

Policy for Handling Retractions, Withdrawals, and Expressions of Concern

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Retractions

Circumstances under which the Publisher, Andover. House Inc., (ANHI) will retract an article:

ANHI is committed to playing its part in maintaining the integrity of the scholarly record. Articles may be retracted if:

- There is a major scientific error that would invalidate the conclusions of the article, for example, where there is clear evidence that findings are unreliable, either as a result of misconduct (e.g., data fabrication) or honest error (e.g., miscalculation or experimental error).
- Where the findings have previously been published elsewhere without proper cross-referencing, permission, or justification (i.e., cases of redundant publication).
- Where there are ethical issues such as plagiarism (appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit, including those obtained through confidential review of others' manuscripts) or inappropriate authorship (e.g., "guest" authorship).
- Where unethical research has been reported.

ANHI's retraction process

In order to ensure that retractions are handled according to industry best practices and in accordance with COPE guidelines, the Publisher adopts the following retraction process:

1. The journal Editor-in-chief and the Managing Editor are informed when an article requires potential retraction.
2. With the assistance of an Auditor, the journal editor should follow the step-by-step guidelines according to the COPE flowcharts (including evaluating a response from the article's author) and decide whether retraction is appropriate.
3. The final decision to retract is communicated to the author and, if necessary, any other relevant bodies, such as the author's institution.
4. The retraction notice is then posted online, linked to the article being retracted, and published in the next available issue of the journal.

Process for issuing a retraction notice

Where the decision is taken to retract, and the article to be retracted is the Version of Record (i.e., it has been published on the website in a final form or in an issue of a journal), ANHI issues a retraction notice, which is published separately but linked to the article being retracted. A "retracted" watermark should also be added to the article's PDF; however, the article as first published should otherwise be retained online to maintain the scientific record. Issuing a retraction notice will mean the following:

1. The retraction notice will appear on the last numbered page of the journal's issue.
2. The retraction notice will be listed on the contents page and include the title of the article being retracted.
3. The text of the retraction notice will explain why the article is being retracted.
4. The retraction notice and the retracted article will be clearly linked so that the retraction will be apparent to anyone who comes across the retracted article.

Withdrawals

Circumstances under which an article may be withdrawn

- Should the corresponding author request a withdrawal because of a major scientific error that would invalidate the conclusions of the article, for example, where there is clear evidence that

findings are unreliable, either as a result of misconduct or honest error (e.g., miscalculation or experimental error), an unpublished article remains in the database, but otherwise there will be no consequences.

- If it happens with an already-published article, then an *Expression of Concern* note will be posted on the article text until corrections are made or the paper is withdrawn.

Accepted Articles

An Accepted Article is an article that has undergone copyediting, typesetting, and formatting, but it is not yet the definitive *Version of Record*. This version will undergo additional review before its final version is published. Please note that during that process, errors may be discovered, which could affect the content.

While an Accepted Article may have been allocated a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), it does not yet carry complete bibliographic information. Therefore, when an Accepted Article is to be retracted because, for example, it contains errors, has been accidentally submitted twice, or any other guideline for retraction, it may be deleted and replaced with a withdrawal notice. Even in the above circumstances, bibliographic information about the deleted article should be retained for the scientific record, and the reasons for its removal should be explained.

Version of Record

It is the Publisher's policy to strongly discourage withdrawal of the *Version of Record* in line with the *International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers* guidelines on retractions and preservation of the objective record of science. Therefore, deletion of the *Version of Record* is rare, and the Publisher will only consider it in limited circumstances, such as the following:

- Where there has been a violation of the privacy of the research subject.
- Where there are errors to which a member of the general public might be exposed and, if followed or adopted, would pose a significant risk to health.
- Where a clearly defamatory comment has been made about others in the relevant field or about their work.

Expressions of Concern

Journal editors may consider issuing an *Expression of Concern* if they have well-founded concerns and feel that readers should be aware of them but do not yet have evidence that the article should be retracted. Therefore, Expressions of Concern should only be issued if an investigation into the problems relating to the article has proved inconclusive and strong indicators remain that the concerns are valid. See [COPE case 17-02 Data manipulation and institute's internal review](#).

On occasion, an Expression of Concern may be issued while an investigation is underway, but a judgment will not be available for a considerable time. However, in such cases, there must be well-founded grounds to suggest that the concerns are valid. In all cases, editors should be aware that an Expression of Concern carries the same risks to a researcher's reputation as a retraction, and it is often preferable to wait to publish a retraction until a definitive judgment has been achieved by an independent investigation.

Integrity and ethics concerns and questions about these policies can be submitted to ANHI via email. Queries received will be directed to the editorial team.

President, Andover House, Inc.
24 Dartmouth St.
North Andover, MA 01845
Tel: +1-734-239-3342 (m)
publisher@andoverhouse.org