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Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals:  
Ethical Considerations in the Conduct and Reporting of Research: Editorship

## The Role of the Editor

The editor of a journal is the person responsible for its entire content. Owners and editors of medical journals have a common endeavor—publication of a reliable, readable journal produced with due respect for the stated aims of the journal and for costs. Owners and editors, however, have different functions. Owners have the right to appoint and dismiss editors and to make important business decisions in which editors should be involved to the fullest extent possible. Editors must have full authority for determining the editorial content of the journal. The concept of editorial freedom should be resolutely defended by editors even to the extent of their placing their positions at stake. To secure this freedom in practice, the editor should have direct access to the highest level of ownership, not to a delegated manager.

Editors of medical journals should have a contract that clearly states their rights and duties, the general terms of the appointment, and the mechanisms for resolving conflict.

An independent editorial advisory board may be useful in helping the editor establish and maintain editorial policy.

## Editorial Freedom

The ICMJE adopts the World Association of Medical Editors' definition of [editorial freedom](#). According to this definition, editorial freedom, or independence, is the concept that editors-in-chief have full authority over the editorial content of their journal and the timing of publication of that content. Journal owners should not interfere in the evaluation, selection, or editing of individual articles either directly or by creating an environment that strongly influences decisions. Journal owners should not require editors to publish supplements as part of their contractual agreements. Editors should base decisions on the validity of the work and its importance to the journal's readers, not on the commercial success of the journal. Editors should be free to express critical but responsible views about all aspects of medicine without fear of retribution, even if these views conflict with the commercial goals of the publisher. Editors and editors' organizations are obligated to support the concept of editorial freedom and to draw major transgressions of such freedom to the attention of the international medical, academic, and lay communities.

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