

Impact Factor and Ethical Issues in Publications of Social Research in Health

Factor de impacto y aspectos éticos en publicaciones de investigación social en salud

Liliana Mondragón-Barrios  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4771-5228>

Instituto Nacional de Psiquiatría Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz y Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México, lmondragonb@inprf.gob.mx

Tonatiuh Kinich Guarneros García

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8880-8260>

Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, México, tonakinich11@gmail.com

José Alberto Jiménez Tapia*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4368-5911>

Instituto Nacional de Psiquiatría Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz, México, alberj@inprf.gob.mx

*Corresponding author:
José Alberto Jiménez Tapia,
alberj@inprf.gob.mx

Reception:
03/10/2025

Approval:
06/08/2026

Publication:
20/10/26

Abstract: The impact factor (IF) ranks the quality of academic journals. The excessive importance given to IF has disadvantaged journals that are not in the high-IF elite, as well as the social sciences. Objective: To analyze whether health science journals with a higher IF include stricter ethical requirements. Method: We conducted a bibliometric review of the journal classification system managed by the Coordinating Commission of National Institutes of Health and Specialized Hospitals (CCINSHAE) in Mexico. The 90 indexed journals were grouped according to their IF, and those that published social research in health between February and November 2014. For the 55 journals identified, we examined the ethical mandates outlined in their instructions for authors to assess their compliance with international ethical guidelines. Results. The most common ethical requirements in instructions to authors were related to authorship, co-authorship, duplicate publication, simultaneous submission, protection, and safekeeping of data. Conclusions. We conclude that the IF is not a metric that can take the place of the quality of a journal, and less of its handling of ethical questions or as a guarantor of ethics in publication.

Keywords: impact factor, ethics, social research, health, publication quality.

Resumen: El factor de impacto (FI) jerarquiza la calidad de las revistas académicas. La importancia excesiva que se le otorga perjudica a publicaciones que no pertenecen a la élite del alto FI.



Objetivo: analizar si las revistas con un factor de impacto (FI) más elevado incluyen requisitos éticos más estrictos. Método: realizamos una revisión bibliométrica de la clasificación de revistas de la Comisión Coordinadora de los Institutos Nacionales de Salud y Hospitales de Alta Especialidad (CCINSHAE) de México. Las 90 revistas se agruparon según el factor de impacto (FI) y se hizo una búsqueda de aquellas que publicaron artículos sobre investigación social en el ámbito de la salud entre febrero y noviembre de 2014. De las 55 revistas resultantes, se examinaron los requisitos éticos incluidos en las instrucciones para los autores y si dichas instrucciones se ajustan a las directrices éticas. Resultados: los requisitos éticos más comunes en las instrucciones para los autores estaban relacionados con la autoría, la coautoría, la publicación duplicada, el envío simultáneo, la protección y la custodia de los datos. Conclusiones: el FI es una métrica que no sustituye la calidad de una revista, ni a su tratamiento de las cuestiones éticas y no es garante de la ética en la publicación.

Palabras clave: factor de impacto, ética, investigación social, salud, calidad de la publicación.

Introduction

The widespread “publish or perish” pressure has severely compromised the integrity of scholarly communication. This environment prioritizes publication volume over quality, accelerates review timelines due to digital demands, and fuels the rise of predatory journals and fraudulent citations (Hansson, 2021; Verma y Sharma, 2024). Ultimately, this systemic dynamic introduces competing institutional and commercial interests that frequently diverge from established quality standards, threatening ethical practices across the entire publication ecosystem (Cortés, 2024; Hansson, 2021; Lima *et al.*, 2025; Mondragón *et al.*, 2017; Salamanca, 2023; Triggler *et al.*, 2022; Ventura & de Oliveira, 2022).

