



HEALTH EDUCATION RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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8th Meeting of Research and Ethical Committee (REC) Meeting for Approval of “The Rehabilitation Journal Policies and Guidelines (Revised)”

A Research and Ethical Committee (REC) meeting has been conducted to approve The Rehabilitation Journal Policies and Guideline on Saturday 28th December 2024. The following members approved the agenda.

- Prof Waqar Ahmed Awan (Convener REC)
- Prof Imran Amjad (Member)
- Dr Muhammad Umar (Member)
- Dr Abdul Haseeb Bhutta (Member)

Publication Ethics

Authorship

TRJ follows the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) guidelines which state that, in order to qualify for authorship of a manuscript, the following criteria should be observed:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or reviewing it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- 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.

Those who contributed to the work but do not qualify for authorship should be listed in the acknowledgments. More detailed guidance on authorship is given by the **International Council of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)**.

Any change to the author list should be approved by all authors including any who have been removed from the list. The corresponding author should act as a point of contact between the editor and the other authors and should keep co-authors informed and involve them in major decisions about the publication. We reserve the right to request confirmation that all authors meet the authorship conditions.

Reviewers Recommendation

Authors can recommend potential reviewers for their manuscripts. The journal editors will carefully examine these suggestions to ensure there are no conflicts of interest before

contacting the reviewers. Reviewers will be asked to disclose any conflicts of interest they may have.

Furthermore, during the initial submission process, authors can specify the names of potential peer reviewers they wish to exclude from considering their manuscript for peer review. The editorial team will honor these requests if they do not compromise the objective and thorough evaluation of the submission.

When submitting their manuscript, authors should propose three potential reviewers who possess the relevant expertise to assess the content. Complete contact information, including address, homepage, phone, and email address, should be provided for each suggested reviewer. It's worth noting that while the editors may not directly approach these referees, they highly value the authors' recommendations.

To maintain fairness, the suggested reviewers should not currently collaborate with any of the co-authors, nor have published with them within the last three years. Additionally, it is preferable that the reviewers come from different institutions than the authors.

Research Involving Human Subjects

When reporting on research that involves human subjects, human material, human tissues, or human data, authors must declare that the investigations were carried out following the rules of the Declaration of Helsinki of 1975 (<https://www.wma.net/what-we-do/medical-ethics/declaration-of-helsinki/>), revised in 2013. According to point 23 of this declaration, approval from the local institutional review board (IRB) or other appropriate ethics committee must be obtained before undertaking the research to confirm the study meets national and international guidelines. As a minimum, a statement including the project identification code, date of approval, and name of the ethics committee or institutional review board must be stated in Section 'Institutional Review Board Statement' of the article.

Example of an ethical statement: "All subjects gave their informed consent for inclusion before they participated in the study. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of XXX (Project identification code)."

For non-interventional studies (e.g. surveys, questionnaires, social media research), all participants must be fully informed if anonymity is assured, why the research is being conducted, how their data will be used, and if there are any risks associated. As with all research involving humans, ethical approval from an appropriate ethics committee must be obtained prior to conducting the study. If ethical approval is not required, authors must either provide an exemption from the ethics committee or are encouraged to cite the local or national legislation that indicates ethics approval is not required for this type of study. Where a study has been granted an exemption, the name of the ethics committee which provided this should be stated in Section 'Institutional Review Board Statement' with a full explanation regarding why ethical approval was not required.

Written informed consent for publication must be obtained from participating patients. Data relating to individual participants must be described in detail, but private information

identifying participants need not be included unless the identifiable materials are of relevance to the research (for example, photographs of participants' faces that show a particular symptom). The patient's initials or other personal identifiers must not appear in any images. For manuscripts that include any case details, personal information, and/or images of patients, authors must obtain signed informed consent for publication from patients (or their relatives/guardians) before submitting to a TRJ journal. Patient details must be anonymized as far as possible, e.g., do not mention specific age, ethnicity, or occupation where they are not relevant to the conclusions. A template permission form is available to download. A blank version of the form used to obtain permission (without the patient's name or signature) must be uploaded with your submission. Editors reserve the right to reject any submission that does not meet these requirements.

You may refer to our sample form and provide an appropriate form after consulting with your affiliated institution. For the purposes of publishing in TRJ journal, a consent, permission, or release form should include unlimited permission for publication in all formats (including print, electronic, and online), in sublicensed and reprinted versions (including translations and derived works), and in other works and products under open access license. To respect patients' and any other individual's privacy, please do not send signed forms. The journal reserves the right to ask authors to provide signed forms if necessary.

If the study reports research involving vulnerable groups, an additional check may be performed. The submitted manuscript will be scrutinized by the editorial office and upon request, documentary evidence (blank consent forms and any related discussion documents from the ethics board) must be supplied. Additionally, when studies describe groups by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, disease, etc., explanations regarding why such categorization was needed must be clearly stated in the article.

Clinical Trials Registration

Registration

The TRJ policy adheres to the guidelines set forth by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). According to these guidelines, clinical trials must be registered in a public trials registry before or at the time of the first patient's enrollment for consideration of publication. However, purely observational studies do not require registration. It is essential to understand that the term "clinical trial" encompasses not only studies conducted in hospitals or involving pharmaceuticals but also any research involving participant randomization and group classification within the context of the intervention being evaluated.

Authors are strongly encouraged to pre-register their clinical trials with an international clinical trials registry and provide a reference to this registration in the Methods section of their submission. Suitable databases for registration include clinicaltrials.gov, the EU Clinical Trials Register, and those listed by the World Health Organization International Clinical Trials Registry Platform.

It is important to note that obtaining approval from an independent local, regional, or national review body for conducting a study does not equate to prospective clinical trial registration. TRJ reserves the right to reject any paper lacking trial registration for further peer review.

