

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of *Biophysical Journal* (*BJ*) is to publish the highest quality work that elucidates important biological, chemical, or physical mechanisms and provides quantitative insight into fundamental problems at the molecular, cellular, and systems and whole-organism levels. Articles published in the Journal should be of general interest to quantitative biologists, regardless of their research specialty.

SCOPE

BJ publishes original articles, letters, and perspectives on important problems in modern biophysics. The papers should be written so as to be of interest to a broad community of biophysicists. *BJ* welcomes experimental studies that employ quantitative physical approaches for the study of biological systems, including or spanning scales from molecule to whole organism. Experimental studies of a purely descriptive or phenomenological nature, with no theoretical or mechanistic underpinning, are not appropriate for publication in *BJ*. Theoretical studies should offer new insights into the understanding of experimental results or suggest new experimentally testable hypotheses. Articles reporting significant methodological or technological advances, which have potential to open new areas of biophysical investigation, are also suitable for publication in *BJ*. Papers describing improvements in accuracy or speed of existing methods or extra detail within methods described previously are not suitable for *BJ*.

Papers are handled by an Editorial Board of more than 100 scientists who solicit reviewers with the requisite expertise. The Editorial Board is divided among the following sections; these descriptions also serve to detail the scope of science published by *BJ*:

Section I—Nucleic Acids and Genome Biophysics. This Section highlights biophysical aspects of genome organization and their relation to cellular functions such as transcription, translation, development, and gene-regulatory mechanisms. It includes studies using experimental and computational techniques to investigate the structure, dynamics, function, and regulation of DNA, RNA, and their complexes with other molecules. It also publishes research studies on chromatin structural states, folding and function, and the dynamic organization of the nucleus.

Section II—Proteins. This section covers the biophysics of protein and nucleic acid structure, function, and interactions. The emphasis is on molecular biophysics encompassing experimental, computational, and theoretical approaches.

Section III—Channels and Transporters. This section covers mechanistic studies of the structure, function, and regulation of membrane transport proteins and signaling receptors. The emphasis is on studies that use experimental and/or computational methods.

Section IV—Membranes. This section covers the analysis of the structure, organization, and function of artificial

and biological membranes via state-of-the art experimental and theoretical biophysics approaches.

Section V—Molecular Machines, Motors, and Nanoscale Biophysics. This section covers biophysical studies of molecular motors (cytoskeletal and non-cytoskeletal), cytoskeletal assemblies, and muscle contraction and studies that use single-molecule tracking, force spectroscopy, and other nanoscale techniques.

Section VI —Cell Biophysics. This section covers work that furthers our understanding of molecular function and interactions within and between cells and elucidates how these mechanisms are regulated within the cellular milieu.

Section VII—Systems Biophysics. This section covers the analysis of collective properties in systems of interacting components, including biomolecular networks, organelles, tissues, organs, and whole organisms. Special emphasis is placed on studies that link multiple levels of biological organization, from gene sequence to nonlinear and network-level phenomena, such as pattern formation, metabolism, and signal transduction.

Section VIII—Perspectives (invited).

GENERAL POLICIES

RESEARCH TRANSPARENCY AND MATERIALS AND DATA AVAILABILITY

The Biophysical Society, publisher of *BJ*, agrees fully with the intent of the National Institutes of Health *Principles and Guidelines for Reporting Preclinical Research* (<http://www.nih.gov/about/reporting-preclinical-research.htm>)—to encourage reproducible, robust, and transparent research.

The Journal's *Guidelines for the Reproducibility of Biophysics Research* be found at <http://www.cell.com/biophysj/authors>

PRIOR PUBLICATION

Manuscripts submitted to *BJ* must be original; papers and supporting material that have already been published or are concurrently submitted elsewhere for publication are not acceptable for submission.

If some part of the work has appeared, or will appear, elsewhere, the authors must give the specific details of such appearances in the cover letter accompanying the *BJ* submission. If previously published illustrative material, such as figures or tables, must be included, the authors are responsible for obtaining the appropriate permissions from the publisher(s) before the material may be published in *BJ*.