Research on publication ethics has focused extensively on quantifying the incidence and underlying motivations of scientific misconduct. This focus is driven by the fact that misconduct wastes valuable academic resources and severely damages the integrity of the scientific literature through article retractions (Feenstra y Pallarés, 2021; Gasparyan *et al.*, 2016; Ribeiro y Aroni, 2019; Roza y Pérez, 2019; Schroter *et al.*, 2018; Wu y Zou, 2015). Despite these known risks, many scientific journals still lack explicit guidelines for addressing inconsistencies in how ethical

standards are interpreted and enforced (Lima *et al.*, 2025; Schroter *et al.*, 2018). This policy ambiguity is particularly evident regarding author order and the precise allocation of responsibilities for a study, frequently resulting in questionable practices such as honorary or excessive authorship (Cortés, 2024; Fong & Wilhite, 2017; González *et al.*, 2017; Kassis, 2017; Triggles *et al.*, 2022).

Current editorial policies in scientific journals often rely heavily on self-declarations, merely requiring authors to pledge compliance with established ethical frameworks such as those outlined by COPE, ICMJE, WAME, and the CSE (2004) (Teixeira da Silva y Dobránszki, 2016; Gasparyan *et al.*, 2016; Kassis, 2017). However, a systemic tension exists between these ethical ideals and market realities. While the integrity of published science remains paramount, “editors compete for IF rankings to demonstrate the importance of their journals” (Triggles *et al.*, 2022, p. 134). This metric-driven competition coincides with decades of escalating institutional pressure on researchers to secure space in high-impact journals.

The impact factor (IF) was originally conceived by Eugene Garfield in 1955 as a bibliographic tool to help librarians select journals and manage incomplete or obsolete data within scientific literature. Today, the index is used globally to rank journals by dividing the number of citations received in a given year by the total number of citable items published in the preceding two years (Feenstra y Pallarés, 2021; Rozo y Pérez, 2019). Beyond institutional evaluation, this bibliometric metric heavily influences how indexing databases and research evaluation tools —such as Clarivate’s Journal Citation Reports (JCR, 2022), Elsevier’s Scopus, Google Scholar Metrics, and SciELO— evaluate journal prestige, prioritize visibility, and algorithmically rank search results (Ribeiro y Aroni, 2019; Rozo y Pérez, 2019).

While the IF remains a dominant index for standardizing the evaluation of scholarly journals, equating a journal’s IF with the intrinsic quality of an individual article or the broader merit of its authors creates a severe evaluation bias. Funding agencies and academic institutions frequently rely on this metric as a proxy for excellence, directly tying it to grant allocations, academic promotions, and career advancements (Feenstra y Pallarés, 2021; Martínez-Urbe, 2022). This institutional overreliance on journal-level metrics to judge individual performance has drawn widespread criticism, driving global initiatives like the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) to advocate for holistic, narrative-based evaluation methods.

The purported short-term advantages that the IF metric offers in research evaluation are associated with a latent bias driven by economic interests (the pay-for-performance concept), public relations, social prestige, technological and financial disparities, and long-term benefits that establish “incentives that may encourage a scientist to pursue projects with a quick return on results rather than long-term research” (Triggle *et al.*, 2022, p. 140). Such incentives have a significant impact on the development, career trajectory, and productivity of scientists across various fields, including the social sciences. They constitute a less-than-objective indicator that prioritizes a large number of citations to a few articles over the average number of citations of the majority of those published (Campbell, 2008; Salamanca, 2023).

Consequently, evaluating diverse disciplines through a singular, uniform metric induces a structural disadvantage for researchers in health-related social sciences. Journals boasting the highest IFs are overwhelmingly concentrated within the biomedical sciences, a field driven by higher publication velocity and greater citation density (Triggle *et al.*, 2022). Despite these intrinsic disciplinary disparities, institutional pressure on social science researchers to publish in high-IF journals remains unyielding, forcing them to compete on an unequal playing field.

The importance placed on this indicator by some institutional systems has also had a negative impact on new journals and those that, due to systemic asymmetries, have not managed to join the elite of the high IF. This has led to the persistence of a damaging arrangement that affects the essence of researchers’ activity and hinders the dissemination of knowledge that, in many cases, is generated with public money. In countries with budgetary limitations, researchers are unable to pay the high publication costs of many journals with a high IF. As a result, researchers must disseminate their findings in journals with a very low or no IF. This practice affects their institutional evaluations and maintains an “impact factor style of thinking” in the scientific community (Fernández y Rodríguez, 2014; Salamanca, 2023; Triggle *et al.*, 2022).

