

## Policy Document

### Introduction

This is the complete Policy Document of Journal of Marriage & Family Studies (JMFS). It contains all policy related information of JMFS mentioned under the following headings. This Policy Document complies with the [Principles of Transparency & Best Practices in Scholarly Publishing](#) and [CORE Practices](#) set by [HEC](#), [DOAJ](#), and [COPE](#). The Policy Document can be found [here](#).

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### **i. About the Journal**

The need for academic and scholarly research can not be ignored and underestimated. Journals are a good source of sharing research among colleagues and peers. There is shortage of academic and scholarly journals in the field of marriage, relationships, and family studies in Pakistan. Therefore, the Marital Therapy and Counseling Center (Registered) has decided to launch its own journal entitled “Journal of Marriage & Family Studies” (JMFS). The ISSN of the Journal of Marriage & Family Studies is [3007-2425 \(Online\); 3007-2417 \(Print\)](#). The **Policy Document** of the journal complies with the [Principles of Transparency & Best Practices in Scholarly Publishing](#) and [CORE Practices](#) set by [HEC](#), [DOAJ](#), and [COPE](#) and can be found [here](#).

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies is the official publication and is owned by Marital Therapy and Counseling Center (SMC-PVT) LTD which is registered with Government of Pakistan as a health based Research and Development organization. The Marital Therapy and Counseling Center has the mandate to carry out health based research and development activities including publication of journals, periodicals, monographs, books; to render consultancy services related to research and development and marital and family therapy and counseling; and to carry out research and development related projects in the fields of marriage, relationships, and family studies. The details about management, Editorial Board, and Advisory Board of the Journal of Marriage & Family Studies can be found [here](#).

### **ii. Aims & Scope**

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies is an academic & scholarly, double blind peer reviewed, online open access journal committed to advance the science and discipline of marriage, relationships, and family. The target readership of the Journal of Marriage & Family Studies includes but are not limited to psychologists, mental health professionals, behavioral scientists, social sciences professionals, donors, policy makers, government and non governmental agencies working in the areas of behavioral, and social sciences. The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies accepts original articles, qualitative and mixed methods articles, review articles including systematic reviews and meta analysis, case study articles, view point, and letters to the editor relevant to all areas of marriage, relationships, and family studies. The detailed guidelines related to these article types can be found [here](#).

It is to be noted that Journal of Marriage & Family Studies does not accept multiple, duplicate, concurrent, or redundant publications. An author should not in general publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal or primary publication. Journal of Marriage & Family Studies does not view the following uses of a work as prior publication: publication in the form of an abstract; publication as an academic thesis; publication as an electronic preprint.

### **iii. Open Access**

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies is an open access journal: all articles will be immediately and permanently free for everyone to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, index, or for any other lawful purpose under the [Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial International License \(CC BY-NC 4.0\)](#). The JMFS complies with the policies of [Directory of Open Access Journals \(DOAJ\)](#) for scholarly publishing under the Open Access Model.

#### **iv. Publishing License**

Permitted third party (re)use is defined by the following Creative Commons user license: **Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 (CC BY-NC 4.0)**

[Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial International License \(CC BY-NC 4.0\)](#) allows others to re-use the work without permission as long as the work is properly referenced and the use is non-commercial. Alternative license arrangements are available, for example, to meet particular funder mandates, made at the author's request.

#### **v. Copyright Policy**

An author who publishes in the Journal of Marriage & Family Studies agrees to the following terms:

- Author(s) retains the copyright and grants the journal the right of first publication of the work simultaneously licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial International License \(CC BY-NC 4.0\)](#) which permits non-Commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed.
- Author is able to enter into separate, additional contractual arrangements for the non-exclusive distribution of the journal's published version of the work (e.g., post it to an institutional repository or publish it in a book) with the acknowledgement of its initial publication in this journal.
- Author is permitted and encouraged to post his/her work online (e.g., in institutional repositories or on their website) prior to and during the submission process, as it can lead to productive exchanges, as well as earlier and greater citation of the published work.

#### **vi. Archiving Policy**

All the published content in the journal will permanently be archived to PKP Preservation Network, [LOCKSS](#) and [CLOCKSS](#).

#### **Initiative for Open Citation (I4OC) Program**

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies has partnered with [Initiative for Open Citation \(I4OC\)](#) program for promoting the unrestricted availability of scholarly citation data.

