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E-mail: office@bioclima.ro, http://bioclima.ro/Journal.htm
BALNEO RESEARCH Balneo and PRM Research Journal English Edition
e ISSN 2734 - 8458 p ISSN 2734 - 844X ROMANIAN ASSOCIATION OF BALNEOLOGY

Policy title: Artificial Intelligence Policy

Balneo and PRM Research Journal
Romanian Association of Balneology

Version: 1.0 / **Effective from:** 2026
Applies to: authors, reviewers, editors, editorial board members, guest editors, production staff, and all contributors involved in the submission, evaluation, editing, production, and publication of manuscripts in *Balneo and PRM Research Journal*.

1. Purpose of the Policy

Balneo and PRM Research Journal recognizes that artificial intelligence tools, including generative artificial intelligence, large language models, machine-learning systems, automated editing tools, image-processing tools, statistical support tools, and reference-checking systems, may support scientific communication when used responsibly. The journal adopts a permissive but strictly regulated approach: AI-assisted tools may be used to improve clarity, efficiency, language quality, technical editing, data visualization, and editorial quality control, but they must never replace human scientific judgment, authorship responsibility, peer-review responsibility, ethical accountability, or final editorial decision-making. This policy is aligned with international recommendations emphasizing transparency, accountability, confidentiality, and human responsibility in the use of AI in scholarly publishing.

2. General Principles

The use of AI tools in relation to submitted or published manuscripts must comply with the following principles: human accountability, transparency, confidentiality, accuracy, originality, verifiability, ethical oversight, and protection of the scientific record. Authors, reviewers, editors, and publishers remain responsible for the integrity of all scientific content, including text, data, figures, tables, references, interpretations, conclusions, and editorial correspondence. AI-generated or AI-assisted content must be reviewed, verified, corrected, and approved by responsible humans before submission, review, publication, or editorial use. International recommendations state that AI may produce output that appears authoritative but may be inaccurate, incomplete, or biased; therefore, humans remain responsible for reviewing and ensuring accuracy.

3. Definition of AI Tools

For the purposes of this policy, “AI tools” include, but are not limited to, generative AI systems, large language models, chatbots, automated writing assistants, translation engines, grammar-editing tools, reference-management or reference-checking tools using AI, automated image-processing tools, statistical coding assistants, data-analysis assistants, machine-learning platforms, image-generation systems, and AI-supported editorial screening tools. This definition includes both free and commercial systems, whether locally installed, web-based, or embedded into word processors, reference managers, statistical software, image-processing tools, or submission platforms.

4. AI and Authorship

AI tools, chatbots, large language models, software systems, or any non-human system must not be listed as authors, co-authors, corresponding authors, collaborators, contributors, or members of a research group. Authorship is limited to human contributors who meet authorship criteria and can take public responsibility for the work. AI tools cannot approve the final manuscript, cannot accept responsibility for accuracy or integrity, cannot respond to allegations of misconduct, cannot hold copyright, and cannot sign authorship, conflict-of-interest, ethics, or license statements. This position is consistent with ICMJE and WAME recommendations that AI-assisted technologies should not be listed as authors and that only humans can meet authorship accountability requirements.

5. Permitted Uses of AI by Authors

Authors may use AI tools for language editing, grammar correction, spelling correction, formatting support, translation assistance, readability improvement, preliminary organization of ideas, reference formatting assistance, technical editing, graphical polishing, coding support, statistical workflow assistance, and preliminary data visualization, provided that all outputs are fully checked by the authors. AI tools may also be used to assist in preparing plain-language summaries, graphical abstracts, structured outlines, or technical descriptions, provided that the final content accurately reflects the authors' own work and is disclosed when required by this policy.

6. Uses Requiring Disclosure by Authors

Authors must disclose the use of AI tools when AI has contributed to drafting text, rewriting substantial sections, translating substantive scientific content, generating or modifying figures, creating tables, assisting with statistical code, assisting with data analysis, generating summaries of literature, generating search strategies, preparing graphical abstracts, or producing any content that influenced the scientific presentation or interpretation of the manuscript. WAME recommends transparency when chatbots or generative AI are used, including identifying how they were used, and ICMJE recommends disclosure of which tool was used and for what purpose.

