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Proper Utilization of Generative AI in Scholarly Writing: The Researcher and Author Perspective

Dong Hoon Suh ^{1,2} and Dong Soo Han ^{3,4}

¹Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Seoul National University Bundang Hospital, Seoul National University College of Medicine, Seongnam, Korea

²Committee Chair of Planning and Administration, Korean Association of Medical Journal Editors, Seoul, Korea

³Department of Internal Medicine, Hanyang University Guri Hospital, Hanyang University College of Medicine, Guri, Korea

⁴President, Korean Association of Medical Journal Editors, Seoul, Korea



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Address for Correspondence:

Dong Soo Han, MD, PhD

Department of Internal Medicine, Hanyang University Guri Hospital, Hanyang University College of Medicine, 153 Gyeongchun-ro, Guri 11923, Republic of Korea.
Email: hands@hanyang.ac.kr

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ORCID iDs

Dong Hoon Suh

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4312-966X>

Dong Soo Han

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7103-3318>

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ABSTRACT

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in scholarly publishing is expanding rapidly, yet clear standards for its appropriate use and disclosure remain lacking. Surveys indicate that many researchers already use AI tools for manuscript preparation, particularly for writing assistance and error detection. However, attitudes toward acceptable AI use and disclosure requirements remain inconsistent, especially regarding the use of AI in drafting manuscripts and in the peer-review process. Analyses of manuscript submissions to major journal groups suggest that the proportion of authors disclosing AI use is substantially lower than estimates from researcher surveys, indicating possible underreporting or uncertainty about reporting requirements. It is therefore essential to implement standardized frameworks that require explicit disclosure of AI use to ensure transparency and uphold trust in scholarly communication.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Scholarly Publishing; Disclosure Standard; Research Integrity

INTRODUCTION

Recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) have produced remarkable progress across many fields. In scholarly publishing, the use of generative AI is rapidly increasing. For example, the number of abstracts submitted to academic conferences has risen markedly since the introduction of ChatGPT.¹ Surveys suggest that AI adoption among researchers is growing quickly, yet attitudes toward disclosure remain inconsistent. Researchers often express ambivalent views regarding whether and how use of AI should be reported.² As a result, uncertainty persists because policies governing the permissibility of AI use and the standards for disclosure vary widely across journals and publishers.

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THE CURRENT STATE OF AI IN ACADEMIC PUBLISHING

Systematic research on AI use in scholarly publishing remains limited, but several recent studies highlight emerging trends. In a survey of 2,000 medical researchers, 45% reported having used AI tools, and about two-thirds of these users employed them to write or edit manuscripts.³ These findings suggest that AI tools are already becoming integrated into the manuscript preparation process. The ExplainAItions 2025 study similarly demonstrates the growing role of AI across the research workflow. Overall, 84% of researchers reported using AI tools in some aspects of their work, up from 57% in the previous survey year. AI is currently used primarily for writing assistance and for identifying errors or potential bias in manuscripts. However, concerns about inaccuracies and hallucinations remain substantial (64%), and concerns about information security and privacy have increased from 47% to 58%.⁴ A Nature survey of approximately 5,000 researchers revealed similarly mixed views regarding acceptable AI use. More than 90% considered generative AI acceptable for editing or translating manuscripts, but opinions diverged on disclosure requirements. While 65% viewed AI-assisted drafting of manuscript text as ethically acceptable, more than 60% considered the use of AI in writing peer-review reports inappropriate, largely because of privacy concerns.² The Korean academic community reflects a similar trend. According to a survey by the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF), 62.8% of domestic researchers consider the non-disclosure of generative AI tools in manuscript preparation as a form of research misconduct, highlighting a strong demand for transparency. Furthermore, a recent survey focusing on Korean medical professionals revealed that 84% are already integrating AI tools into their research workflows, primarily for writing assistance, translation, and text summarization.⁵ Together, these findings suggest that AI use in scholarly publishing is expanding rapidly, but consensus on its appropriate scope—particularly in peer review—has yet to emerge.

CORE PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH INTEGRITY: TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Generative AI tools are reshaping scholarly writing, and many publishers now require disclosure of AI use during manuscript preparation. However, policies differ substantially among journals. Some mandate disclosure, whereas others require it only in specific circumstances or do not require it at all. For example, the *Journal of Korean Medical Science* requires disclosure of AI use in both the cover letter and the submitted work, but journals published by the Institute of Physics (IOP) Publishing do not mandate disclosure but prohibit the use of AI to “create, alter, or manipulate” research data or results.⁶

Evidence suggests that AI use in manuscripts may also be underreported. Analyses of submissions to major journal groups found that only 3.3–5.7% of authors disclosed using AI tools in manuscript preparation among more than 130,000 submissions to JAMA Network and BMJ journals.^{7,8} Although disclosure rates increased during the study period, they remain substantially lower than estimates from research surveys, suggesting either uncertainty about reporting requirements or deliberate non-disclosure.

Transparency and accountability are fundamental principles of scholarly publishing. Authors should therefore inform editors about how and to what extent AI tools were used during manuscript preparation. The International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical

Publishers' (STM) framework emphasizes that transparency is essential so that readers can clearly distinguish between human-authored text and AI-assisted material.⁹ While it is unnecessary to list every individual sentence or expression, the fundamental principle is to clearly disclose the specific purpose for which the AI tools were utilized.

Research ethics organizations such as the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) emphasize that AI systems cannot be listed as authors and that their use must therefore be disclosed.¹⁰ However, definitions of AI use vary across publishers, creating uncertainty for researchers. Ideally, disclosure of AI use should reach a level of standardization comparable to existing practices for author contributions and conflicts of interest.

To address this challenge, the STM has proposed a framework that categorizes AI use in manuscript preparation. While routine use for linguistic refinement—such as grammar and formatting—may not require formal disclosure, substantive use—including drafting content, visualizing data, or structuring arguments—necessitates mandatory disclosure as it constitutes a substantial contribution.⁹ The STM report also proposes practical steps to improve transparency, including clearer journal policies, explicit guidance on acceptable AI uses, and mechanisms for reporting AI assistance during manuscript submission. Without clearer and more consistent standards, the rapid expansion of AI-assisted writing risks undermining trust in scholarly communication.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of AI tools by researchers is increasing rapidly, yet disclosure practices remain inconsistent across journals and publishers. Although several organizations have proposed guidelines for AI use in scholarly publishing, there remains a pressing need for harmonized disclosure standards and reporting formats. Wider adoption of permissible-use policies and disclosure principles proposed by organizations such as STM could help reduce confusion and improve transparency. As AI becomes increasingly embedded in scholarly communication, establishing clear and consistent standards for its responsible use and disclosure will be essential for maintaining trust in the scientific record.

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