

## **ASCB Policy on Research Misconduct by Authors**

### Applicability of the Policy

By submitting an article for an ASCB publication or an image for the ASCB Image & Video Library you acknowledge that you are subject to this ASCB Policy on Research Misconduct by Authors. It is generally the policy of ASCB to follow the Public Health Service (PHS) rules on Research Misconduct.

### Policy Overview

It is a violation of this Research Misconduct Policy to engage in fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results or submitting any information or digital image.

### Specific Policy Requirements and Prohibitions

In addition, under this Policy, research misconduct by authors includes: providing information or images that are fraudulent, misleading, inaccurate, or misrepresentative of the actual data or image; falsification of data, plagiarism of the work of others, self-plagiarism or duplicate publication, misrepresentation of author contributions, and failure to disclose potential or actual conflicts of interest.

With regard specifically to images, manipulation of images in a manner that could change the interpretation of the data may constitute research misconduct. While authors are permitted to delete irrelevant parts of a figure (such as blank lanes in a gel or autoradiograph), they are expected to explicitly describe such manipulations in the cover letter that accompanies the manuscript and to be able to provide the complete, unaltered data upon request. However, a digital image should not be manipulated to enhance one part of the image relative to another or to remove any potentially relevant features.

### Policy Procedures and Authors' Rights

Reviewers, editorial board members, and staff may examine data, claims, and images for evidence of violations, and ASCB reserves the right to reject a previously accepted image or manuscript if any evidence of violation(s) is suspected and not sufficiently explained.

If an editorial board member has suspicions of research misconduct by an author, he or she must bring the matter to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief.<sup>1</sup> If the Editor-in-Chief, in consultation with one or more Editors,<sup>2</sup> believes that the suspicion may be justified, he or she will ask the corresponding author for an explanation, and may also require the author(s) to provide original data, by a stated deadline of approximately three weeks. Whenever practical, all other authors of the manuscript will be notified of the Editor-in-Chief's concerns and invited to submit explanatory information.

If no explanation is provided by the deadline or the Editor-in-Chief finds the corresponding author's explanation inadequate, the Editor-in-Chief should notify the corresponding author and/or some or all the other authors of the journal's intent to refer the matter to an outside authority as described below, and allow the author(s) approximately two additional weeks to provide an adequate explanation.

If the Editor-in-Chief determines that an investigation is warranted he or she should: (a) to refer the matter to an institution that ASCB reasonably determines to be qualified by practice and experience to conduct the research misconduct proceeding instead of ASCB (such as the author(s) institution(s)); and (b) to alert the author(s) funding agency or agencies.

ASCB intends to ensure that: (a) the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) receives notice within 30 days of finding that an investigation concerning PHS funds is warranted; (b) investigations are concluded within 120 days; (c) researchers have the opportunity to respond to any draft adverse findings; (d) ORI receives a written finding by the responsible institutional official of the outcome of any investigation pertaining to PHS funds; (d) provide any annual report information required by ORI; (e) otherwise comply with any applicable PHS requirements.

Whether or not outside authorities are notified, when scientific misconduct is suspected and no adequate explanation is provided by the authors, ASCB reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to place additional restrictions upon the rights and procedures by which the author(s) in question can submit articles or images to ASCB in the future.

### Confidentiality

As set forth in the PHS rules, disclosure of the identity of respondents and complainants in research misconduct proceedings is limited, to the extent possible, to those who need

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<sup>1</sup> References to "Editor-in-Chief" shall be read to mean the person holding the highest non-staff position(s) with direct responsibility for the particular program or publication within ASCB.

<sup>2</sup> References to "Editors" shall be read to mean the person or people holding the second highest non-staff position(s) with direct responsibility for the particular program or publication within ASCB.

to know, consistent with a thorough, competent, objective and fair research misconduct proceeding, and as allowed by law. Provided, however, that: (1) the institution must disclose the identity of respondents and complainants to ORI pursuant to an ORI review of research misconduct proceedings; and, (2) any HHS administrative hearings that are held must be open to the public.

Except as may otherwise be prescribed by applicable law, confidentiality must be maintained for any records or evidence from which research subjects might be identified. Disclosure is limited to those who have a need to know to carry out a research misconduct proceeding.

*Approved December 9, 2006*