However, an exception to the registration requirement applies if the study protocol has been previously published before participant enrollment, in which case the registration requirement can be waived, provided that the published protocol is appropriately cited. Researchers should develop a comprehensive trial protocol that clearly outlines the study's objectives, methodology, criteria for participant inclusion and exclusion, endpoints, statistical analysis plan, and other pertinent details. Subsequently, this trial protocol must undergo meticulous evaluation and approval by an ethical review board or institutional review board (IRB). The involvement of ethical review boards is vital in safeguarding the rights, safety, and welfare of the study participants. To foster transparency and allow others to assess the study's design and intentions, it is recommended to consider publishing the trial protocol in an academic journal or other publicly accessible platforms.

CONSORT Statement

When submitting your research to TRJ and reporting the results of a randomized trial, it is mandatory to include a fully completed CONSORT 2010 checklist and flow diagram. Templates for these documents can be obtained from the CONSORT website (<http://www.consort-statement.org>) or accessed here. The CONSORT website provides additional information about checklist extensions customized for various study designs and data types, even beyond two-group parallel trials. To ensure your submission complies with the CONSORT guidelines, your article should, at a minimum, address each item on the checklist and provide a comprehensive report accordingly.

Sex and Gender in Research

We encourage our authors to follow the 'Sex and Gender Equity in Research – SAGER – guidelines' and to include sex and gender considerations where relevant. Authors should use the terms sex (biological attribute) and gender (shaped by social and cultural circumstances) carefully to avoid confusing both terms. Article titles and/or abstracts should indicate clearly what sex(es) the study applies to. Authors should also describe in the background, whether sex and/or gender differences may be expected; report how sex and/or gender were accounted for in the design of the study; provide disaggregated data by sex and/or gender, where appropriate; and discuss respective results. If a sex and/or gender analysis was not conducted, the rationale should be given in the Discussion. We suggest that our authors consult the full guidelines before submission.

Publication Ethics Statement

TRJ follows the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). We fully adhere to its Code of Conduct and to its Best Practice Guidelines.

The editors of this journal enforce a rigorous peer-review process together with strict ethical policies and standards to ensure to add of high-quality scientific works to the field of scholarly publication. Unfortunately, cases of plagiarism, data falsification, image manipulation, inappropriate authorship credit, and the like, do arise. The editors of TRJ take such publishing ethics issues very seriously and are trained to proceed in such cases with a zero-tolerance policy.

Authors wishing to publish their papers in *TRJ* must abide by the following:

- Any facts that might be perceived as a possible conflict of interest of the author(s) must be disclosed in the paper prior to submission.
- Authors should accurately present their research findings and include an objective discussion of the significance of their findings.
- Data and methods used in the research need to be presented in sufficient detail in the paper so that other researchers can replicate the work.
- Raw data should preferably be publicly deposited by the authors before the submission of their manuscript. Authors need to at least have the raw data readily available for presentation to the referees and the editors of the journal if requested. Authors need to ensure appropriate measures are taken so that raw data is retained in full for a reasonable time after publication.
- Simultaneous submission of manuscripts to more than one journal is not tolerated.
- If errors and inaccuracies are found by the authors after the publication of their paper, they need to be promptly communicated to the editors of this journal so that appropriate actions can be taken.
- Your manuscript should not contain any information that has already been published. If you include already published figures or images, please obtain the necessary permission from the copyright holder to publish under the CC-BY license.
- Plagiarism, data fabrication, and image manipulation are not tolerated. For detail see *TRJ*'s Plagiarism Policy.

Conflict Of Interest

A conflict of interest is anything that interferes with, or could reasonably be perceived as interfering with, the full and objective presentation, commissioning, peer review, editorial decision-making, or publication of research or non-research articles submitted to *TRJ*. A conflict of interest exists if a person or institution has a relationship, personal or otherwise, which has the potential to compromise or in any way interfere with professional objectivity or judgment in issues related to the relationship. A conflict of interest is actual if a relationship exists, or apparent if the possibility for a relationship could be inferred. In either case, it is the responsibility of journal Editors, Associate Editors, Editorial Board members, authors, and reviewers to declare Conflicts of Interest, actual or apparent, in order that appropriate mitigating action is taken. As conflict of interest is common, it reaches the level of concern when an observer may wonder if the individual's behavior or judgment was motivated by his or her competing interest. Having competing interests does not imply wrongdoing, however, it could undermine the credibility and trustworthiness of the journal. *TRJ*, through this policy, aims to protect the integrity of the journal.

Editors: *TRJ* has in place procedures by which potential conflict-of-interest information is obtained from all Editors and Associate Editors on a regular basis; annually, or upon appointment or re-appointment. Such information includes the identification of editorial

services with related or competing journals, institutional affiliations, paid consultancies, etc. Editors, in consultation with TRJ, manage their own conflicts of interest as well as those of their Associate Editors, staff, authors, reviewers, and Editorial Board members. They maintain a summary of relevant interests (financial, academic, and other kinds) of all editorial staff and members of editorial boards (which is updated at least annually). Article submissions from the Editors, Editorial Board members, or employees are managed so that no details of the review process, other than the anonymous reviews and decisions, are accessible to the Editor or employee.

Authors: The author has the obligation to reveal any personal interest or relationship that has the potential to be affected by the publication of the submitted manuscript. Sources of funding must be acknowledged in the manuscript. All authors must report any financial interest in corporate or commercial entities dealing with the subject matter of the manuscript. On behalf of all the authors, the corresponding author has the responsibility to advise the Editor of an actual or apparent conflict of interest at the time of submission of the manuscript. Such conflicts will be acknowledged in the Acknowledgement section of the published article. Authors must also submit corrections if conflicts of interest are revealed after publication.

Reviewers: A reviewer is entrusted to provide an unbiased assessment of the scientific merit of a manuscript under review. Any situation or relationship that could bias or be construed to bias this assessment must be reported to the Editor. These include personal relations to the authors, concurrent competitive research on the same subject in the manuscript, or professional or financial ties to an organization with interests in the subject under review. In such cases where an actual or apparent Conflict of Interest is disclosed, the use of a review provided or requested is at the discretion of the Editor.

Citation Policy

Authors should ensure that where the material is taken from other sources (including their own published writing) the source is clearly cited and that where appropriate permission is obtained.

Authors should not engage in excessive self-citation of their own work.

Authors should not copy references from other publications if they have not read the cited work.

