

Editorial Indulgence

Definition: *Editorial indulgence* refers to the tendency of journal editors to **prioritize personal, institutional, or sentimental content** over scientific rigor, often by **publishing articles that would not meet standard peer-review criteria** if submitted by unaffiliated authors.

Characteristics

- Acceptance of weak or anecdotal submissions from editorial board members or senior figures.
- Over-publication of commemorative articles, historical retrospectives, or vanity series.
- Minimal critical oversight applied to certain contributors (“editorial immunity”).
- Use of journal space for internal legacy building rather than academic advancement.

Red Flags

Symptom	Consequence
Repeated publications by the same institution	Perceived bias and erosion of editorial credibility
Long, uncritical tributes or autobiographies	Displacement of peer-reviewed scientific research
Lack of methodological or bibliographic rigor	Weakens the journal's academic reputation

Consequences

- Undermines the integrity and fairness of the peer-review process.
- Prioritizes prestige, ego, or nostalgia over objective scientific merit.
- Contributes to journal padding and reader disengagement.
- May lead to reputational damage for the journal in academic circles.

Related Terms

- Journal padding
- Institutional bias
- Vanity publishing
- Editorial favoritism

Application Example

- The multi-part series on the “genesis of Academic Neurosurgery” in Neurocirugía (Engl Ed) can be seen as a case of editorial indulgence, reflecting internal reverence rather than critical historical scholarship.

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