#### **vii. Publication Frequency & Timeline**

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies will be published on biannual basis in the months of December and June. The Volume of JMFS will run from July to June and its issues will be published in the months of December and June. The submissions to the journal are welcome throughout the year. We encourage submissions from around the world.

#### **viii. Authorship Policy**

An 'author' is an individual who has made a significant intellectual contribution (including conception, design, execution, or interpretation) to the study. As per accepted international standards, all persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed as author(s).

Four criteria must all be met to be credited as an author:

- Substantial contribution to the study's conception and design, data acquisition, analysis, and interpretation.

- Drafting or revising the article for intellectual content.
- Approval of the final version.
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work.

The order of authorship should be a joint decision of the coauthors. The Individuals who are involved in a study but do not qualify for authorship, should be listed as ‘Contributors’ or ‘Acknowledged Individuals’. Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of the research group alone does not constitute authorship, although all contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in the Acknowledgments section.

Three types of authorship are considered unacceptable:

- ‘Ghost’ authors, who contribute substantially but are not acknowledged (often paid by commercial sponsors);
- ‘Guest’ authors, who make no significant contributions, but are listed to help increase the chances of publication;
- ‘Gift’ authors, whose contribution is based solely on a tenuous affiliation with a study.

#### **ix. Contribution of Authors**

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies encourages authors to keep transparency in authorship in line with [CRediT Author Statement](#). CRediT offers authors the opportunity to share an accurate and detailed description of their diverse contributions to the published work. It is to be noted that:

- The corresponding author is responsible for ensuring that the descriptions are accurate and agreed by all authors.
- The role(s) of all authors should be listed, using the relevant CRediT categories.
- Authors may have contributed in multiple roles as per the given CRediT categories:

Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project Administration, Funding Acquisition

The sample CRediT Author Statement is given below:

**Jamal Shah:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Software; **Alia Khurana:** Data curation, Writing-Original draft preparation; **Tania Shamsi:** Visualization, Investigation; **Tania Shamsi:** Supervision; **Alia Khurana:** Software, Validation; **Jamal Shah:** Writing- Reviewing and Editing  
If a complaint is filed over a dispute regarding authorship, an investigation may be conducted with the journal Chief Editor and author’s institution to reach a resolution keeping in line with [COPE Guidelines](#).

#### **x. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

Any interest or relationship, financial or otherwise, which might be perceived as influencing an author's objectivity, is considered a potential source of conflict of interest. These must be disclosed when directly relevant or directly related to the work that the authors describe in their manuscript. All authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organizations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work. Examples of potential conflict of interests include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other funding, membership of a company's board of directors, membership of an advisory board or committee for a company, and consultancy for or receipt of speaker's fees from a company. Authors must disclose any conflict of interest statement in the manuscript file. If there are no interests to declare then please state this:

'Declarations of conflict of interest: none'. This statement will be ultimately published if the article is accepted. The existence of a conflict of interest does not preclude publication in the journal. It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to review this policy with all authors.

**xi. Role of the Funding Source**

You are requested to identify who provided financial support for the conduct of the research and/or preparation of the article and to briefly describe the role of the sponsor(s), if any, in study design; in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data; in the writing of the article; and in the decision to submit the article for publication. If the funding source(s) had no such involvement, then this should be stated.

**xii. Informed Consent**

Studies on patients or volunteers require ethics committee approval and informed consent, which should be documented in the paper. Appropriate consents, and permissions must be obtained where an author wishes to include case details or other personal information or images of patients and any other individuals. Written consents must be retained by the author but copies should not be provided to the journal. Only if specifically requested by the journal in exceptional circumstances (for example if a legal issue arises), the author must provide copies of the consents or evidence that such consents have been obtained. Unless you have written permission from the patient or volunteers (or, where applicable, the next of kin), the personal details of any patient or volunteer included in any part of the article must be removed before submission.

**xiii. Editorial and Peer Review Policy**

All manuscripts are initially evaluated by the Chief Editor and by members of Editorial Board. All manuscripts are checked for Similarity Index (Plagiarism) by the Turnitin software before they move to the review stage. The acceptable range of Similarity Index is <19 as per [HEC Policy](#). If found relevant and free from plagiarized content, manuscripts are then subject to independent and anonymous double blind peer review by two referees who are experts in the relevant field and are not part of editorial or advisory board of the journal. The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies runs the rounds of double blind peer review till the peer reviewers give recommendation of "Accept Submission". After review, the decision to publish the manuscript is made and communicated to author(s). If any of the authors have concerns regarding the Similarity Index of their submitted manuscript, they may contact Chief Editor at [ceditor@mtccenter.com](mailto:ceditor@mtccenter.com). If an article, for example, is found to have plagiarized work or included third-party copyright material without permission or with insufficient acknowledgement, or if the authorship of the article is contested, we reserve the right to take action including, but not limited to: publishing an erratum or corrigendum (correction); retracting the article; taking up the matter with the head of department or dean of the author's institution and/or relevant academic bodies or societies; or taking appropriate legal action.