Authors should not preferentially cite their own or their friends, peers', or institution's publications.

Authors should not cite advertisements or advertorial material.

In accordance with COPE guidelines, we expect that "original wording taken directly from publications by other researchers should appear in quotation marks with the appropriate citations." This condition also applies to an author's own work. COPE has produced a discussion document on citation manipulation with recommendations for best practice.

Scientific Misconduct

TRJ follows the guidelines provided by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), and the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan (HEC) for dealing with scientific misconduct.

The following examples and forms of misconduct have been taken from WAME, originally with minor modifications from the ORI publication Analysis of Institutional Policies for Responding to Allegations of Scientific Misconduct:

- Falsification of data: ranges from fabrication to deceptive selective reporting of findings and omission of conflicting data, or willful suppression and/or distortion of data.
- Plagiarism: The appropriation of the language, ideas, or thoughts of another without crediting their true source, and representation of them as one's own original work.
- Improprieties of authorship: Improper assignment of credit, such as excluding others, misrepresentation of the same material as original in more than one publication, the inclusion of individuals as authors who have not made a definite contribution to the work published; or submission of multi-authored publications without the concurrence of all authors.
- Misappropriation of the ideas of others: an important aspect of scholarly activity is the exchange of ideas among colleagues. Scholars can acquire novel ideas from others during the process of reviewing grant applications and manuscripts. However, improper use of such information can constitute fraud. Wholesale appropriation of such material constitutes misconduct.
- Violation of generally accepted research practices: Serious deviation from accepted practices in proposing or carrying out research, improper manipulation of experiments to obtain biased results, deceptive statistical or analytical manipulations, or improper reporting of results.
- Material failure to comply with legislative and regulatory requirements affecting research: Including but not limited to serious or substantial, repeated, willful violations of applicable local regulations and law involving the use of funds, care of human subjects, investigational therapies/drugs, recombinant products, new devices, or radioactive, biologic, or chemical materials.
- Inappropriate behavior in relation to misconduct: this includes unfounded or knowingly false accusations of misconduct, failure to report known or suspected misconduct, withholding or destruction of information relevant to a claim of misconduct, and retaliation against persons involved in the allegation or investigation.
- TRJ also includes redundant publication and duplicate publication, lack of declaration of competing interests and of funding/sponsorship, and other failures of transparency to be forms of misconduct.

Handling of Ethical Misconduct

Identification and investigation: It is possible for anyone to report misconduct and unethical behavior to the editor and publisher at any given time. The person who provides the information must also provide adequate evidence or documentation to initiate an investigation. The responsibility of conducting investigations into misconduct lies primarily with journal editors, who should seek advice from the publisher if necessary. To avoid spreading rumors or allegations, investigations should be carried out discreetly and only among those who require the information.

Research misconduct and potential consequences: The editor, in collaboration with the publisher and society, is responsible for making the final decision on how to handle any identified misconduct. This may involve notifying the employer of the accused of the breach. The following outcomes are listed in order of increasing severity:

- Educating the author or reviewer if there is a misunderstanding or misapplication of standards.
- Issuing a strongly worded written warning to the author or reviewer to deter future behavior.
- Publishing a formal notice or editorial that outlines the misconduct.
- Sending a formal letter to the head of the author's or reviewer's department or funding agency.
- Formally retracting a publication from the journal, while informing relevant department heads, indexing services, and readers of the publication.
- Imposing a formal embargo on contributions from an individual for a defined period.
- Reporting the case and outcome to a professional organization or higher authority for further investigation and action.

Language Correction

To facilitate proper peer-reviewing of your manuscript, it is essential that it is submitted in grammatically correct English. TRJ provides minor English editing by native English speakers for all accepted papers, included in the APC. The APC does not cover extensive English editing. Your paper could be returned to you at the English editing stage of the publication process if extensive editing is required. You may choose to use a paid language-editing service, such as TRJ's *Author Services*, before submitting your paper for publication. If you use an alternative service that provides a confirmation certificate, please send a copy to the Editorial Office.

Conference Papers

TRJ welcomes submissions of high-quality conference papers that meet the following criteria:

- The paper must be expanded to the size of a research article.
- The original conference paper should be cited and acknowledged on the first page of the submission.

- If the authors do not own the copyright of the published conference paper, they should obtain the necessary permission from the copyright holder.
- Authors must indicate in their cover letter that the submission is based on a conference paper and provide a statement detailing the changes made compared to the original version.

For unpublished conference papers that do not meet these conditions, the authors are encouraged to submit them as regular research articles instead.

Supplements

TRJ is also willing to accept supplement publishing requests made by external organizations based on different topics, abstracts, or meetings. The cost of publishing the supplement will be paid by the requesting body after discussion with the journal management.

It is vital to note that all the articles published represent the opinions of the authors and do not reflect the official policy of the journal. For more details regarding supplements, please get in touch with the Journal at ce@trjournal.org.

Editorial Independence

Lack of Interference with Editorial Decisions

Editorial independence is of utmost importance and TRJ does not interfere with editorial decisions. All articles published by TRJ are peer reviewed and assessed by our independent editorial boards, and TRJ staff are not involved in decisions to accept manuscripts. When making an editorial decision, we expect the academic editor to make their decision based only upon:

- The suitability of selected reviewers.
- Adequacy of reviewer comments and author response.
- Overall scientific quality of the paper.

In TRJ policies are informed by the mission to make science and research findings open and accessible as widely and rapidly as possible.

Editors and Editorial Staff as Authors

As per TRJ's policy, the editorial staff, editors, and advisory members are prohibited from submitting manuscripts to the journal as authors.

Peer-Review

The decision to publish a paper in TRJ is based on an editorial assessment and peer review. Initially, all papers are assessed by an editorial committee consisting of two or more members of the editorial team. The prime purpose is to decide whether to send a paper for peer review and to give a rapid decision on those that are not.

Once a manuscript passes the initial checks, it will be assigned to at least two independent experts for peer review.