This overwhelming institutional emphasis on the IF stems from a symbiotic alignment between research evaluation systems, commercial editorial models, and bibliometric indicators. As Feenstra and Pallarés (2021) observe, this framework “establishes rules that are not unrelated to numerous instances of inappropriate ethical conduct,

including excessive stacking and self-citation” (p. 2). Consequently, systemic publication ethics are frequently marginalized or actively compromised by the deep-seated institutional and market interests that underpin this single metric.

Growing concerns regarding the systemic misuse of the IF have catalyzed international initiatives aimed at reforming editorial and evaluation processes. These movements seek to reprioritize the intrinsic value of knowledge creators while mitigating the disproportionate influence of large publishing conglomerates. Chief among these is the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA, 2012), which advocates for eliminating the use of journal-based metrics as a proxy for evaluating individual researchers’ contributions (DORA, 2012; Feenstra y Pallarés, 2021). In light of this paradigm shift, it is critical to determine whether the IF can or should be reconceptualized alongside ethical standards in publishing. To ensure structural integrity, a systematic assessment of the alignment between formal editorial policies and best ethical practices is highly imperative (Cortés, 2024; Mondragón *et al.*, 2017; Salamanca, 2023; Triggles *et al.*, 2022).

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze whether the ethical requirements stipulated in the instructions for authors are significantly stricter in journals with higher IFs, focusing specifically on those publishing social health research. To achieve this, the study analyzes a targeted sample of scientific journals indexed in the Journal Classification System of the Coordinating Commission of National Institutes of Health and Specialized Hospitals (CCINSHAE), a system administered by the Mexican Ministry of Health with the support of SECIHTI (Ministry of Science, Humanities, Technology and Innovation).

Our central premise acknowledges that ethical mandates can vary widely across peer-reviewed platforms, independent of their bibliometric standing. We hypothesize that a high IF does not inherently guarantee more stringent ethical enforcement or clearer author guidelines. Therefore, this study empirically tests whether the IF serves as an indicator of ethical rigor, or whether it remains strictly a measure of citation velocity divorced from publication ethics.

Method

Bibliographic search & selection

This study comprises a bibliometric review of the Qualitative Classification of Scientific Journals of the CCINSHAE, conducted with administrative support from SECIHTI. The investigation was structured in two operational phases:

1. **Journal Stratification:** The CCINSHAE qualitative framework included 90 distinct journals, stratified into six analytical groups based on their updated 2019 IF metrics. The groups were classified as follows:
 - **Group I:** Journals indexed in regional and specialized databases (*Abstracts in Anthropology, Artemisa, Bibliomex Salud, Latindex, LILACS, MEDLINE, Psychological Abstracts, SciELO, Sociological Abstracts*).
 - **Group II:** Mexican journals indexed in the *Revistas Mexicanas de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica* registry of SECIHTI.
 - **Group III:** Mexican and international journals indexed in *Current Contents* with an IF range of 0.90-2.99, according to the 2019 Journal Citation Reports (JCR) Social Science Edition.
 - **Group IV:** International journals indexed in *Current Contents* with an IF range of 3.00-4.49, per the JCR.
 - **Group V:** International journals indexed in *Current Contents* with an IF range of 4.50-5.59, per the JCR.
 - **Group VI:** International journals indexed in *Current Contents* with an IF of 6.00 or greater, per the JCR.
2. **Guidelines Review:** We reviewed the current Submission Guidelines and Instructions for Authors published on the official websites of these 90 journals. We targeted platforms that published theoretical articles, interventions, or social health research (specifically addressing violence, suicide, and/or addiction) between February and November 2014.

Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

To ensure sample integrity, journals were selected based on the following parameters:

- **Inclusion:** Mexican or international journals recognized within the foundational CCINSHAE-SECIHTI Qualitative Classification that published social research in health (violence, suicide, and/or addiction) between 2010 and 2014 in either English or Spanish.
- **Exclusion:** Purely epidemiological studies, clinical trials, or strictly biomedical research lacking a qualitative or social science framework on the targeted topics.