Some authors prefer to post their manuscripts to preprint servers before submitting them to primary research journals. *BJ* will consider for publication manuscripts that have been posted informally on a private website or on ArXiv or BioArXiv, but will not consider manuscripts that have been posted on other preprint servers or "virtual journal" websites. Questions related to this policy should be directed to the Editorial Office (BJ@biophysics.org).

RELATED WORKS

Authors are required to include with their manuscript submission related manuscripts under review at other journals. If a manuscript is heavily dependent on information in a prior publication by the author(s), the authors

are advised to include such publication(s) along with their manuscript submission. Failure to include this information may delay the editorial decision because the handling editor can be expected to request these materials from the author(s).

REVIEWERS

Manuscripts are typically reviewed by one to three reviewers, who are solicited by the handling editor.

At submission, authors are invited to suggest appropriate reviewers, who should be experts in the subject matter and who cannot have collaborated with the author(s) within the last three years. In the case of cross-disciplinary studies using modeling, novel methods, or theory applied to a biophysical research problem, authors are encouraged to suggest potential referees with the requisite expertise to assess both the technical/theoretical merits and the significance of potential applications of the work. Suggested reviewers are contacted at the discretion of the handling editor and there is no guarantee that suggested editors will be used.

The final decision regarding acceptance of a manuscript for publication will be made by the Editor-in-Chief.

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Authors should use the link below to estimate the number of printed pages for their manuscript. We encourage papers of a maximum of 12 pages total (10 of text and 2 of references). Papers longer than 12 pages may be submitted, but they should be accompanied by a justification for the additional length and will be assessed at higher page charges for each page above 12.

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Use the “characters (with spaces)” count. The count should include the title page, abstract, article text, appendices, and table and figure legends, but NOT references. Figures larger than 3.25 inches wide by 4 inches high should be counted as two in the formula.

AUTHORSHIP

The co-authors of a manuscript should include all persons who have made significant scientific contributions to the reported work and who share responsibility and accountability for it. Other contributors should be indicated in the Acknowledgments section. Inclusion of a name as an author is a statement that this person made significant scientific contributions; administrative relationships to the investigators do not qualify a person for co-authorship. Deceased persons who meet the criteria for co-authorship should be included, with a footnote indicating date of death.

Authors should include an “Author Contributions” section in their manuscript, as a separate subheading just before “Acknowledgements” (or “References” if there are no acknowledgements). This text should describe the specific contributions of each author, designated by initials, to the submitted work. Examples of such author designations could include: designed research; performed research; contributed analytic tools; analyzed data; or wrote the manuscript. An author may have contributed to more than one aspect of the work, and more than one author may have contributed to the same aspect of the work.

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For administrative purposes, one author is designated as the corresponding author for all matters regarding the published article (requests for materials, technical comments, and requests for revisions). *BJ* will indicate this person as the point of contact for feedback on the published paper. It is this author's full responsibility to inform all co-authors of any matters arising and to deal promptly with such matters. This author is not required to be the senior author of the paper. **The person listed as the corresponding author in the submission site will determine the membership status of the manuscript regarding publication charges.**

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BJ requires all authors to disclose any private-sector financial conflicts of interest that might be construed to influence either the results or their interpretation in the manuscript. Such conflicts include a significant financial benefit or significant fractional ownership of a company with related interests. Authors must declare such conflicts both in the submission letter and in the Acknowledgments section of the manuscript. This policy applies to all submitted manuscripts and review materials.

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BJ expects the highest level of scholarship from its authors. Authors should cite articles that are closely related to the present work, that have been influential during the conduct of the research and the writing of the manuscript, and that will aid readers in locating earlier work essential for understanding the present studies. Citation of articles that are not directly related to the reported research should be minimized. For critical materials used in the work, there must be proper citation and acknowledgement of non-author sources.

