

Inquiry Report on Quality of the Contents Published by the Journal 'Advancements in Life Sciences' in 2022/23

Date of release - 16 June 2025

Table of Contents

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Preamble | 1 |
| 2 | Summary of Findings | 2 |
| 3 | Manuscript Level Details of the Inquiry | 3 |
| 4 | Recommendations by the Inquiry Team | 3 |
| 5 | Important Clarification on the Previous Inquiry Report (2024/25) | 4 |
| 6 | Way Forward | 4 |
| 7 | Validation by the Inquiry Team | 4 |

For Public Release

1 Preamble

This inquiry report is a result of an internal examination of the content published by the journal in the years 2022 and 2023. This examination was warranted in the extra-ordinary editorial board meeting held on 02 April 2025 consequent to the change in status of the journal in Web of Science (WoS) index to 'on-hold' on account of quality concerns raised by the editorial team of WoS.

This report is continuum of the ongoing internal examination. For readers to know more about the process of inquiry, terms of reference, and inquiry team members with their respective roles, please see the report on the first cohort of content already available [at this link](#). This said content is being omitted from this report to avoid redundancy.

Furthermore, since the report on the first cohort (2024/25) provided detailed insights into both areas of good quality and aspects requiring improvement, this report will only highlight anomalies in the second cohort of content (2022/23). This is deliberately opted by the inquiry team keeping its key mandate in sight i.e., highlighting areas of concern regarding quality.

For Public Release

2 Summary of Findings

1. A total of 216 articles published by the journal in 2022 and 2023 were evaluated by the record and scientific evaluation team members. These articles were from volume 09 and volume 10.
2. Use of English language has been found problematic in at least eight (8) articles.
3. Apparently insufficient peer review has been noted in editorial workflow of four (4) different articles.
4. Nineteen (19) publications were found having more than 20% Similarity Index (Turnitin).
5. Quality of figures have been found compromised in two (2) publications.
6. There is at least one (1) occasion where inquiry team could not find certain parts of record of editorial processing.
7. There are at least three (3) studies which do not qualify to be "full length research article" but only as "short communication" as per precedent set by the journal itself.
8. In line with the Web of Science "Exceptions to standard embargo and removal from coverage policies" need for editorial expression of concern has been identified for 41 published articles on account of different errors. The details are as follows in table 1.

| Sr No. | Type of Errors Found After Publishing / Other Discrepancies | Occasions | Corrective Measures Advised |
|--------|---|-----------|---|
| 1. | Errors in metadata | 4 | Expression of concern is recommended. Minor corrections to be applied by the editorial team. |
| 2. | Inappropriate category assigned | 3 | Expression of concern is recommended. Expulsion of editor / editorial team member process to be started. Record to be set straight after consultation with authors. |
| 3. | Insufficient Peer Review | 4 | Expression of concern is recommended. New round of review is advised to ascertain if the reported findings are reliable before taking further action e.g., retraction, corrections. |
| 4. | Major (plagiarism) | 19 | Expression of concern is recommended. Retraction is advised after reconfirmation. |
| 5. | Major (quality of figures) | 2 | Expression of concern is recommended. Major corrections to be sent to authors. |
| 6. | Minor (language) | 8 | Expression of concern is recommended. Minor corrections to be applied by the editorial team in consultation with the authors. |
| 7. | Record or parts of record not available | 1 | Expression of concern is recommended. Expulsion of editor / editorial team member process to be started. Record to be set straight after consultation with authors. |

Table 1: Breakup of post-publication errors in the examined papers and respective corrective measures advised.

9. Trend concerning number of publications per issue remained within regular range. However, a special issue published in 2023 was marked as out of regular publishing practice of the journal. Number of papers published per issue are given in the following table 2.

| Volume (issue) | Number of Articles Published |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Volume 10 issue 4 (2023) | 26 |
| Volume 10 issue 3 (2023) | 27 |
| Volume 10 issue 2 (2023) | 25 |
| Volume 10 issue 1 (2023) | 23 |
| Volume 10 Special Issue (2023) | 24 |
| Volume 9 issue 4 (2022) | 34 |
| Volume 9 issue 3 (2022) | 21 |
| Volume 9 issue 2 (2022) | 17 |
| Volume 9 issue 1 (2022) | 19 |

Table 2: Number of articles published by the journal in each issue in 2022 / 23.