Procedure & Content Analysis

Following initial cohort identification, we verified that each journal actively published social research within our areas of interest during the designated window. Extracted metadata were logged into a structured matrix including: 1) updated IF; 2) journal name; 3) automated search abbreviations; 4) disciplinary domain according to Latindex, SciELO, and JCR; 5) publisher; 6) institutional affiliation; 7) web URL; 8) editorial scope; and 9) specific published topics.

Of the initial 90 specialized journals, 61% ($n = 55$) satisfied all inclusion criteria during the primary study period (2009-2014). The tracking database was updated to capture the name of the author guidelines section, explicit ethical mandates, and active links to supplementary institutional forms or disclosure documents.

The 2019 IF update resulted in the exclusion of three journals that were no longer indexed within the JCR registry. The final analytic sample ($n = 52$) was evaluated using the qualitative content analysis framework established by Bardin (2002), which proceeds through three sequential steps: pre-analysis, material exploration, and interpretive synthesis. The coding process yielded 60 discrete codes, which were subsequently harmonized into 21 overarching ethical categories based on core publication standards from the ICMJE, COPE, WAME, and CSE (2004). Categorization was achieved through iterative investigator consensus to ensure coding reproducibility and inter-rater reliability (Krippendorff, 1997, as cited in López, 2002). Final category distributions were evaluated using descriptive statistics to map relative frequencies across the cohort.

Results

The final sample ($n = 52$) was organized into six groups based on bibliometric standing. Groups I and II (no active IF) comprised 2 and 13 journals, respectively. The remaining high-IF groups were distributed as follows: Group III ($n = 5$), Group IV ($n = 10$), Group V ($n = 9$), and Group VI ($n = 13$).

Aggregate Content Analysis of Guidelines for Authors

The predominant ethical categories identified across the complete sample focused on authorship structures, conflicts of interest, manuscript originality, simultaneous submissions, scientific misconduct (plagiarism and fabrication), and methodological transparency (see Table 1).¹

Frequency analysis revealed that “Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship, co-authorship, acknowledgments, and funding” was the most prevalent category, accounting for 17% of all recorded codes. This was followed by “Not previously published or submitted simultaneously” (13%), “Abide by the ethical norms of the discipline and/or the publisher” (11%), and “Protection, use, and safekeeping of data” (10%). Conversely, the least frequent codes were “Importance of the contribution to science” (2%) and “No ethical requirements specified in guidelines for authors” (1%; see Table 2).

Ethical Requirements in Non-Impact Factor Journals

For journals lacking an IF (Groups I and II), the most frequently invoked ethical categories were “Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship, co-authorship, acknowledgments, and funding” (17%), “Original and unpublished articles” (16%), and “Not previously published or submitted simultaneously” (15%). These were supported by “Transfer of copyright” (11.6%) and “Protection, use, and safekeeping of data” (10.5%). Crucially, these non-IF journals rarely noted “Acceptance of the journal’s conditions”, “Description of methodology”, “Justify with drawal of submissions”, or “Importance of the contribution to science”, which each accounted for a mere 1% of the group’s codes (see Table 3).

1 All the tables are located in the Annex at the end of this article (Editor’s note).

Ethical Requirements in Impact Factor Journals

Journals with an active IF (Groups III-VI) demonstrated striking structural homogeneity across tiers, showing minimal variation as impact values increased (see Table 4):

- **Group III (IF less than 3.00):** Most frequently cited “Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship...” (19%) and “Abide by ethical norms of the discipline...” (17%). Only 2% explicitly demanded a “Description of Methodology” or noted “Publication of refereed articles”.
- **Group IV (IF 3.00-4.49):** Prioritized “Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship...” (15%) and “Not previously published or submitted simultaneously” (14%). Blank policies (“No ethical requirements”) occurred at a low 1%.
- **Group V (IF 4.50-5.59):** Most commonly highlighted “Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship...” (14%), “Not previously published...” (13%), and “Protection, use, and safekeeping of data” (12%). Explicit expectations regarding informed consent and scientific contribution remained highly marginal at 2%.
- **Group VI (IF 6.00 or greater):** Most frequently mandated “Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship...” (19%), “Not previously published...” (13%), and “Conflict of interest” (13%). Notably, mandates regarding “Data sharing” were uniquely confined to this elite group, though at an exceptionally low frequency (0.6%). “Importance of the contribution to science” and “Notify editor of significant errors” each accounted for only 1%.