The authors should identify all sources of information quoted or offered, except for common knowledge. Information obtained privately—from conversations, correspondence, or discussions with other parties—should only be used if explicit permission is obtained from the source(s). These written permissions must be included together with the initial submission of the manuscript.

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Manuscripts that refer to information in a public database (such as structures in the RCSB Data Bank) must cite the publication, if available, in which the original information was reported. If the data are not derived from a publication, the authors and Digital Object Identifier (DOI) of the data should be cited.

Citations are not allowed in the Abstract.

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Wager, E., and S. Kleinert. 2011. Responsible research publication: International standards for authors. A position statement developed at the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity, Singapore, July 22–24, 2010. In *Promoting Research Integrity in a Global Environment*. T. Mayer and N. Steneck, editors. Imperial College Press/World Scientific Publishing, Singapore, pp. 309–316.
http://publicationethics.org/files/International%20standards_authors_for%20website_11_Nov_2011.pdf

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If the manuscript reports results of studies of either human subjects or materials obtained from human subjects, it should state in the Materials and Methods section that the study was approved by the appropriate institutional review board (IRB) and that appropriate informed consent was obtained from human subjects.

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Under *BJ*'s 12-month embargo policy, the Journal automatically submits the final published article on behalf of the author to PubMed Central. Therefore, all papers are in compliance with the National Institutes of Health and Howard Hughes Medical Institute policies.

TYPES OF ARTICLES

REGULAR ARTICLES

***BJ* will accept for initial review well-prepared manuscripts in any format.** If your manuscript is accepted you will be required to meet the Journal's specific file requirements prior to publication. See Final File Formats.

We prefer manuscripts formatted as single-column, single-spaced documents, in which text is justified and side margins are 1 inch. The page estimating tool will be most accurate if the font is Times New Roman size 12 point for regular text and Symbol for Greek and mathematical symbols.

ORDER OF MANUSCRIPT SECTIONS

- Title Page (For initial submissions: Title and Author names listed with initials of given names followed by surnames; do not list affiliations, addresses or email address)
- Abstract
- Main Text (Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion [or Results and Discussion], Conclusion) — **Figures or tables, along with their titles and captions, should be embedded in the text as they are referenced in the paper when submitting for review.**
- Acknowledgments
- References (numbered)
- Supporting Material (movies, database files, etc. may be uploaded as separate files)

Please note: Instructions for Supporting Material are available at the following link: [Supporting Material.pdf](#)

STYLE

Papers are to follow the conventions of *Scientific Style and Format*, 8th Edition, the Council of Science Editors Style Manual (except for references). Additional information can be obtained from the [BJ Style Guide](#).

TITLE

The title of each manuscript should identify the content of the article; clarity and conciseness are essential for indexing, abstracting, and retrieval. Not more than 100 characters and spaces should be used. A condensed running title of no more than 40 characters (including spaces) must be provided on the title page.

KEYWORDS

Up to six keywords or phrases not in the title must be provided from a predetermined list. These will be used for indexing and for selecting reviewers.

ABSTRACTS

Each manuscript must be accompanied by an informative abstract of no more than 300 words. Abstracts should describe the substance of the paper in language non-specialists can understand, and must make clear the paper's biological significance. Reference citations are not allowed in the Abstract of a paper.

APPENDICES

Appendices are formatted the same as the other major sections of the article (Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion, etc. for regular articles) with one exception: instead of subheadings, the sections are broken down as Appendix A, Appendix B, and so forth, although subheadings within those aforementioned main "A" and "B" headings are permissible. The numbering of equations can either continue sequentially from the main text (34, 35, 36, ...) or be specific to the Appendix itself (A1, A2, A3, ...). The numbering of reference citations continues sequentially (very important). Placement of the Appendix is immediately after the main text (i.e., before Supporting Material, Acknowledgments, and References).

FOOTNOTES

The only footnotes should be on the title page (used within the author list to denote affiliations) or in tables (defined within the table legend).