7. Uses Not Requiring Disclosure

Disclosure is not required for routine spelling correction, grammar checking, reference-formatting by standard reference managers, non-generative word-processing functions, plagiarism screening performed before submission, or minor typographical correction, provided that these tools do not generate substantive scientific content, interpretations, references, conclusions, or data. When there is uncertainty, authors should disclose the use of the tool.

8. Prohibited Uses by Authors

Authors must not use AI tools to fabricate data, generate false results, invent references, create misleading citations, manipulate images, alter clinical data, generate patient cases, fabricate peer-review suggestions, create false ethics statements, conceal plagiarism, rewrite copied text to evade similarity detection, or generate misleading scientific claims. Authors must not insert hidden prompts, invisible text, white-font instructions, machine-readable instructions, or other manipulative content intended to influence editorial screening, peer review, AI-assisted checks, indexing systems, or editorial decisions.

9. Accuracy, Citations, and Source Verification

Authors are fully responsible for verifying all references, quotations, factual claims, statistical outputs, clinical statements, and interpretations generated or assisted by AI tools. AI-generated references must not be used unless each reference has been independently verified against a reliable bibliographic source. Authors must ensure that cited sources exist, support the claims made, and are accurately represented. WAME explicitly states that authors are responsible for the accuracy of chatbot-generated material, for appropriate attribution, and for ensuring that cited sources support the statements made.

10. AI Use in Literature Reviews and Systematic Reviews

AI tools may assist with organization of search terms, deduplication support, preliminary screening support, or extraction template preparation. However, AI must not replace human screening, eligibility decisions, risk-of-bias assessment, evidence grading, or final synthesis. For systematic reviews, scoping reviews, umbrella reviews, bibliometric studies, and meta-analyses, authors must specify whether AI tools were used in search strategy development, screening, data extraction, coding, risk-of-bias assessment, statistical analysis, or visualization. Human authors must retain full responsibility for PRISMA compliance, methodological decisions, and reproducibility.

11. AI Use in Data Analysis, Statistics, and Coding

AI-assisted tools may be used to support statistical coding, syntax checking, data visualization, or computational workflow drafting. Authors must verify all code, assumptions, statistical tests, outputs, and interpretations. When AI tools materially contribute to analysis or code generation, the manuscript must disclose the tool, version where available, purpose of use, and human verification process. WAME recommends that when AI is used to carry out or generate analytical work, generate tables or figures, report results, or write computer code, this should be stated in the manuscript, including in relevant methodological sections.

12. AI Use in Figures, Images, and Visual Materials

AI tools may be used for technical enhancement of figures, graphical clarity, layout improvement, schematic illustration, or graphical abstract preparation, provided that the resulting images are accurate, non-misleading, and clearly disclosed. AI must not be used to alter clinical images, radiological images,

histological images, electrophysiological recordings, graphs, laboratory images, or any research data image in a way that changes the scientific meaning. Any AI-assisted image generation or image modification must be disclosed in the figure legend or in the AI Use Statement.

13. AI Use with Patient Data and Confidential Information

Authors must not upload identifiable patient information, clinical images, raw datasets, unpublished patient records, consent forms, ethics documents, confidential institutional data, or any protected health information into external AI systems unless the system is institutionally approved, legally compliant, and explicitly authorized for that purpose. All patient data must remain protected according to applicable privacy regulations, ethical approvals, institutional rules, and journal confidentiality expectations.

14. Mandatory AI Use Statement for Authors

All submitted manuscripts must include an **AI Use Statement** before the references or within the declarations section. If AI was not used, authors must state:

"The authors declare that no artificial intelligence tools were used in the preparation, writing, analysis, interpretation, or presentation of this manuscript."

If AI was used, authors must state:

"Artificial intelligence tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript as follows: [tool name, version if available] was used for [specific purpose: language editing/statistical code support/figure preparation/literature organization/etc.]. All AI-assisted outputs were reviewed, verified, corrected, and approved by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, originality, and final content of the manuscript."

15. AI Use in Cover Letter

At submission, authors must disclose AI use in the cover letter or submission form. This disclosure must be consistent with the AI Use Statement in the manuscript. Undisclosed use of AI for substantive writing, data analysis, figure generation, reference generation, or interpretation may be treated as a breach of editorial policy.