When clustered together, the active IF groups mirror the baseline population, prioritizing authorship architecture (17%), submission exclusivity (13%), and baseline compliance pledges (11%), while severely marginalizing the “Importance of the contribution to science” (5%) and completely omitting explicit ethical guidelines in some instances (0.5%). Crucially, an increase in journal IF group did not correlate with an expansion of ethical rigor or unique policy enforcement mechanisms; ethical requirements remained concentrated around the same baseline compliance markers across all groups.

Discussion

The Equalization of Ethical Demands Across IF Tiers

This study proceeded from the hypothesis that formal ethical considerations vary widely among journals, and that a high bibliometric rank does not inherently guarantee more stringent ethical standards. Our empirical results confirm this premise. The core ethical categories mandated by author guidelines—such as authorship attribution, simultaneous submission bans, and copyright management—are statistically equivalent between IF and non-IF journals. This demonstrates that an elevated impact factor does not translate into a more rigorous or expansive ethical framework.

While journals across all tiers deploy a standardized compliance vocabulary covering copyright and disclosure, they uniformly fail to emphasize the social or scientific value of the work. This suggests that the impact factor operates primarily as a measure of structural visibility and citation velocity rather than an indicator of superior ethical or scholarly oversight.

Authorship, Meritocracy, and Metric Distortion

The high frequency of mandates regarding “Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship, co-authorship, acknowledgments, and funding” across all cohorts reflects a structural focus on the legal and administrative architecture of publishing. While organizations like the ICMJE (2018) provide clear, four-part frameworks for validating authorship based on substantive intellectual contribution and shared accountability, our findings suggest that the practical application of these rules is frequently distorted by academic meritocracy.

Rather than serving as an objective record of scientific labor, authorship assignment is heavily influenced by institutional reward systems, funding dependencies, and socio-political pressures within research networks (Espinoza, 2019; Mondragón *et al.*, 2017; Triggler *et al.*, 2022). The dominant focus on authorship order and attribution over scientific contribution suggests that researchers and journals alike are forced to prioritize the reputational capital of a publication over its actual value to the literature (Casadevall y Fang, 2015). This metric-driven pressure can incentivize questionable practices such as guest, honorary,

or ghost authorship, highlighting a clear gap between formal policy text and real-world compliance (COPE, 2017; Schroter *et al.*, 2018).

Redundancy and Ambiguity in Compliance Pledges

The high frequency of generic mandates, such as “Abide by the ethical norms of the discipline and/or the publisher”, points to a reliance on passive, self-declaratory compliance models. Rather than providing actionable, field-specific guidance, journals often treat ethical codes as administrative checklists grouped alongside basic formatting rules. As previous studies have argued, framing ethics as a list of procedural guidelines can dilute its significance (Atlas, 2003; Stojanovski, 2015; Wu y Zou, 2015).

True research integrity cannot be enforced through a submission checkbox; it must be an active component of the investigator’s methodology. When journal guidelines rely on vague, sweeping mandates, they shift the entire burden of ethical oversight onto the author without providing the necessary clarification or enforcement mechanisms to handle complex dilemmas in the field.

Disciplinary Inequalities and the “Impact Factor Style of Thinking”

Our results underscore the structural disadvantage that a uniform, metric-driven evaluation system imposes on the social health sciences. Because high impact factors are overwhelmingly concentrated within biomedical journals —driven by rapid publication cycles and high citation density— social science researchers are forced to compete on an unequal playing field (Triggle *et al.*, 2022). This structural imbalance encourages an “impact factor style of thinking” that can distort the trajectory of science by diverting researchers away from long-term, qualitative projects toward topics that promise a fast bibliometric return (Casadevall y Fang, 2015; Fernández y Rodríguez, 2014).