Author-list footnotes should be numbered (1, 2, 3, etc.), and table footnotes should be lettered (a, b, c, etc.). Please

do not use the range format to indicate multiple footnotes; instead, list each footnote individually (e.g., 1,2,3,4, not 1-4; and a,b,c,d, not a-d).

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations should be defined in the text at first mention.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Capitalize trade names and give manufacturers' full names and addresses (city and state).

EQUATIONS

Equations are to be typewritten. Handwritten equations will not be accepted. Clearly indicate capital and lowercase letters. Label Greek and unusual symbols the first time they appear. Use fractional exponents instead of root signs. The solidus (/) for fractions will save vertical space. Equation numbers should be cited in the text without parentheses (e.g., Eq. 9, Eq. 10). Do not cite equations numerically only, but be sure to add the "Eq." Do not cite equations in the Abstract.

When creating equations, you may use LaTeX, Math Type, or Word's Equation Editor (not Equation Builder; please see note below). However, please note that LaTeX files must be converted to .doc files by our

composition team; as a result, approximately 1 week will be added to the production timeline for LaTeX manuscripts. The latter two options do not incur any extra conversion time during production.

Equation Builder: Because of technical problems associated with the program, Equation Builder (the default equation tool in Word 2007/2010) should not be used. To insert an Equation Editor equation in Word 2007/2010, go to the Insert tab, select the pull-down option labeled "Object," and choose "Microsoft Equation 3.0."

REFERENCES

References are cited in numerical order in the text and are designated by that reference number in parentheses. The numbers, in parentheses, can be repeated at each citation of the referenced material. References appearing solely in figure legends and tables follow those in the text. Reference citations are not allowed in the Abstract. The following is an example of numbered citations:

Membrane channels with large aqueous pores are traditionally regarded as "molecular sieves" that discriminate between different molecules based on their size (1,2). This simplified view, however, contradicts emerging experimental evidence that permeation through these structures involves intimate molecular interactions (3–5). Metabolite-specific channels exhibit affinity to their metabolites; permeating molecules do not just slip through the pore, but feel strong attraction to the pore-lining residues. The now classical example is bacterial porin LamB (6), where the existence of an extended binding zone for oligosaccharides is firmly established. More recent examples include ATP interactions with VDAC (3) and penicillin antibiotic interactions with the general bacterial porin OmpF (4,6–8).

UNPUBLISHED DATA AND PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Citations such as "unpublished data" and "personal communication" should be included parenthetically in the text, with all authors' initials and last names, and **must not appear in the reference section**. For personal communications, include cited author's institutional affiliation and written permission to use material cited. For the reference list, follow the style of the examples listed here, noting that each reference is numbered according to the number in which it appears in the text.

SUPPORTING REFERENCES

All unique supporting references must be included at the end of the main-text reference list. Please see the [Supporting Material](#) instructions for more information.

ADDING AND DELETING REFERENCES

If references are added in the proof stage, they and their corresponding citations must be inserted per their proper numerical order and the rest of the citations/references renumbered accordingly. References deleted in the proof stage will read, for example, "3. Reference deleted in proof." Their corresponding numbers will remain in the text.

REFERENCE FORMATS

JOURNAL ARTICLES

For references to journal articles, include all authors' names (invert only the first author's last name and initials; do not use "et al."), year, complete article titles, volume number, journal name, and inclusive page numbers. Abbreviate the names of journals as in the *Serial Sources for the Biosis Data Base* (published annually by BioSciences Information Service of Biological Abstracts, Philadelphia, PA 19103); spell out the names of unlisted journals.

See the examples below:

1. Cole, K. S., and J. W. Moore. 1960. Potassium ion current in the squid giant axon: Dynamic characteristics. *Biophys. J.* 1:1-14.