16. AI Use by Reviewers

Reviewers may use AI tools only for limited support, such as organizing their own notes, improving grammar of their review, or checking clarity of their comments, provided that manuscript confidentiality is fully protected. Reviewers must not upload manuscripts, figures, tables, supplementary files, unpublished data, or confidential review materials into public or external AI systems unless the journal has explicitly authorized the system and confidentiality is guaranteed. ICMJE warns that submitted manuscripts are privileged communications and that uploading them into AI systems may violate confidentiality, while WAME similarly states that supplying an author's manuscript to a chatbot may breach confidentiality.

17. Reviewer Disclosure of AI Use

If reviewers use AI tools in preparing comments, they must disclose this to the editor in a confidential note. The disclosure must include the tool used and the purpose of use. Reviewers remain fully responsible for the content, tone, accuracy, fairness, and recommendations included in their review. AI-generated peer-review comments must not be submitted without careful human evaluation and correction. WAME recommends that reviewers and editors specify any use of chatbots in manuscript evaluation, review generation, or correspondence.

18. Prohibited Reviewer Uses

Reviewers must not use AI tools to generate full peer-review reports without substantive human assessment. Reviewers must not use AI to identify authors in anonymized review, breach blinding, extract unpublished ideas for personal use, generate coercive citation suggestions, evaluate confidential data through unauthorized external platforms, or produce defamatory, discriminatory, or unsupported statements. Reviewers must not rely on AI-generated factual claims, references, statistical critiques, or ethical allegations without independent verification.

19. AI Use by Editors

Editors may use AI-assisted tools for administrative and editorial support, including technical checks, similarity screening, reference verification, language-quality screening, metadata checks, statistical red-flag screening, image-integrity screening, reporting-guideline checks, and production-quality control. AI may support but must never replace editorial judgment. Final decisions on desk rejection, peer-review invitation, revision, acceptance, correction, expression of concern, or retraction must always be made by human editors.

20. Editorial Confidentiality

Editors, editorial board members, and editorial staff must not upload submitted manuscripts, unpublished data, reviewer identities, reviewer comments, editorial correspondence, decision letters, authors' responses, or confidential internal documents into external AI systems unless the journal has approved the tool, confidentiality is contractually ensured, and use complies with applicable legal and ethical requirements. This follows the same confidentiality principle applied to reviewers and submitted manuscripts.

21. AI Use in Editorial Correspondence

Editors may use AI tools to improve clarity, tone, grammar, structure, or consistency of editorial correspondence. However, editors must verify the final content and ensure that AI-assisted correspondence accurately reflects the editorial decision, reviewer comments, ethical requirements, and journal policy. AI tools must not independently generate final editorial decisions.

22. AI Use in Production and Quality Control

The journal may use AI-supported or automated tools during production for language consistency checks, layout verification, metadata consistency, reference validation, DOI checking, license consistency, plagiarism screening, image-quality checks, and detection of residual template text. These tools are used as aids to human quality control. Final validation of published content remains the responsibility of the editorial and production teams.

23. AI Detection Tools

The journal may use AI-detection tools, but detection results will not be treated as conclusive evidence of misconduct. AI-detection systems may produce false positives and false negatives. Any concern arising from AI-detection tools will be evaluated by human editors, with consideration of manuscript context, author explanations, similarity reports, source verification, writing patterns, and possible legitimate uses of AI.

24. Peer-Review Integrity and Hidden AI Prompts

Authors must not include hidden text, invisible instructions, white text, prompt-injection content, metadata-based instructions, machine-readable instructions, or any other content intended to manipulate AI-assisted editorial screening, reviewer behavior, or peer-review outcomes. Such conduct may be treated as attempted peer-review manipulation or publication misconduct. The journal reserves the right to screen submissions for hidden prompts or manipulative content.

25. AI and Plagiarism

Use of AI does not exempt authors from plagiarism rules. Authors must ensure that all text, ideas, data, figures, and concepts derived from other sources are properly cited. AI-generated paraphrasing of previously published material without attribution may constitute plagiarism. AI-assisted rewriting intended to conceal copying is prohibited.

