



**REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DU PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL**

WESTERN PACIFIC REGION INDEX MEDICUS (WPRIM)

Minimum standards for the suspension and removal of WPRIM approved journals

The following policy was approved by the representatives of the National Journal Selection Committees and focal persons during the virtual WPRIM Regional Journal Selection Committee Meeting on 07 August 2025.

A. Purpose

This policy outlines the proposed criteria for the suspension, removal and retraction of journals indexed in the Western Pacific Region Index Medicus (WPRIM). WPRIM aligns with the best practices from other indexing databases, metrics and specialty bodies such as MEDLINE, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), Scopus, Web of Science, ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors), COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics), and WAME (World Association of Medical Editors).

B. Scope

All journals indexed in the Western Pacific Region Index Medicus WPRIM database are subject to this policy, which is established in accordance with and derives its authority from the current WPRIM Journal Selection Criteria.

A journal must meet the following criteria:

1. Must be published in a Member State within the WHO Western Pacific Region ensuring that its operations and governance are rooted in the region, regardless of where it is physically published;
2. Covers health and biomedical subjects;
3. Is peer-reviewed, either internally or externally;
4. Publishes abstracts in English (applies to research articles but not necessarily for special sections such as editorials, commentaries or technical notes which do not require abstracts);
5. Is published regularly at least 2 issues per year;
 - If it is published only once a year, the journal will be encouraged to increase its frequency to at least two issues per year.
6. Includes "Instructions to Authors" reviewed and accepted by the National Journal Selection Committees; and
7. Holds an electronic and/or print International Standard Serial Number (ISSN).

Note: National Journal Selection Committees may decide to add country-specific criteria to the minimum journal selection criteria stated above. An example of which could be the registration of clinical trials as a scientific and ethical responsibility.

C. Definition of Terms:

- **Suspension:** temporary exclusion of the journal from WPRIM due to non-compliance
- **Removal:** permanent delisting of a WPRIM journal due to its failure to meet mandatory standards

D. Journal Suspension

Upon the decision of the National Journal Selection Committee (NJSC), a journal may be suspended from the Western Pacific Region Index Medicus (WPRIM) if it fails to meet one or more of the journal selection criteria. Ethical concerns, including but not limited to minor breaches of publication ethics that require corrective action, may also result in suspension.

Note: For journals without a NJSC, this shall be decided by the RJSC.

Suspension Process:

The timeline should be decided by the NJSC:

1. **Reporting:** The non-compliance of the journal with WPRIM criteria, ethical concern, or other breach of publication ethics is brought to the attention of the NJSC (or RJSC) by an individual or group or noted on social media or publishing sites.
2. **Notification:** After confirming the breach, the WPRIM Secretariat notifies the journal and NJSC (or RJSC) of the journal's non-compliance and pending suspension.
3. **Response Period:** The journal should address concerns within a period specified by the NJSC (or RJSC).
4. **Evaluation:** If unresolved, the journal could be suspended pending resolution. The expected resolution period depends on the issue's severity:
 - **Minor revisions/clarifications** (including habitually late publication): Usually 6 weeks – 6 months (the journal should respond and rectify the breaches). The WPRIM secretariat may decide on the resolution.
 - **Serious ethical concerns** (e.g., plagiarism, predatory practices): May require 6-12 months, depending on complexity. The journal should address the concerns and rectify the breaches. The RJSC needs to decide on the resolution.
 - **Data integrity/retraction issues** (e.g., fabrication, falsification, manipulation): Could take 12 months or more if institutional investigations are needed. The journal and/or publisher (institution) should address the concerns and demonstrate rectification. The RJSC needs to act on the resolution.
 - **Prolonged unresolved issues** beyond the usual periods may lead to Journal Removal.
5. **Reinstatement:** The journal may reapply after resolving the issue with the recommendations of the NJSC to RJSC. The reapplication process is the same as that for new journals, except for minor revisions/clarifications where reinstatement can automatically be decided by the WPRIM secretariat.

E. Journal Removal

A journal may be permanently removed from WPRIM for severe or unresolved violations. It could also be removed for a specific period as decided by the NJSC if a journal breaches one or more of the following criteria:

1. Does not rectify identified deficiencies or transgressions while undergoing a period of suspension and after a warning
2. A journal is found to be engaged in substantiated cases of research or publication fraud or misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, data fabrication, falsification, manipulation or predatory publishing practices
3. A journal has ceased publication and does not have any issues published within the last 3 years.
4. There has been no contribution to the WPRIM database for the last 3 years
5. False or misleading claims have been made regarding its indexing status, peer-review practices or editorial policies.

Removal Process:

1. Review by NJSC (or RJSC in the absence of a NJSC) & WPRIM Secretariat
2. The journal is notified and given the chance to appeal on a timeline decided by the NJSC (or RJSC in the absence of a NJSC).
3. Final decision by the WPRIM RJSC
4. Journal title shall be marked "removed" in the WPRIM database. Any new articles will not be indexed or available in the database.