Artificial intelligence (AI) policy

Overview

ACNR recognises that artificial intelligence (AI) and generative AI technologies are increasingly being used in research, scientific writing, education, clinical communication, data analysis, and publishing workflows. These technologies may offer legitimate benefits when used responsibly and transparently. However, they also present risks relating to scientific integrity, accuracy, bias, confidentiality, authorship, copyright, patient privacy, and research reproducibility.

This policy outlines ACNR's requirements regarding the acceptable use of AI tools in manuscripts, peer review, editorial workflows, images, figures, and associated publication activities.

This policy applies to all authors, reviewers, editors, contributors, commissioned writers, and editorial staff.

ACNR's policy aligns broadly with current guidance from major scientific publishers, indexing standards, and recognised publishing ethics bodies including the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Core principles

Any use of AI in content submitted to ACNR must adhere to the following principles:

- Transparency
- Human accountability
- Scientific integrity
- Accuracy and verifiability
- Protection of confidential and patient information
- Compliance with copyright and licensing requirements
- Ethical and responsible use

Authors remain fully responsible for all submitted content, regardless of whether AI tools were used during preparation.

Acceptable uses of AI

ACNR permits limited and responsible use of AI-assisted technologies in the preparation of manuscripts and related content.

Examples of acceptable uses may include:

- Language editing and grammar correction
- Improving readability or structure
- Formatting assistance
- Translation support
- Coding assistance
- Literature organisation or classification
- Brainstorming or idea generation
- Transcription assistance
- Non-clinical administrative support

All AI-generated output must be carefully reviewed, verified, edited, and approved by the human author(s).

Authors must ensure:

- factual accuracy
- appropriate referencing
- absence of fabricated citations or data
- absence of plagiarism
- appropriate clinical interpretation
- appropriate scientific nuance and context

AI tools must not replace the intellectual, analytical, interpretive, or clinical responsibilities of authors.

Disclosure requirements

Any substantive use of generative AI or AI-assisted technologies in manuscript preparation must be clearly disclosed. Disclosure should include:

- the name of the AI tool
- the version (where available)
- how the tool was used
- the extent of use

This disclosure should appear in either:

- the Methods section (where AI forms part of the research methodology), or
- an Acknowledgements or Declaration section (where AI assisted manuscript preparation only)

Examples requiring disclosure include:

- generating or rewriting text
- summarising literature
- generating code
- assisting with statistical analysis
- creating tables or supplementary content
- transcription or substantial editing assistance

Routine spellcheck and grammar tools do not generally require disclosure.

Example disclosure statement:

"During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-5) to assist with language editing and structural refinement. All outputs were reviewed, edited, and verified by the authors, who take full responsibility for the content."

Transparency regarding AI use is increasingly expected within scientific publishing and indexing standards.

Authorship

AI tools cannot be listed as authors or co-authors.

AI systems cannot:

- take responsibility for published work
- approve manuscripts
- manage conflicts of interest
- provide consent for publication
- fulfil accountability requirements

All named authors must meet established authorship criteria and remain fully accountable for the integrity of the work.

Prohibited uses

The following uses of AI are not permitted in content submitted to ACNR:

Fabrication or falsification

Use of AI to:

- fabricate data
- invent references
- generate fictional patient information
- create misleading scientific claims
- generate fraudulent peer review material

Undisclosed AI-generated content

Substantial AI-generated text, analysis, or interpretation submitted without disclosure.

AI-generated clinical misinformation

Use of AI to generate unsupported clinical advice, diagnostic recommendations, or therapeutic claims without rigorous expert oversight.

Replacement of scholarly judgement

Submission of manuscripts substantially generated by AI without meaningful human intellectual contribution.

Manipulation of scientific images or figures

ACNR does not permit the use of generative AI tools to create, manipulate, alter, enhance, conceal, add, remove, or distort scientific images, scans, electrophysiology traces, pathology images, radiology images, microscopy images, graphs, or research figures in ways that could misrepresent underlying data or scientific meaning.

Limited non-deceptive technical adjustments (such as brightness or contrast corrections applied uniformly) remain acceptable where consistent with standard scientific publishing practice.

Patient confidentiality and data protection

Authors must not upload:

- identifiable patient data
- unpublished manuscripts
- confidential reviewer comments

- sensitive clinical material
- unpublished datasets

into public AI systems unless appropriate safeguards, permissions, and data protection compliance are assured.

Authors remain responsible for compliance with:

- UK GDPR
- data protection law
- institutional governance requirements
- patient consent obligations

Particular caution is required in neurology and neurorehabilitation contexts where rare conditions, imaging, cognitive data, or detailed case histories may increase re-identification risk.

AI use in research methods

Where AI forms part of the actual research methodology — for example:

- machine learning models
- diagnostic algorithms
- AI-assisted imaging analysis
- natural language processing
- predictive modelling

authors must provide sufficient methodological detail to allow appropriate scientific evaluation and reproducibility.

This should include:

- model description
- software/platform details
- validation methods
- limitations
- bias considerations
- human oversight processes

Peer reviewers and editors

To protect confidentiality and intellectual property, peer reviewers and editors must not upload unpublished manuscripts, reviewer reports, figures, or supplementary files into public generative AI platforms.

AI tools may be used only for limited administrative or language assistance purposes that do not compromise confidentiality.

Editorial decisions must remain entirely under human control.

Detection and investigation

ACNR reserves the right to:

- screen submissions for AI-generated content
- investigate undisclosed AI use
- request clarification from authors
- request original data or drafts
- reject manuscripts where AI use breaches this policy
- retract published material if serious breaches are identified

Potential breaches may be handled in accordance with recognised publishing ethics procedures.

Copyright and licensing

Authors remain responsible for ensuring that AI-assisted content:

- does not infringe copyright
- complies with licensing requirements
- does not reproduce protected material without permission

Authors should be aware that some AI platforms may retain, reuse, or train on uploaded content.

As ACNR publishes content under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence, authors must ensure they have the necessary rights to publish any AI-assisted material under this licence.

Policy development

AI technologies and publishing standards are evolving rapidly. ACNR may update this policy periodically to reflect:

- developments in publishing ethics
- legal requirements
- technological changes
- publisher and indexing standards
- emerging best practice

Authors are encouraged to consult the latest version of this policy before submission

ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-5) was used to create this policy. It was reviewed and edited by the Publisher.

Version 1, Dated: 22 May 2026

Whitehouse Publishing, 1 The Lynch, Mere, Wiltshire BA12 6DQ.
Tel: 01747 860168/07989 470278, e-mail: Rachael@acnr.co.uk