



## Letter to the Editor – Response to *“Keeping the pact with readers”*

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### Keeping the pact with readers

Thank you for the thoughtful letter, we share the same compass. It is important to acknowledge that AI is here to stay. Its responsible use is valuable but must follow the policies that relevant stakeholders have been implementing. Use AI when it may help and its use is allowed, always disclose its uses, and keep responsibility human. We should not lose track of this mantra. Machines cannot accept responsibility and humans must disclose and stand behind the work.<sup>1,2</sup> We build on that foundation.

Regarding your letter, there are a few topics we would like to discuss. The first is creativity. The process by which AI generates creative ideas remains poorly understood. However, research seems to suggest that AI may possess unrecognized abilities that are integral to the creative process and that AI-creativity may be an element to consider in co-creation processes. Indeed, AI may be regarded as a type of mentor and guide that provides assistance and support, and challenges users during both divergent and convergent steps of creative problem-solving tasks.<sup>3</sup>

Another aspect we would like to highlight is the balance between automation and human engagement. AI promises efficiency gains, reducing the time to complete certain tasks and, considering research activities, recent reviews show tangible gains in literature triage, structuring, and drafting, among others.<sup>4</sup> But we are also warned that speed without verification erodes rigor.<sup>5-7</sup> Moreover, large language models still fabricate facts and citations, and research has already catalogued the problem.<sup>8</sup> Verification is not optional. We agree that these tools may lead to productivity gains but, after using the tools, every line should be checked carefully.

The final topic to highlight is the fact that we should not pretend we can reliably spot machine text. ChatGPT-written abstracts have fooled scientists<sup>9</sup> and AI detectors misfire, especially on non-native English writing.<sup>10,11</sup> The path is clear, policy must rest on transparency and audit, not on brittle screening.

Our rule remains simple: responsible practice in daily work.<sup>12</sup>

We welcome dialogue on implementation. The compact of trust, the unwritten, shared agreement that makes scholarly publishing credible, deserves nothing less.

- Authors tell the truth, show their workings, disclose the tools (including any AI), respect ethics, respect privacy and intellectual property, declare conflicts, and take responsibility for every line and figure.
- Reviewers keep manuscripts confidential, declare conflicts, judge the work on its merits, and don't pipe confidential text into public AI systems.
- Editors and publishers run a fair, transparent process, enforce policies (misconduct, image and data integrity, AI use), correct the record (corrections and/or retractions), and protect independence.
- Readers and institutions engage critically, cite adequately, and flag concerns.

A line of code cannot sign that pact. The hand on the wheel stays human.

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