2. Loboda, A., and C. M. Armstrong, 2001. Resolving the gating charge movement associated with late transitions in K channel activation. *Biophys. J.* 81:905-916.
3. Reference deleted in proof.
4. Johnston I. G., B. C. Rickett, and N. S. Jones. 2014. Explicit tracking of uncertainty increases the power of quantitative rule-of-thumb reasoning in cell biology. *Biophys. J.* 107:2612-2617.
5. Álvarez-González, B., R. Melli, E. Bastounis, R. A. Firtel, J. C., Lasheras, J. C. del Álamo. 2015. Three-dimensional balance of cortical tension and axial contractility enables fast amoeboid migration. *Biophys. J.* In press.

INFORMATION IN PUBLIC REPOSITORIES

Manuscripts that refer to information in a public database (such as structures in the RCSB Data Bank) must cite the publication, if available, in which the original information was reported as well as the database serial number.

ABSTRACTS

Carvalho-de-Souza, J. L., J. S. Treger, B. Dang, S. Kent, D. R. Pepperberg, and F. Bezanilla. Robust optical stimulation of neuronal activity using functionalized gold nanoparticles. 2015 Biophysical Society Meeting Abstracts. *Biophys. J., Suppl*, Abstract 1037-Plat.

COMPLETE BOOKS

Phillips, R., J. Kondev, and J. Theriot. 2009. *Physical Biology of the Cell*. Garland Science, New York.

ARTICLES IN BOOKS

Seddon, J. M., and R. H. Templer. 1995. Polymorphism of lipid-water systems. *In Handbook of Biological Physics*, vol 1. Structure and Dynamics of Membranes, From Cells to Vesicles. R. Lipowsky and E. Sackmann, editors. Elsevier/North Holland, Amsterdam, pp. 97-160.

COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE

All commercial software and products should provide the name and location of the manufacturer. MATLAB (The MathWorks, Natick, MA).

WEBSITES

Web references should be treated no differently than other references, and should appear as shown below. Society, Biophysical. *Biophysical Society*. June-July 2010. Web. 08 July 2010. <http://www.biophysics.org>.

TABLES

All tables should be double-spaced and carry a title. Do not use vertical rules. Tables must be in black and white.

BIOPHYSICAL LETTERS

Biophysical Letters are unusually important and unusually timely short articles in diverse areas of biophysics. The criteria for acceptance of a Letter are more stringent than for Regular Articles. Biophysical Letters are not meant to serve as a means of publishing preliminary results or material that lacks enough significance to be acceptable as a Regular Article.

All Letters must be submitted using the template provided by the Journal. **The format for Biophysical Letters is two columns and a maximum of three pages, including references.** You may download the template for letters here: http://biophysj.msubmit.net/html/biophysj_manuscript_templates.html

Letters that have been rejected may only be resubmitted if the handling editor has made the suggestion for resubmission in the decision letter to the author(s).

BJ CLASSICS

These invited articles celebrate seminal papers originally published in *BJ*. The articles will be written by the original authors, their colleagues, and/or their students and will explain how the paper has influenced the field and is still relevant today. The article should be accessible to scientists outside the field and to students. BJ Classics should be limited to five printed pages in length, exclusive of references, and the number of references should be limited to no more than 60 recent publications. An abstract with a reference to the paper being highlighted should be included. There are no page charges associated with an accepted BJ Classic article. Color figures will be e-color only (black and white in print and color online) unless the author specifies otherwise and incurs the cost of print color.

COMMENTS TO THE EDITOR

These are short commentaries on a paper published earlier in *BJ*. These are NOT short original articles. In order for a submission to qualify as a comment, it must not contain unpublished data and must be entirely free of polemic. Comments to the Editor may be rebutted by the authors of the previously published article. Comments and any rebuttals are subject to review. Abstracts are not required for Comments.

