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A Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence and Large Language Models in Peer Review

Our readers will now be well aware of the astonishing growth in the capability and availability of artificial intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs) through platforms such as ChatGPT. This presents both challenges and exciting opportunities for researchers. This includes the potential use of AI in evaluating submissions we receive to the journal.

Time will tell where and how we can use AI to our advantage – in evaluating code that forms part of a submission for example. This is something we are actively exploring. However, currently our policy is that – whilst we remain open to the potential opportunities offered by AI – we do not support the use of AI or LLMs as a substitute for human expertise in the review process.

The journal is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which has developed [guidelines for reviewers](#). These guidelines emphasise the importance of maintaining confidentiality both throughout and following the review process. Authors submit their work to us in confidence for review, and it is crucial that we honour that.

The key challenge with using ChatGPT in the context of peer review is that ChatGPT can save all of the information submitted to it, and store this information. It then uses this data to improve its language model. In other words, providing a manuscript to ChatGPT fundamentally breaches the confidentiality inherent to the peer review process.

Editors and reviewers should therefore not share information about a manuscript, its content, or a review of that manuscript with any person or entity, including AI tools and LLMs. We have now included text to this effect in our emails to reviewers, and this editorial is intended to reinforce and highlight this policy.

This peer review policy will also complement and help to reinforce our policy regarding the use of AI by authors, which has been in place for several months. The [author-facing AI policy](#) can be found on the Oxford University Press (OUP) central policy page, and applies to submissions to *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* (as well as other OUP journals).

Crucially, our policy – which is shared across OUP journals – acknowledges the key role editors and reviewers play not only with respect to *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, but also with scholarly communications more generally. Despite the many potential ways in which AI and LLMs can enhance research and scholarly communication, ours remains fundamentally a human endeavour.

Marcus Munafò
Editor-in-Chief