances in which authors have submitted a manuscript to the *Journal* when an identical or nearly identical version has been previously published by the same authors in another journal. Although most of these cases have been identified by the reviewers or the editorial office prior to publication, in at least one instance the manuscript in question proceeded to the publication stage. Although it is true that authors must attest that their manuscripts “are not currently under consideration by any other publication and that no portion of them has been published elsewhere” (Information for Contributors), I believe that, in all instances, these events have not been fraudulent but have instead been due to a misunderstanding as to what constitutes prior publication. Each instance has involved work published in conference or symposium proceedings, for which the authors were invited to submit full papers related to their presentation. In some cases, these papers are peer-reviewed and edited, as well as abstracted by the major databases, including the National Library of Medicine, and are therefore easily accessible and citable. Those without peer review rarely include any disclaimer to that fact. Thus, readers consider these papers to be full-fledged

publications and incorrectly cite them as such. On the other hand, some authors have mistakenly considered such publications to be “extended abstracts,” even though they may be many journal pages in length, include several figures and tables, and contain the section headings of a typical manuscript. In our view, this constitutes duplicate publication. The *Journal* will not consider such manuscripts for publication, and, if one is inadvertently published, the paper will be retracted by the editorial office. Prior publication of true abstracts, typically one or two paragraphs in length and consistent in scope to a journal summary, will not affect a paper’s eligibility for consideration.

Authors should be aware that any prior publication of a full paper, including one associated with a meeting or symposium, precludes the opportunity to publish the data or experimental results in the *Journal*. Consultation by authors with the editor is appropriate and encouraged if uncertainty exists regarding the standing of a manuscript in this regard.

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Editor