Furthermore, this arrangement creates severe financial barriers for researchers in nations with limited budgets, who are often priced out of high-IF open-access platforms due to exorbitant Article Processing Charges (APCs). Consequently, these researchers are excluded from elite publishing tiers, which negatively impacts their institutional evaluations and limits the global reach of publicly funded research.

Rethinking the Role of Scientific Journals

Ultimately, our findings reveal that high-IF journals often use affiliations with initiatives in ethics and scientific publishing like COPE or the ICMJE as a symbolic strategy to maintain their market position and metric standing rather than as an expression of distinct commitment to superior ethical enforcement. The fact that the “Importance of the contribution to science” remains one of the least cited categories across all groups confirms that the publishing ecosystem treats journals as the end goal of research rather than as a tool for knowledge dissemination.

To counteract this distortion, the scientific community must support global initiatives like DORA (2012) that advocate for eliminating journal-level metrics as a primary tool for individual career assessment. Evaluating research on its intrinsic merits and utilizing open-access models will help decouple scholarly communication from commercial metrics, ensuring that publication ethics serve the advancement of science rather than the preservation of institutional rewards.

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Table 1

Categories and Their Definitions

Cat. No.	Category	Definition
1	Acceptance of the journal's conditions	The journal reserves the right to publish and, in cases where misconduct is detected, has the authority to sanction the authors or notify the appropriate authorities. Authors making use of all or part of one of their own articles published elsewhere must obtain the journal's prior authorization.
2	Abide by the ethical norms of the discipline and/or the publisher	Submitted articles must comply with institutional norms, laws, documentation, and ethical requirements, such as a letter of approval from an ethics committee and measures to protect participants in the study.
3	Original, unpublished articles	Submitted articles must be original, unpublished products of research.
4	Notification of editor of significant errors	Authors discovering errors are required to notify the journal and assist in their correction.
5	Transfer of copyright	Authors of accepted manuscripts must transfer copyright to the journal.
6	Conflict of interest	Any contractual restriction concerning publication imposed by the subject of a study must be disclosed in a letter to the journal declaring conflicts of interest, particularly those of a financial or institutional nature.
7	Informed consent	As part of the right to protection of information, some journals require authors to specify whether informed consent was obtained of participants as well as of authors or collaborators and, in some cases, of the institutions that provided assistance for carrying out the research.
8	Use of language	Submitted articles must ensure the use of language that is not discriminatory, stigmatizing, racist, or sexist.

9	Intellectual property rights	In some journals authors retain their intellectual property rights; they are also responsible for citing other authors when they refer to other studies.
10	Description of methodology	Authors are asked to describe the characteristics of the sample. In some cases, they are asked for manuals, protocols, or descriptions of particular procedures, such as the obtaining of informed consent in research with human subjects, or a description of the methods employed with animal subjects. They must supply the information necessary to attest to the reliability of the data, the process of obtaining it, and its statistical verification. In general, authors must guarantee that the data presented are truthful and reliable, and they must assure that the information shown is clear and adequately documented.
11	Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship, co-authorship, and acknowledgments.	The specification of authorship should consider the contribution of each author and the responsibility of each for the arguments made. Where there is institutional support, sponsorship, or funding of the research, it should be mentioned in the acknowledgements, along with any individuals with substantial collaboration in the publication, declaring that these persons have agreed to be mentioned. There should thus be approval from all authors and collaborators for the possible publication of the article.
12	Justification for withdrawal from consideration	Where the author or authors decide to withdraw their manuscript from the review process, they should notify the journal and explain their decision as soon as possible.
13	Not previously published or submitted simultaneously	Authors must declare that the manuscript submitted to a journal has not been previously published and is not under simultaneous review at another journal.
14	No ethical requirements specified in guidelines for authors	Some journals do not specify any kind of ethical guidelines that must be followed by authors submitting manuscripts.