**xiv. Originality & Plagiarism Policy**

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies completely follows [HEC's Plagiarism Policy](#). As per HEC Policy, all submitted manuscripts are checked for Similarity Index through Turnitin Software. Only manuscripts having Similarity Index less than <19% will be processed further. The papers whose Similarity Index are found high are returned to authors. Authors may resubmit the manuscripts after removing the plagiarized content. Authors are advised not to check the Similarity

Index by themselves. Only the Editorial Team of the journal will check Similarity Index through the authorized software (Turnitin). If an author has disagreement regarding the Similarity Index of submitted manuscripts, he/she can contact Chief Editor at [ceditor@mtccenter.com](mailto:ceditor@mtccenter.com)

#### **xv. Article Publication Charges (APC)**

The journal provides open access to its published content **free of charge; there is no submission fee.** However, the authors of an accepted article are charged one time **Article Publication Charges (APC) of PKR 20,000 or an equivalent amount in USD for foreign authors** to be deposited in the bank account\* and upload the copy of receipt to OJS by starting a new discussion in copyedited section.

*\*Bank Name: Bank Alfalah*

*Account Title: Marital Therapy and Counseling Center (SMC-PVT) LTD*

*Account No. 1008039315*

*Account No (IBAN). PK18ALFH0198001008039315*

*Branch Name: Bosan Road Branch, Multan*

*Branch Code: 0198*

The following categories of authors can claim discount on APC as outlined below:

Authors from [UN List of Least Developed Countries \(LDCs\)](#) = 100% discount

Peer Reviewers of JMFS = 10% discount

PhD/MPhil students = 10% discount

BS (Hons) students = 15% discount

**NB:** *A student can only claim discount if he/she is the first author of the article. The student has to apply with his/her student card for claiming discount on APC.*

#### **Article Publication Charges Explained**

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies ensures that the Article Publication Charges (APC) should be clearly defined on the website of the journal. The article processing charges covers the costs of turning a manuscript into a finished article, as well as the costs of hosting, distributing and promoting an article.

The amount of APC is used to cover the costs related to following categories:

- Installation and Maintenance of Journal Website on annual basis
- Remuneration to reviewers
- Remuneration of Technical staff including webmaster and typesetters etc.
- Miscellaneous Expenses including stationery charges etc.
- Registration fee for applying to international indexing agencies

With the increasing inflation, the APC may increase slightly with the passage of time.

There is no submission and review charges if the paper is rejected. However, due to the costs incurred, the JMFS reserves the right to a partial charge of the APC if the author(s) withdraws the paper after the peer review is complete and decision to publish the article has been communicated to the author(s). It is to be noted that Journal of Marriage & Family Studies has no other source of revenue except Article Publication Charges (APCs).

#### **xvi. After Acceptance of Article**

Your accepted article will move on to Copyediting stage. Proofs will be made available to the corresponding author via our Journal Management System and corrections should be made directly



or notified to us promptly. Author(s) are reminded to check their proofs carefully to confirm that all author information, including names, affiliations, sequence and contact details are correct, and that Conflict of Interest and Source of Funding statements, if any, are accurate. Please note that if there are any changes to the author list at this stage, that must be approved by the Editorial Board. In that case, all authors will be required to complete and sign a form authorizing the change.

### **English Language Editing Service**

The JMFS accepts articles possessing good English grammar and proper formatting as per journal style guidelines. The authors who wish to avail journal's English Language Editing services, may contact Managing Editor by sending an email request at **meditor@mtccenter.com**

### **xvii. Publication Ethics & Malpractice Statements**

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies follows the [Principles of Transparency & Best Practices in Scholarly Publishing](#) and [CORE Practices](#) issued by the Committee on Publication Ethics [COPE](#). The JMFS has a clearly defined mechanism of dealing with an ethical issue related to publication in the JMFS research where misconduct has occurred, including plagiarism, citation manipulation, data falsification/fabrication, and ethical oversight. The Editorial Board of the JMFS has the right to discuss the issue to reach a solution. The members of Advisory Board may be engaged in the process for their scientific opinions to reach a solution. The ethical issue may be shared with the [COPE](#) team by sharing it to [COPE Forum](#) so that opinion of [COPE](#) members may be sought. The final decision has to be made by the Editorial Board of JMFS keeping in view the [Principles of Transparency & Best Practices in Scholarly Publishing](#) and [CORE Practices](#) of [COPE](#). A penalty or punitive measure may be suggested if Editorial Board deems necessary.