Manuscripts going forward to the review process undergo a double-blind peer review by two or more reviewers, under the supervision of the Chief Editor and the Managing Editor. We aim to complete the review process within 4-8 weeks of the decision to review although occasionally delays do happen, and authors should allow at least 6 weeks from submissions before contacting the journal. The Editor-in-Chief reserves the right to the final decision regarding acceptance. You may find the journal's article reviewing procedure, [here](#).

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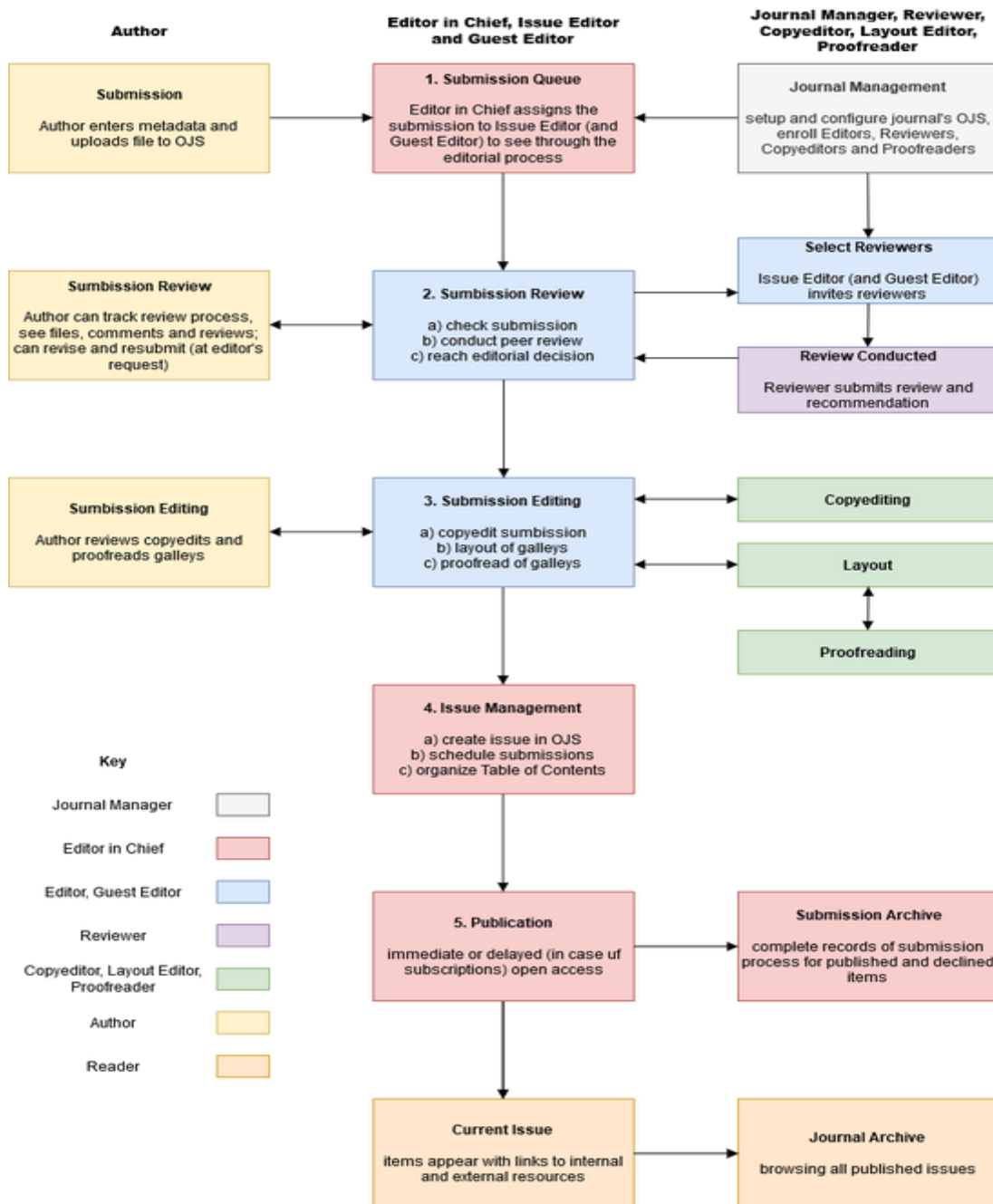
Responses to published work: Comments on previously published articles in TRJ will be reviewed by the editor-in-chief and forwarded to the authors of the published manuscript for a reply. Appropriate time will be given for the response. Both will be published simultaneously in one of the forthcoming issues. In case the author of the published article does not reply, the comments will be published on their own. This process will only be undertaken if the comments are appropriate.

Peer Review Policy

The decision to publish a paper in TRJ is based on an editorial assessment and peer review. Initially, all papers are assessed by an editorial committee consisting of two or more members of the editorial team. The prime purpose is to decide whether to send a paper for peer review and to give a rapid decision on those that are not.

Editorials and Letters may be accepted at this stage but in all other cases, the decision is to reject the paper or to send it for peer review. The Papers which do not meet basic standards or are unlikely to be published irrespective of a positive peer review, for example, because their novel contribution is insufficient or the relevance to the discipline is unclear, may be rejected at this point to avoid delays to authors who may wish to seek publication elsewhere. Occasionally a paper will be returned to the author with requests for revisions to assist the editors in deciding whether send it out for review or not. Authors can expect a decision from this stage of the review process within 1–2 weeks of submission.

Manuscripts going forward to the review process undergo a double-blind peer review by two or more reviewers, under the supervision of the journal editor and the editor-in-chief. We aim to complete the review process within 4-8 weeks of the decision to review although occasionally delays do happen, and authors should allow at least 6 weeks from submissions before contacting the journal. The Editor-in-Chief reserves the right to the final decision regarding acceptance. You may find the journal's article reviewing procedure, [below](#).



Editorial Decision and Revision

All the articles, reviews and communications published in TRJ journals go through the peer-review process and receive at least two reviews. The in-house editor will communicate the decision of the academic editor, which will be one of the following:

Accept after Minor Revisions: The paper is in principle accepted after revision based on the reviewer's comments. Authors are given 7 days for minor revisions.