15	Plagiarism or fraud	The journal makes it clear that alteration, manipulation, plagiarism, and fraud will not be tolerated in submitted manuscripts, and that it will take appropriate measures where these are identified.
16	Copyright protection	Journal guarantees by law that an author's original work, both published and unpublished, is granted copyright protection.
17	Protection, use, and safekeeping of data	Manuscripts submitted must explain the management of data and the measures taken to preserve the confidentiality of participants' data, their anonymity, and their right to privacy. They must describe the relevant permissions, where the data already appears in another publication, or where they wish to include maps or images. They must address the care and importance of preserving the information submitted to the journal. In some cases, authors are asked to share data with other professionals and be willing to distribute them at no cost, for scientific purposes.
18	Publication of refereed articles	Some journals accept complete works previously published in summary form, or unpublished works presented at conferences, especially where these have been evaluated by an appropriate committee.
19	Importance of the contribution to science or to non-specialized publication	Manuscripts submitted must be of substantial scientific quality, with social importance and relevance.
20	Suggest reviewers	Some journals accept authors' suggestions of qualified reviewers.
21	Public database register	To include the paper in a public database.

Source: Original work based on the content analysis of the information published by journals.

Table 2

Percentage of Categories for All Journals ($n=52$)

Cat. No.	Category	%
11	Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship	17.00
13	Not previously published or submitted simultaneously	13.04
2	Abide by the ethical norms of the discipline and/or the publisher	10.87
17	Protection, use, and safekeeping of data	10.28
6	Conflict of interest	8.70
5	Transfer of copyright	6.92
3	Original, unpublished articles	6.32
10	Description of methodology	5.93
7	Informed consent	5.34
1	Acceptance of the journal's conditions	3.95
9	Right to intellectual property	2.57
15	Plagiarism or fraud	2.57
19	Importance of the contribution to science	1.78
4	Notify editor of significant errors	0.99
8	Use of language	0.99
14	No ethical requirements in guidelines for authors	0.79
16	Copyright protection	0.59
18	Publication of refereed articles	0.59
20	Suggest reviewers	0.40
12	Justify withdrawal of submissions	0.20
21	Public database register	0.20

Source: Original work based on the content analysis of the information published by journals.

Table 3

Percentage of Categories for Journals Without an Impact Factor

Cat. No.	Category	%
11	Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship	17.4
3	Original, unpublished articles	16.3
13	Not previously published or submitted simultaneously	15.1
5	Transfer of copyright	11.6
17	Protection, use, and safekeeping of data	10.5
2	Abide by the ethical norms of the discipline and/or the publisher	8.1
7	Informed consent	5.8
9	Right to intellectual property	3.5
6	Conflict of interest	2.3
14	No ethical requirements in guidelines for authors	2.3
18	Publication of refereed articles	2.3
1	Acceptance of the journal's conditions	1.2
10	Description of methodology	1.2
12	Justify withdrawal of submissions	1.2
19	Importance of the contribution to science	1.2

Source: Original work based on the content analysis of the information published by journals.

Table 4

Percentages of Ethical Categories by Journal Group

Cat. No.	Category	% Group III	% Group IV	% Group V	% Group VI	% All Groups
1	Acceptance of the journal's conditions	4.2	3.9	5.3	4.5	4.5
2	Abide by the ethical norms of the discipline and/or the publisher	16.7	10.7	9.6	11.4	11.4
3	Original, unpublished articles	6.3	2.9	3.2	5.1	4.3
4	Notify editor of significant errors	2.1	1.9	0.0	1.1	1.2
5	Transfer of copyright	10.4	7.8	7.4	2.8	5.9
6	Conflict of interest	6.3	6.8	10.6	12.5	10.0
7	Informed consent	6.3	6.8	2.1	5.7	5.2
8	Use of language	0.0	1.0	2.1	0.0	0.7
9	Right to intellectual property	2.1	3.9	4.3	1.7	2.9
10	Description of methodology	2.1	5.8	10.6	6.8	6.9
11	Hierarchy and/or justification of authorship	18.8	14.6	13.8	19.3	16.9
12	Justify withdrawal of submissions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
13	Not previously published or submitted simultaneously	10.4	13.6	12.8	13.1	12.8
14	No ethical requirements in guidelines for authors	2.1	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
15	Plagiarism or fraud	0.0	3.9	0.0	5.1	3.1
16	Copyright protection	0.0	1.0	2.1	0.0	0.7

Cat. No.	Category	% Group III	% Group IV	% Group V	% Group VI	% All Groups
17	Protection, use, and safe-keeping of data	10.4	10.7	11.7	9.1	10.2
18	Publication of refereed articles	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
19	Importance of the contribution to science	0.0	3.9	2.1	1.1	1.9
20	Suggest reviewers	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.5
21	Public database register	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.2

Source: Prepared for this article.