26. AI and Copyright

Authors are responsible for ensuring that AI-assisted content does not violate copyright, licensing terms, database rights, or third-party permissions. When AI-generated or AI-assisted content is used, authors must ensure that they have the right to publish it under the journal's open-access license. ICMJE states that humans are responsible for citing appropriate sources, obtaining permissions when necessary, and ensuring that plagiarism has not occurred when using AI-generated content.

27. AI and Research Integrity

AI must not be used to fabricate, falsify, manipulate, or selectively report research data. AI must not be used to generate fake peer reviewers, fake reviewer reports, fake patient cases, fake images, fake ethics approvals, fake institutional affiliations, fake conflicts-of-interest statements, or fake references. Any suspected misuse will be handled according to the journal's publication ethics procedures.

28. AI and Conflicts of Interest

Authors, reviewers, and editors must disclose any financial, commercial, institutional, or personal relationship with AI tools, AI vendors, AI platforms, or companies whose products are evaluated or used in the manuscript when such relationships may be perceived as influencing the work. The journal's general conflict-of-interest policy applies equally to AI-related tools and technologies.

29. AI Use in Manuscripts About AI

Manuscripts that develop, validate, evaluate, or apply AI systems in clinical, rehabilitation, educational, diagnostic, imaging, or biomedical research must provide sufficient methodological transparency. Authors should describe the AI model or tool, training data where applicable, validation strategy, performance metrics, bias assessment, intended use, limitations, human oversight, ethical approval,

data governance, and clinical relevance. For AI-based medical or rehabilitation tools, authors should clearly distinguish exploratory development from clinical validation.

30. Editorial Sanctions for Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in request for clarification, request for revision, rejection before peer review, rejection after peer review, publication delay, correction, expression of concern, retraction, notification of authors' institutions, or other editorial actions consistent with publication ethics procedures. The severity of the response will depend on the nature of the violation, intent, potential harm, and whether the scientific record has been affected.

31. Post-Publication Corrections

If undisclosed or inappropriate AI use is identified after publication, the journal may publish a correction, addendum, expression of concern, or retraction, depending on the effect on scientific integrity. Minor undisclosed use for language editing may require a correction of the declaration. Fabrication of data, invented citations, manipulated images, or compromised peer review may require stronger editorial action.

32. Responsibilities of the Journal

Balneo and PRM Research Journal will display this AI policy on its website and apply it consistently to authors, reviewers, editors, and production staff. The journal will update the policy as AI technologies, legal standards, and publication ethics recommendations evolve. The Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing emphasize that journals should clearly display authorship criteria, publication ethics policies, peer-review procedures, copyright, and licensing information on their websites; this AI policy is part of that broader commitment to transparent editorial practice.

33. Standard Author Declaration Templates

No AI used: "The authors declare that no artificial intelligence tools were used in the preparation, writing, analysis, interpretation, figure generation, reference generation, or presentation of this manuscript."

AI used only for language editing: "The authors used [tool name, version if available] only for language editing and grammar improvement. No scientific content, data analysis, references, images, or conclusions were generated by AI. The authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript and take full responsibility for its content."

AI used for substantive support: "The authors used [tool name, version if available] for [specific purpose]. The AI-assisted output was reviewed, verified, corrected, and approved by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the manuscript."

AI used for analysis or coding: "The authors used [tool name, version if available] to assist with [statistical code/data visualization/data organization]. All code, outputs, and interpretations were independently verified by the authors. The authors take full responsibility for the analysis and conclusions."

34. Standard Reviewer Declaration Template: "I declare that I have not uploaded the manuscript, figures, tables, supplementary materials, or confidential review content into any external AI system. If AI was used, it was used only for [grammar editing/organization of reviewer comments], and I remain fully responsible for the content and recommendation of this review."

35. Standard Editorial Declaration Template: "AI-supported tools may have been used for technical editorial checks, such as similarity screening, metadata verification, reference checking, language consistency, or production quality control. Final editorial assessment and publication decisions were made by human editors."

36. Policy Basis. This policy is based on international recommendations and principles issued by ICMJE, WAME, and the joint Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing developed by COPE, DOAJ, OASPA, and WAME. ICMJE states that journals should have an AI policy and that authors, reviewers, editors, and publishers should be transparent in AI use; WAME states that chatbots cannot be authors, that AI use should be disclosed, that authors remain responsible for accuracy and plagiarism, and that editors and reviewers must protect manuscript confidentiality.

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