Resubmit after Major Revisions: The acceptance of the manuscript would depend on the revisions. The author needs to provide a point-by-point response or provide a **rebuttal** if some of the reviewer's comments cannot be revised. A maximum of two rounds of major revision

per manuscript is normally provided. Authors will be asked to resubmit the revised paper within 2 weeks, and the revised version will be returned to the reviewer for further comments. If the required revision time is estimated to be longer than 2 months, we will recommend that authors withdraw their manuscript before resubmitting to avoid unnecessary time pressure and to ensure that all manuscripts are sufficiently revised.

Reject and Encourage Resubmission: If additional experiments are needed to support the conclusions, the manuscript will be rejected, and the authors will be encouraged to re-submit the paper once further experiments have been conducted.

Reject: The article has serious flaws, and/or makes no original significant contribution. No offer of resubmission to the journal is provided.

All reviewer comments should be responded to in a point-by-point fashion. Where the authors disagree with a reviewer, they must provide a clear response.

Author Appeals

Authors may appeal a rejection by sending an e-mail to the Managing Editor of the journal. The appeal must provide detailed justification, including point-by-point responses to the reviewers' and/or Editor's comments using an **appeal form**. Appeals can only be submitted following a “declined submission” decision and should be submitted within three months from the decision date. Failure to meet these criteria will result in the appeal not being considered further. The *Chief Editor* will forward the manuscript and related information (including the identities of the referees) to a designated *Editorial Board Member*. The Editors being consulted will be asked to provide an advisory recommendation on the manuscript and may recommend acceptance, further peer-review, or uphold the original rejection decision. This decision will then be validated by the *Editor-in-Chief*. A rejection at this stage is final and cannot be reversed.

Production and Publication

Once accepted, the manuscript will undergo professional copy-editing, English editing, proofreading by the authors, final corrections, pagination, and publication on TRJ website.

Plagiarism Policy

The Rehabilitation Journal is committed to upholding the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) guidelines to prevent plagiarism and employs the "Turnitin" software to detect similarities. It is the responsibility of authors to ensure that their work is free of plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, paraphrasing, and salami slicing.

Any article submitted with an overall similarity index $\geq 19\%$ or $\geq 5\%$ from a single source or $\geq 20\%$ from artificial intelligence (AI) source will be rejected and returned to the authors. The disciplinary committee, consisting of TRJ staff, editors, and the Chief Editor or a representative, will manage cases of plagiarism. If an act of plagiarism is discovered in a submitted article, it will be removed from further processing and the author will be required to provide an explanation. If the explanation is not satisfactory, the disciplinary committee will determine the appropriate course of action.

If plagiarism is suspected in a published article, it will be temporarily retracted from publication, and a notice will be issued in TRJ. The author will be given an opportunity to respond and provide an explanation. If the response is not satisfactory or no response is received within the given time frame, the article will be permanently retracted, and the author will be monitored. If an author submits the same article to multiple journals, the other editors will be notified, and the author must provide documentary evidence of retraction from publication. Any claims of intellectual, data, or idea theft must be supported by documentary evidence.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The Rehabilitation Journal (TRJ) upholds the highest academic integrity and ethical publishing standards. Authors are required to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools transparently and responsibly throughout the research and publication process.

Authorship and AI Tools

AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT by OpenAI, Google Bard, Microsoft Copilot) cannot be listed as authors under any circumstances. Authorship requires intellectual contribution, accountability, and the ability to respond to peer review criteria that AI tools cannot fulfill.

Acceptable Use and Disclosure

Authors must disclose the use of AI tools in manuscript preparation, including but not limited to language editing, literature summarization, coding assistance, or formatting. Disclosure must be made either in a dedicated AI Use Statement or in the Acknowledgments section. Authors are responsible for all AI-assisted content, ensuring its originality, factual accuracy, and appropriate citation.

AI-Generated Content

Any figure, table, image, or dataset generated with AI must be clearly labeled as such, with sufficient detail to ensure transparency and reproducibility. Misrepresenting AI-generated content as original work or failing to disclose its use constitutes a breach of ethical standards and may result in rejection or retraction of the manuscript.

Peer Review Restrictions

AI tools must not be used during the peer review process to protect confidentiality and intellectual property rights.

Required Information for Disclosure

When disclosing AI use, authors must specify:

- The name of the AI tool
- Its version (if applicable)
- The provider (e.g., OpenAI, Google)

Examples of Acceptable AI Use Statements

- *Writing support only: “The authors used OpenAI’s ChatGPT to improve language clarity during manuscript preparation. The tool was not used for content generation, data analysis, or interpretation. All final content was reviewed and approved by the authors.”*
- *Writing and idea generation: “Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT were used to assist with literature summarization and refinement of the research rationale. All interpretations, conclusions, and original ideas remain solely those of the authors.”*
- *Editorial assistance only: “In line with TRJ’s AI policy, AI tools were used solely for formatting and language editing. No AI was used for content generation, data analysis,*

or interpretation.”

- *No AI was used: “No AI tools were used in this manuscript's writing, analysis, or preparation.”*

Policy Updates and Compliance

This policy is reviewed annually to align with advancements in AI technology and ethical standards established by COPE, ICMJE, and other relevant bodies. Misuse of AI tools or failure to disclose their use may lead to editorial actions, including rejection or retraction, by TRJ's ethical guidelines.

Open Access/Copyright Policy

The Rehabilitation Journal (TRJ) operates as an open-access journal, making all its content freely accessible to users and their institutions without any charges. Users have freedom to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, link to, or utilize the full texts of the articles for lawful purposes without needing prior permission from the publisher or the author.

Authors retain the copyright of their research articles published in TRJ. The journal applies the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license to all its articles. This license permits anyone to copy, redistribute, remix, transmit, and adapt the work, provided that the original work and source are appropriately cited.

Article Processing Charges

All articles published in The Rehabilitation Journal are published in full open access. An article processing charge (APC) applies to papers submitted and accepted papers after peer review respectively.

The processing fee submission does not guarantee the acceptance of the article. These charges are to cover the costs of peer review, copyediting, typesetting, long-term archiving, and journal management.

Processing Fee: Rs 5,000/- will be accompanied by each article during submission.