### **A. Complaints and Appeals**

In case of Allegations of Misconduct such as plagiarism, falsification/fabrication of data, the aggrieved party may launch a formal complaint to the Chief Editor. The complaint should be initiated in writing by sending an email to Chief Editor at **ceditor@mtccenter.com**. The Chief Editor in consultation with the members of the Editorial Board will discuss and resolve the Complaint in accordance with the [Principles of Transparency & Best Practices in Scholarly Publishing](#) and [CORE Practices](#) of [COPE](#).

### **Appealing the Publication Decision**

The Editorial Board of JMFS believes that the manuscripts shall not be declined without sharing a proper statement (Reviewers Comments) of the rejection decision with the author(s).

The decision of the Editorial Board is not eligible for a formal appeal unless the author(s) believe that the decision of manuscript rejection is based on an error in the review process of the manuscript. In such case, the author(s) may file a formal appeal against the decision of rejection. However, the author(s) need to provide a written statement with detailed description of the error which they believe has occurred and affected the review process of the manuscript.

In case the author(s) believe that the decision of rejection of the manuscript has been affected by a publication ethics breach, the author(s) may contact the Chief Editor with a detailed written description of the concern along with the relevant information supporting the concern.

### **B. Data Sharing and Reproducibility**

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies encourages all authors to follow these principles for data sharing and reproducibility:

- The author(s) should share relevant datasets with the Editorial Board and Reviewers where necessary during the publication process.
- Research data should be made available free of charge to all researchers wherever possible and with minimal reuse restrictions.
- The corresponding author of a published article is responsible for sharing datasets with other researchers.

### C. Post Publication Discussions and Corrections

Every article published in Journal of Marriage & Family Studies is considered Version of Record (VOR). Version of record constitutes definitive and final version of an article for purposes of citation. The Version of Record represents the revised and accepted after peer review version of an article including any supplementary material such as dataset.

Sometimes after an article has been published, it may be necessary to make a change to the final version of the article. This will be done after careful consideration by the Editorial Board in accordance with Post Publication Guidelines of [COPE](#).

Any necessary changes will be accompanied with a post-publication notice which will be permanently linked to the original article so that readers will be fully informed of any necessary changes. This can be in the form of a **Correction** notice, an **Expression of Concern**, a **Retraction** and in rare circumstances a **Removal**.

Authors should notify us as soon as possible if they find errors in their published article, especially errors that could affect the interpretation of data or reliability of information presented. It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to ensure consensus has been reached between all listed co-authors prior to putting forward any requests for corrections or retractions to an article.

If, after reading the Guidelines here, you believe a correction or retraction is necessary for your article, contact the Chief Editor at [ceditor@mtccenter.com](mailto:ceditor@mtccenter.com)

### Correction Notice

A **Correction** notice will be issued when it is necessary to correct an error or omission which can impact the interpretation of the article, but where the scholarly integrity of the article remains intact. Examples include mislabeling of a figure, missing key information on funding or competing interests of the authors.

The following principles will be followed for major and minor errors in an article:

- All major errors are accompanied by a separate correction notice. The correction notice should provide clear details of the error and the changes that have been made to the Version of Record. Under these circumstances, the Editorial Board of JMFS will:
  - Correct the online article.
  - Issue a separate correction notice electronically linked back to the corrected version.
  - Add a footnote to the article displaying the electronic link to the correction notice.
  - Paginate and make available the correction notice in the online issue of the journal.
  - Make the correction notice free to view.
- Any minor errors will not be accompanied by a separate correction notice. Instead a footnote will be added to the article detailing to the reader that the article has been corrected. Minor errors do not impact the reliability of, or the reader's understanding of the scholarly content.