Liliana Mondragón-Barrios holds a doctoral degree in psychology from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). She is currently a researcher at the Instituto Nacional de Psiquiatría Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz in Mexico. Her research interests are suicidal behavior, bioethics in mental health, and ethics in social research in health. Recent publications: 1) Maldonado, Isaac y Mondragón, Liliana (2023). Ethical issues when using digital platforms to perform interviews in qualitative health research. *Journal of Qualitative Methods*. DOI: 10.1177/16094069231165949. 2) Mondragón, Liliana, Lolas, Fernando, García, Zoraida, Kemelmajer-de-Carlucci, Aída, Tapia, Sandra y Cárdenas, Ronald (2025). Contexto jurídico de las voluntades anticipadas en salud mental en América Latina. *Bioethics Update*, 11(1). DOI: 10.24875/BUP.24000013. 3) Mondragón-Barrios Liliana, Martínez-Levy, Gabriela, Díaz-Anzaldúa, Adriana, Caballero-Gutiérrez, Miguel Ángel, Moncayo-Samperio, Luis (2025). Bioethical implications of the use of digital technologies for mental health research during the social distancing period of the Covid-19 pandemic. *Digital Health*. DOI: 10.1177/20552076251328809.

Tonatiuh Kinich Guarneros García holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from UNAM. He is currently a staff member at the Instituto Nacional de Psiquiatría Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz in Mexico. His research interests include the ethical analysis of social research. Recent publications: 1) Mondragón Liliana, Guarneros, Tonatiuh, Jiménez Alberto (2017). Ethical evaluation of mental health social research: agreement between researchers and ethics committees. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 12(3). DOI: 10.1177/1556264617708937. 2) Mondragón, Liliana, Guarneros, Tonatiuh y Jiménez, Alberto (2021). The Harmful Effects of Social Research and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights: Results of a National Survey of Social Scientists in Mexico. *RBD. Revista de Bioética y Derecho*, (53). DOI: 10.1344/rbd2021.53.33758.

José Alberto Jiménez Tapia holds a master's degree in sciences and is a doctoral student in psychology at UNAM. He is currently a researcher at the Instituto Nacional de Psiquiatría Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz in Mexico. He has been working on the topics related to depression, suicide, and violence. Recent publications: 1) Jiménez, Alberto, Brands, Brunna, Mann, Robert, Saldivar, Gabriela, Juárez-Loya, Angélica, Garbus, Pamela, González-Forteza, Catalina (2023). Risk Perception of Traffic Accidents Due to Alcohol and Marijuana Use in Mexican College Students. *Healthcare*, 11(7). DOI: 10.3390/healthcare11071009. 2) Rivera, Leonor, Palacios, Bruma, Austria, Fernando, Séris, Marina, Pérez, Berenice, Jiménez, Alberto, Astudillo-García, Claudia (2023). Eventos de vida estresantes y su efecto en la conducta suicida en mujeres durante la pandemia por Covid-19 en México. *Salud Pública de México*, 65(4). DOI: 10.21149/14552. 3) Rogers, Megan, Richards, Jenelle, Peterkin, Devon, Park, Ji Yoon, Astudillo-García, Claudia, Barzilay, Shira, Blum, Yarden, Chistopolskaya, Ksenia, Dudeck, Manuela, Enikolopov, Sergey, Husain, Ishrat, Jiménez, Alberto, Kantas, Fatma, Kuśmirek, Oskar, Been, Ming, Menon, Vikas, Peper, Jefté, Pilecka, Barbara, Streb, Judith, Ünübol, Başak, Valvassori, Samira, Contreras, María, Wu, Yi, You, Sungeun, Galynker, Igor (2024). Intentions to use mental health and suicide prevention resources among individuals with symptoms of the suicide crisis syndrome and/or suicidal ideation. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 54(4). DOI: 10.1111/sltb.13083.