Publication Fee: Rs 15,000/-, if accepted.

Title of Account

Rand Publications (Pvt) Ltd

Account #: 6044320311714123501

Bank Name: Habib Matro.

I-8 Branch, Islamabad Pakistan

Withdrawal Policy

It is considered unethical to submit the same manuscript to more than one journal at the same time. If the authors want to withdraw the manuscript during its processing, an email has to be sent notifying them as to their intention, to the effect that the manuscript withdrawal form will be emailed for the signatures of all the authors. This needs to be completed, scanned, and sent back. A final letter from the editorial office for the withdrawal of the manuscript will then be dispatched. Electronic signatures will not be accepted.

Please note that without a formal letter of withdrawal, a manuscript is not considered withdrawn and the use of such a manuscript elsewhere will be construed as ethical misconduct.

Archiving & Repository Policy

The Rehabilitation Journal (TRJ) has data depositing function installed via PKP Preservation Network (PKP PN) that digitally preserves the Journals regulated under Open Journal System (OJS). We support digital archiving to ensure the security and accessibility of the data. TRJ maintains its archives through LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe) and CLOCKSS (Controlled Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe) systems.

TRJ's repository Policy encourages authors to post their pre-publication manuscript in institutional repositories or on their websites prior to and during the submission process and to post the Publisher's final formatted PDF version after publication without embargo. These practices benefit authors with productive exchanges as well as earlier and greater citations of published work.

Author Guidelines

Submission Checklist

Please:

1. Read the Aims & Scope to gain an overview and assessed the manuscript is suitable for this journal.
2. Aware issues about publication ethics, plagiarism policy, copyright, authorship, figure formats, data and references format have been appropriately considered;
3. Ensure that all authors have approved the content of the submitted manuscript.
4. A cover letter must be accompanied by initial submission. The cover letter should include a concise description of the manuscript's focus, research question, and relevance to the journal. Additionally, it must declare that the manuscript is original, not published elsewhere, and not under consideration for publication elsewhere.
5. Manuscript, including title page, body of text (Background, Introduction, Methodology, Result, Discussion, and Conclusion) Declaration & Statements, and references in one Word file.
6. The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration (copyright statement and the undertaking Form).
7. Permission Letter (IRB/ERB etc) from every Institution mentioned in the manuscript in methodology.
8. All illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end.
9. The text adheres to the stylistic and bibliographic requirements outlined in the Author Guidelines. (the Vancouver citation style.)
10. Processing Fee: The Rs 5000/- must be accompanied with each article during submission for bearing the reviewing and processing cost.
11. Three reviewers (together with their institutional e-mail address and some keywords representing their area of expertise) who can review your paper. These

reviewers should be independent from you and work in a different institute from you.

12. Utilized the Microsoft Word template for the formatting of the manuscript appropriately.

Manuscript Submission Overview Types of publications

Type & Word Count (Excluding references and tables)	Purpose & Description	Max. No. of Tables/Figures	Max No. of References
Editorial Max. 1000 Words	The purpose of an editorial in a journal is to provide an authoritative and informed discussion on a particular topic or issue that is of interest to the journal's readership. Editorials are typically written by the journal's editors or invited experts in the field.	2	10
Letter To Editor Max. 800 Words Summery Max. 100 Words	A Letter to the Editor is typically a short piece of writing that allows readers of a journal or magazine to respond to previously published articles, express opinions, share personal experiences, or comment on various issues related to the publication's scope. Content: It may address a specific article, correct inaccuracies, provide additional information, offer a different perspective, or discuss implications of research.	-	5(if needed)
Short Communication Max. 1500 Words Abstract Max. 200 Words	The purpose of a short communication in an academic or scientific context is to communicate important research findings or significant observations quickly and concisely to the scholarly community. Short communications are typically brief articles that focus on a specific, well-defined aspect of research and are intended to convey valuable and timely information to readers. They serve several key purposes:	4	30
Study Protocols Max. 4000 Words	The primary purpose of a study protocol is to enhance researchers' and funding bodies' awareness of ongoing research, preventing duplication of efforts, and promoting potential collaborations. By publishing the entire protocol, it provides more information than what is typically required by trial registries, fostering transparency. This transparency allows editors, reviewers, and readers to identify and comprehend any deviations from the original protocol that might have occurred during the study. The Rehabilitation Journal is open to considering protocols for various study designs, including observational studies and systematic reviews.	6	30
Original Research Max. Word 3500 Abstract Max 250 Words	The primary purpose of an original research report is to disseminate the findings of a scientific experiment or study to fellow scientists, researchers, and the public. These reports present an unbiased account of the research methods, obtained results, and the implications of those results. Their objective is to inform and persuade readers, aiding them in making decisions regarding future research and policy. For submissions involving clinical trials (RCTs), we strongly encourage pre-registration. Please ensure the methods section includes the name of the registry and the registration number for your study. In cases of late registration, we expect researchers to be fully transparent about the reasons for the delay and to acknowledge any potential implications it may have on the study's findings and conclusions. Maintaining the	6	40

study's integrity requires complete disclosure of the circumstances surrounding the late registration.

Furthermore, every research article must include a statement confirming that the study obtained ethics approval, along with details such as the name of the ethics committee(s) or institutional review board(s), and the respective approval number(s). Additionally, it should be clearly stated that participants provided informed consent before taking part. Generic statements regarding ethical approval, such as "ethical approval was granted from the institutional board," will not be accepted.

Authors may include additional material as supplementary information, to be published in a single PDF file in the Appendix if the article is accepted for publication.

Reporting Guideline: dependent upon the design of your study.