3 Manuscript Level Details of the Inquiry

Following fifteen (15) quality / data indicators of each of the published manuscript, consistent with purview of this inquiry, were examined. These indicators pertain to integrity of record, their public standing, integrity/standards of quality and recommendations for corrective measures.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Manuscript ID | 9. Country of the Corresponding Author |
| 2. Manuscript Title | 10. Published (in) |
| 3. Manuscript Type | 11. APCs Charged |
| 4. Scope Compliance | 12. Citations Received till Date |
| 5. Turnitin Similarity Index (in percentage) | 13. Type of Errors Found After Publishing |
| 6. AI Generated / Paraphrased Content | 14. Misconduct Found if any |
| 7. No. of Peer Reviewers / Reports | 15. Corrective Measures to be Taken |
| 8. Processing Time (Months) | |

Manuscript-level analyses sheet is available at the following link.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1t7UuQVC-QafDL-o1prhxQeSizxj-Ykcs/>

4 Recommendations by the Inquiry Team

The inquiry team is pleased to experience the independence and readiness of the editorial board over adoption of recommendations by the inquiry report (cohort 2024/25). The inquiry team is satisfied with the compliance report No. REF/WOS/04, dated 02 June 2026 issued by the office of the chief editor. As a general principle of keeping high standard of quality publications, long term adoption of those recommendations in true letter and spirit will ensure satisfaction of readers and regulatory agencies. However, the following recommendations based on the findings of this cohort may please be followed.

1. Apply corrective measures as advised in section 2, point no. 9.
2. Seek clarification / guidance from Web of Science, Scopus and other regulatory bodies on rules of publishing Special Issues. If the practice is not permitted, publication of special issues should be ceased and already published content may be retracted after consultation with the concerned authors.

5 Important Clarification on the Previous Inquiry Report (2024/25)

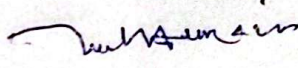
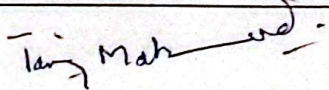

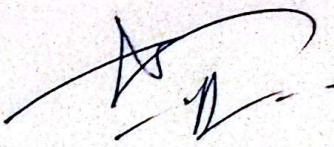
The editorial board communicated reservation to inquiry team on the misperceived grounds of the Recommendation no. 8 in section 6 of the "Final Inquiry Report on Quality of the Contents Published by the Journal 'Advancements in Life Sciences' in 2024/25" released on 12 May 2025 which stated that "Since the journal is an international outlet, increase in diversification of geographical origin of authors is encouraged". The board argued that since the inquiry team only considered country of the corresponding authors, therefore the inference on geographical diversity of authors was not accurate. Had the affiliations of all authors been considered, the inference about the diversity of authors would have supported the journal's internationality.

The inquiry team concurs with this argument and confirms that the author-base of the journal in the evaluated content (2025/24/23/22) is international, covering all continents including developing and developed nations.

6 Way Forward

The board is requested to present compliance report on all recommendations (section 4) in two (2) weeks after issuance of this report.

7 Validation by the Inquiry Team

| Member No. | Name / Designation / Affiliation / Contact Information | Signature |
|------------|--|---|
| 1. | Prof Dr (R) Tayyab Husnain Professor of Molecular Biology Ex-Director of Center of Excellence in Molecular Biology, University of the Punjab, Lahore Email: tayyabhusnain@yahoo.com |  |
| 2. | Prof Dr (R) Tariq Mahmud Professor of Chemistry University of the Punjab, Lahore Email: tariqmeer30@hotmail.com |  |
| 3. | Prof Dr (R) Idrees Ahmad Nasir Professor of Biotechnology University of the Punjab, Lahore Chief Editor of the Journal (<i>Advancements in Life Sciences</i>) Email: dr.idrees@gmail.com |  |
| 4. | Dr Shafique Ahmed Assistant Professor of Molecular Biology The Superior University, Lahore Ex-managing Editor of the Journal (<i>Advancements in Life Sciences</i>) Email: shafique.ahmed@superior.edu.pk |  |