

We Would Like to Withdraw Our Manuscript!

Editorial

Cem Bilgen 

Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Ege University School of Medicine, İzmir, Turkey

The process of withdrawal by the authors of a manuscript submitted to a journal for consideration should be conducted within the framework of certain rules foreseen in publication ethics. The withdrawal mechanism has been designed to enable correction of any serious defects or mistakes in the data (e.g., significant errors in scientific or statistical methodology). Authors may experience unfavorable consequences if the process is not conducted in line with the international guidelines of publication ethics. Therefore, it is important that authors, especially young authors, have a good understanding of the rules for manuscript withdrawal.

The crucial aspect of the withdrawal process is the rationale of the withdrawal. A scientific manuscript may be withdrawn only if it contains extremely significant errors that affect the reliability and the value of its content, and only for the purposes of correcting such errors. Given the significant time and effort spent by the publishing team, and more importantly, by the editor and the reviewers in the process, the reasons for the request of withdrawal must be well-founded. Otherwise, it will be very difficult for the editor to accept the request for withdrawal. If, on the other hand, absence of a justifiable rationale for the withdrawal that satisfies the above conditions, can lead to unfavorable convictions about the authors (1-4).

A request for the withdrawal of a manuscript in the evaluation stage must be submitted to the editor of the journal in writing with a letter signed by all authors and clearly stating the reasons for the withdrawal. The editor will review the request stated in the letter and respond in writing explaining the result of his/her evaluation of the request. Authors should not assume to have withdrawn their manuscript until they receive a response from the editor. Any attempts (such as submitting the manuscript to another journal) before receiving the response

of the editor can lead to serious ethical issues and sanctions. (4)

Authors can withdraw their manuscript at any stage of the evaluation process, including the editorial evaluation and the peer-review stages, and even in the publication process after acceptance. Given the significant time and effort editors and reviewers invest in the process, an early request for withdrawal will relatively facilitate its acceptance. Some journals even impose sanctions on authors who request withdrawal of their manuscript at the later stages of the process. These sanctions may include a penalty charge (this requirement and the amount of the charge are usually stated in the 'instructions to authors' section of the journal), or the refusal to consider future work from the authors for a certain period of time. (1-3, 5).

To conclude, authors do have the right to request the withdrawal of their manuscript which they submitted to a journal for consideration. This right, however, should be exercised only under absolutely unavoidable conditions associated with the reliability of its scientific content. Otherwise serious ethical problems may arise, and in such case the editor has the right and the responsibility to impose sanctions on the authors.

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ORCID ID of the author:
C.B. 0000-0003-0853-1095.

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Corresponding Author:

Cem Bilgen; cembilgen@gmail.com

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