Qualitative Research	<p>The purpose of conducting a qualitative research study is to gain an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon from the perspective of the participants involved. This approach involves exploring and interpreting the phenomenon through methods like in-depth interviews, focus groups, or observations. Qualitative research is valuable for providing insights into the motivations, emotions, and experiences of individuals, identifying patterns, and uncovering underlying meanings. In your research submission, it is essential to clearly state your qualitative approach, data collection methods, and analysis procedures. Additionally, provide sufficient descriptions of the theoretical and/or conceptual frameworks underlying your study, where applicable. To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of your findings, we strongly recommend describing your approach to maintaining quality and reliability throughout the study. Furthermore, every research article must include a statement confirming that the study obtained ethics approval (or an explanation if it was not required), including the names of the ethics committee(s) or institutional review board(s), along with the corresponding approval number(s). Additionally, participants' informed consent should be explicitly stated. Generic statements like "ethical approval was granted from the institutional board" will not be accepted. You may include any additional material as supplementary information, which will be published in a single PDF file in the Appendix if your article is accepted. For proper reporting, it is mandatory to complete and submit the appropriate reporting guideline for qualitative research. The selected guideline will be published as an appendix once your article is accepted. For qualitative research, the recommended reporting guidelines are Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research (SRQR) and Consolidated Requirements for Qualitative Research (COREQ).</p>	6	40
Max. Words 4500			
Abstract Max. 300 Words			
Systematic Review	<p>This article type encompasses research reviews that systematically synthesize evidence, such as Systematic reviews, Meta-analysis, Scoping reviews, Mixed methods reviews, etc. To clarify the nature of your study, please include the research type in your title. Systematic reviews, providing Level One evidence, are integral to the literature.</p> <p>We seek experts capable of synthesizing the literature and offering meaningful and clinically relevant insights on the review outcomes. The</p>	6	100
Max. Words 4500			
Abstract Max. 250			

topic must be relevant to clinicians, with a central question focusing on whether the findings will impact practitioners' practices.

Reviews that are succinct, focused, and address topical, novel, or controversial questions, likely to engage readers and researchers, are more likely to be accepted. All titles should contain 'a Systematic Review' to accurately reflect the article's content. For transparency, please include systematic review registration details, including the registry and registration number (if registered).

Narrative Review	A narrative review is a form of review article designed to succinctly summarize and assess the current understanding and research trends pertaining to a specific topic. It offers a comprehensive overview of the existing literature, synthesizing current research findings, and identifying gaps in knowledge.	6	80
Max. Words 4000			
Abstract. 250	These reviews play a pivotal role in aiding researchers to identify trends in the field and guide future research endeavors. Authors should explicitly state in their cover letter the reasons justifying the choice of a narrative review over a systematic review for their study. To accurately represent the article's content, all titles should include 'a Narrative review.'		

Submission Process

To submit your manuscript TRJ, register and log in to the submission Link.. The submitting author, who is generally the corresponding author, is responsible for the manuscript during the submission and peer-review process. The submitting author must ensure that all eligible co-authors have been included in the author list according to ICJME criteria to qualify for authorship and that they have all read and approved the submitted version of the manuscript.

Accepted File Formats

Authors are encouraged to use the Microsoft Word template to prepare their manuscript. Using the template file will substantially shorten the time to complete copy-editing and publication of accepted manuscripts.

Supplementary files: May be any format, but it is recommended that you use common, non-proprietary formats where possible.

Cover Letter

A cover letter must be included with each manuscript submission. It should be concise and explain why the content of the paper is significant, placing the findings in the context of existing work. It should explain why the manuscript fits the scope of the journal.

Any prior submissions of the manuscript to journals must be acknowledged. If this is the case, it is strongly recommended that the previous manuscript ID is provided in the submission system, which will ease your current submission process. The names of proposed and excluded reviewers should be provided in the submission system, not in the cover letter.

All cover letters are required to include the statements:

- We confirm that neither the manuscript nor any parts of its content are currently under consideration or published in another journal.

- All authors have approved the manuscript and agree with its submission to The Rehabilitation Journal (TRJ).

Manuscript Preparation

General Considerations

Title Page

These sections should appear in all manuscript types;

- **Title:** The title of your manuscript should be concise, specific and relevant. It should identify if the study reports (human or animal) trial data, or is a systematic review, meta-analysis or replication study. When gene or protein names are included, the abbreviated name rather than full name should be used. Please do not include abbreviated or short forms of the title, such as a running title or head. These will be removed by our Editorial Office.
- **Author List and Affiliations:** Authors' full first and last names must be provided. The initials of any middle names can be added. The PubMed/MEDLINE standard format is used for affiliations: complete address information including city, zip code, state/province, and country. At least one author should be designated as the corresponding author. After acceptance, updates to author names or affiliations may not be permitted.
- **Abstract:** The structured abstract should be followed, but without headings: 1) Background: Place the question addressed in a broad context and highlight the purpose of the study; 2) Methods: Briefly describe the main methods or treatments applied. Include any relevant preregistration numbers, and species and strains of any animals used; 3) Results: Summarize the article's main findings; and 4) Conclusion: Indicate the main conclusions or interpretations. The abstract should be an objective representation of the article: it must not contain results which are not presented and substantiated in the main text and should not exaggerate the main conclusions.
- **Keywords:** Three to ten pertinent keywords need to be added after the abstract. We recommend that the keywords are specific to the article, yet reasonably common within the subject discipline (MeSH).

Research Article Sections

- **Introduction:** The introduction should briefly place the study in a broad context and highlight why it is important. It should define the purpose of the work and its significance, including specific hypotheses being tested. The current state of the research field should be reviewed carefully and key publications cited. Please highlight controversial and diverging hypotheses when necessary. Finally, briefly mention the main aim of the work and highlight the main conclusions. Keep the introduction comprehensible to scientists working outside the topic of the paper.
- **Materials and Methods:** They should be described with sufficient detail to allow others to replicate and build on published results. New methods and protocols should be described in detail while well-established methods can be briefly described and

appropriately cited. Give the name and version of any software used and make clear whether computer code used is available. Include any pre-registration codes.

- **Results:** Provide a concise and precise description of the experimental results, their interpretation as well as the experimental conclusions that can be drawn.
- **Discussion:** Authors should discuss the results and how they can be interpreted from the perspective of previous studies and of the working hypotheses. The findings and their implications should be discussed in the broadest context possible, and limitations of the work highlighted. Future research directions may also be mentioned. This section may be combined with Results.
- **Conclusions:** This section is not mandatory but can be added to the manuscript if the discussion is unusually long or complex.