## Retractions

A **Retraction** notice will be issued where a major error (e.g., in the analysis or methods) invalidates the conclusions in the article, or where research misconduct or publication misconduct has taken place (e.g., research without required ethical approvals, fabricated data, manipulated images, plagiarism, duplicate publication). The decision to issue a retraction for an article will be made in accordance with [Principles of Transparency & Best Practices in Scholarly Publishing](#) and [CORE Practices](#) of [COPE](#), and will involve an investigation by the Editorial Board of JMFS. Authors and institutions may request a retraction of their articles if their reasons meet the criteria for retraction.

Retraction will be considered in following conditions:

- If there is clear evidence that the findings are unreliable, either as a result of misconduct (e.g., data fabrication or image manipulation) or honest error (e.g., miscalculation or experimental error).
- If the findings have previously been published elsewhere without proper cross referencing, permission or justification (e.g., cases of redundant publication or duplicate publication).
- If the research constitutes [Plagiarism as per HEC Policy](#).
- Where there is evidence of fraudulent authorship and [Journal Authorship Policy](#) is not followed.
- Where there is evidence of compromised peer review.
- If there is evidence of unethical research.

Where the decision has been taken to retract an article, the journal will:

- Add a “retracted” watermark to the published Version of Record of the article.
- Issue a separate retraction statement, titled ‘Retraction: [article title]’, that will be linked to the retracted article on JMFS website.
- Paginate and make available the retraction statement in the online issue of the journal.

## Expressions of Concern

In some cases, an **Expression of Concern** notice may be considered where concerns of a major nature have been raised (e.g., serious research or publication misconduct), but where the outcome of the investigation is inconclusive or where due to various complexities, the investigation will not be complete for a considerable time.

When the investigation has been completed a Retraction or Correction notice may follow the Expression of Concern, and alongside the original article, all will remain part of the permanent published record.

Publication of an expression of concern notice will be considered if:

- There is inconclusive evidence of research or publication misconduct by the authors, but the nature of the concerns warrant notifying the readers.
- There are well-founded concerns that the findings are unreliable or that misconduct may have occurred, but there is limited cooperation from the authors’ institution(s) in investigating the concerns raised.
- There is an investigation into alleged misconduct related to the publication that has not been, or would not be, fair and impartial or conclusive.
- An investigation is underway, but a judgement will not be available for a considerable time and the nature of the concerns warrant notifying the readers.

The expression of concern will be linked back to the published article it relates to.

## **Article Removal**

An **article removal** will be issued in rare circumstances where the problems are very serious in nature and cannot be addressed by a Retraction or Correction notice. The Editorial Board will consider removal of a published article from JMFS in very limited circumstances such as:

- If the article contains content that could pose a serious risk if followed or acted upon.
- If the article contains content which violates the rights to privacy of a study participant.
- If the article is defamatory or infringes other legal rights.
- If an article is subject to a court order.

In case of an article being removed from JMFS, a removal notice will be issued in its place.

## **Addenda**

An **addendum** is a notification of an addition of information to an article. Addenda do not contradict the original publication and are not used to fix errors (for which a Correction notice will be published), but if the author needs to update or add some key information then, this can be published as an addendum. Addenda may be peer reviewed, as decided by the Editorial Board of JMFS.

All addenda are electronically linked to the published article to which they relate.

### **xviii. Advertising Policy**

The advertisements appearing in the Journal of Marriage & Family Studies are independent and do not influence the Editorial decisions. Advertisers and donors have no control over editorial decision making under any circumstances.

The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies requires all advertisements to clearly identify the advertiser and the product or service being offered. In the case of drug advertisements, the full generic name of each active ingredient should appear. The Journal of Marriage & Family Studies will place commercial advertisements adjacent to any editorial matter that discusses the product being advertised, it will not be placed adjacent to any article reporting research on the advertised product, similarly, advertisements should not refer to an article in the same issue in which they appear. The appearance and outlook of advertisements should be different and specific so that readers may not confuse the editorial material with the advertisements.

Advertisements may not be deceptive or misleading. Exaggerated or extravagantly worded copies are not allowed. Advertisements will not be accepted if they appear to be indecent or offensive in either text or artwork, or contain negative content of a personal, racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, or religious character.

The Editorial Board of Journal of Marriage & Family Studies has the right to refuse any advertisement for any reason. The decision as to acceptance (and any questions about eligibility raised by readers or others) is made jointly by members of the Editorial Board. Those advertisements will be refused which do not comply with the journal's guidelines. The decision of the Editorial Board regarding the acceptance of any advertisement should be final. However, if any advertiser wants to lodge a complaint in this regard, may contact Chief Editor at [ceditor@mtccenter.com](mailto:ceditor@mtccenter.com)