Declarations & Statements

- Author's Contribution

The Rehabilitation Journal follows the guidelines laid down by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) while receiving, processing, and publication of research manuscripts. The Rehabilitation Journal will consider a right to authorship ONLY when ALL four of the authorship criteria of ICJME are met. These criteria are as follows:

- Substantial participation in the research work with a contribution to all stages of research namely, the conception of the research work; the research design itself; or the data collection; data analysis following collection; or data interpretation following analysis; AND •
- Active contribution to the research manuscript during drafting or its critical revision with reference to the importance of the intellectual content; AND
- Active contribution/participation in the final approval final copy of the manuscript that is ready for publication; AND
- Willingness to share responsibility for the whole research work to allow for investigation and resolution of integrity and accuracy of research work.

The following format should be used for the author's contribution.

AA: substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study.

AA and BA: acquisition of data for the study.

ZH and BA: interpretation of data for the study.

KT: analysis of the data for the study.

ZH and SS: drafted the work.

AA, BA, ZH, KT and SS: revised it critically for important intellectual content.

AA, BA, ZH, KT and SS: final approval of the version to be published and 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. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

- Ethical Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Research Ethical committee (or Ethics Committee) of Name Of Institute (protocol code ABC and date of approval). OR “Ethical review and approval were waived for this study due to reason (please provide a detailed justification).”

- Consent Statement

For any research article that describes a study involving humans, it is necessary to include the following statement: "Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study." Alternatively, if patient consent was waived due to a specific reason, please provide a detailed justification as follows: "Patient consent was waived due to REASON (please provide a detailed justification)." If the study does not involve humans, you can use the statement "Not applicable." It is also acceptable to omit this statement if the study does not involve humans. Additionally, for studies involving patients who can be identified, including self-identification, written informed consent for publication must be acquired from the participating patients. If applicable, please include the statement: "Written informed consent has been obtained from the patient(s) to publish this paper."

- Data Availability Statement

Authors publishing articles in TRJ journals are strongly encouraged to share their research data. In this section, please furnish information about the location of the data that supports the reported findings. This should include links to publicly archived datasets that were analyzed or generated during the study. If no new data were created, or if data cannot be made available due to privacy or ethical constraints, it is still necessary to provide a statement.

Below are suggested Data Availability Statements:

1. The data presented in this study can be accessed openly in a publicly accessible repository known as [repository name e.g., FigShare] under the DOI [doi], with the reference number [reference number].
2. This study involved the analysis of publicly available datasets. Interested parties can access the data through the following link/accession number: [link/accession number].
3. Due to privacy or ethical considerations, the data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author, as they are not publicly accessible.
4. The data used in this study were obtained from a third party, [third party], and can be accessed with their permission either from the authors or via a specific URL.

5. This study does not involve the creation or analysis of new data, and therefore, data sharing is not applicable to this article.
6. The data presented in this study can be found within the article itself or in the supplementary material section.

- **Acknowledgments**

This section provides an opportunity to acknowledge any support received that may not be covered in the author's contribution or funding sections. This can include acknowledgments for administrative and technical assistance, as well as donations in kind, such as materials used for experiments. Please refer to the Guidelines issued by the ICMJE to determine non-author contributors that should be included in the Acknowledgement section.

- **Conflicts of Interest**

Authors are required to disclose any conflicts of interest, or alternatively state, "The authors declare no conflict of interest." It is important for authors to identify and disclose any personal circumstances or interests that could potentially be perceived as influencing the representation or interpretation of the reported research results.

- **Funding**

If funders played a role in the study design, data collection, analysis, manuscript writing, or publication decision, this must also be declared. If funders were not involved in any of these aspects, authors should state "The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results."

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Additional data and files can be uploaded as "Supplementary Files" during the manuscript submission process. The supplementary files will also be available to the referees as part of the peer-review process. Any file format is acceptable; however, we recommend that common, non-proprietary formats are used where possible.

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- **References**

References must be numbered in order of appearance in the text. All publications cited in the text should be presented in a list of references at the end of the manuscript. List the references in the order in which they appear in the text. We recommend preparing the references with a bibliography software package, such as EndNote etc, to avoid typing mistakes and duplicated references. If an article has a DOI and/or PubMed ID, this should be provided after the page number details with hyperlink.

References must be listed in following style:

1. Rose ME, Huerbin MB, Melick J, Marion DW, Palmer AM, Schiding JK, et al. Regulation of interstitial excitatory amino acid concentrations after cortical contusion injury. *Brain Res.* 2002; 935(12): 406. doi.org/10.52567/trj.v7i01.212, PubMed ID: 37075043
2. Murray PR, Rosenthal KS, Kobayashi GS, Pfaller MA. *Medical microbiology*. 4th ed. St. Louis: Mosby; 2002.
3. Kanwal J, Masih FJ, editors. *The rand manual of assessment and treatment*. 16th ed. Subway (ISB): Rand Research Laboratories; 2018.
4. Khan PS, Joseph A, Trent JM. genetic alterations in mice. In: Stein D, Sultan KW, editors. *The genetic basis of human cancer*. New York: McGrawHill; 2002. p. 93113.
5. Pakistan Rehabilitation Society [homepage on the Internet]. Lahore: The Society; 2020 [updated 2020 May 12; cited 2020 Oct 17]. Available from: rehabilitation.pk/.

- **Preparing Figures and Tables**

All Figures, Schemes and Tables should be inserted into the main text close to their first citation and must be numbered following their number of appearance (Figure 1, Figure 2, Table 1, etc.).

All Figures and Tables should have a short explanatory title and caption.

All table columns should have an explanatory heading. To facilitate the copy-editing of larger tables, smaller fonts may be used, but no less than 8 pt. in size. Authors should use the Table option of Microsoft Word to create tables.

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Before submitting manuscripts, authors are requested to read all the guidelines and policies regarding processing and publication of the manuscript. How to complain? The authors have the right to complain and ask explanation if they perceive any misconduct in any applicable policies and ethical guidelines. The authors can raise their complaints by submitting a letter to:

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Dated: 10th January 2025



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