COMPUTATIONAL TOOLS

Computational Tool articles are **limited to five pages in length, including references**, and describe software for analysis of experimental data, modeling/simulation software, or database services. The tool should be new or the paper should describe a significant new feature in an existing computational resource. The paper should also describe how the computational tool can be applied to a biophysical problem, preferably with an example. Any new algorithms implemented in the software should also be described. All computational tools will have to be freely accessible and open to the research community. The paper should describe what the tool does, but not take the place of a user guide, which, together with any requisite download instructions, should be available on the authors' website. In addition to the usual review criteria of novelty and importance, reviewers will be asked to test-drive the computational tool and judge its usability.

Authors must declare the location and accessibility of any custom code and software central to the main claims of their paper. We recommend deposition of source code on GitHub (<https://github.com/>) together with a listing on Zenodo (<https://zenodo.org/>), which will assign a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) to make the upload uniquely citeable; this DOI should be reported in the manuscript.

NEW AND NOTABLES

These commentaries, which highlight Regular Articles appearing in the same issue of *BJ*, are solicited by the handling editor. They are expected within 10 days of solicitation to facilitate rapid peer review and publication. Abstracts are not required for New and Notable articles.

FOR AUTHORS OF NEW & NOTABLES

A New and Notable is a commentary/microreview and gives the writer some leeway to say whatever he/she thinks is relevant as opposed to an inclusive overview. A New and Notable can mention some of the limitations

of the relevant paper and thus where questions and controversies still lie and where future research can provide the next steps forward. Therefore, it should have **no more than 10 references** to earlier work (preferably from *BJ*) and should also have an explicit citation of the paper. It could be as short as half a page and be **up to two pages**; importantly, it should convey excitement to a non-specialist reader regarding the advance made by the research paper. A single illustrative figure would also be welcome. There are no page charges associated with New and Notables. Color figures will be e-color only (black and white in print and color online) unless the author specifies otherwise and incurs the cost of print color. Only one set of figures is needed; please do not upload two versions of the same figure.

PERSPECTIVES IN BIOPHYSICS

Perspectives in Biophysics are brief (**approximately five printed pages in length, exclusive of references, and the number of references should be limited to roughly 60 recent publications**), cover topics of current interest in biophysics, and are intended to provide a unique perspective on the current state and future of a field, rather than a comprehensive review. These articles are typically written by authorities in the field and are directed to a broad range of scientists who wish to keep abreast of the best current research. All Perspectives in Biophysics are invited and are solicited by the Editor-in-Chief and the Associate Editors, but nominations from outside the Editorial Board are welcomed. These suggestions will then be considered by the Associate Editor for Perspectives in Biophysics in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief, and if accepted, an invitation will be sent to the proposed author to submit a review. There are no page charges associated with an accepted review. Color figures will be e-color only (black and white in print and color online) unless the author specifies otherwise and incurs the cost of print color. Only one set of figures is needed; please do not upload two versions of the same figure.

SUBMISSION-STAGE FILE FORMATS

At the initial submission stage, *BJ* will accept for review well-prepared manuscripts in any format. However, the title page should contain only the article title and the list of authors, using only initials for the authors' given names as well as their full surnames; do not include author affiliations or email addresses. You are encouraged to provide your figures in line with the manuscript text so that the editors and reviewers can more easily read through the paper and match the figures with their associated textual description.

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If your paper is accepted, you will be asked to provide the manuscript and figures as separate files, to allow for editing and composition of the manuscript during the production process (see below). At that point, a title page with full author names, affiliations, and email address of the corresponding author will also be required.

MANUSCRIPT TEXT

The final version of the manuscript text must be submitted as a single-spaced, single-column Word document or LaTeX file. LaTeX users should submit the .bbl file and a final PDF version of the manuscript as well. The PDF version **MUST** include the reference section to ensure accuracy of the .bbl file.

Note: LaTeX manuscripts must be converted to .doc format by our composition team. As a result, approximately 1 week will be added to the production timeline for LaTeX papers. (See "Equations" in the "Regular Articles" section above for more information.)

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Each figure must be uploaded as an individual file. The file name of each figure should include the number of the figure (e.g., "Figure 1.tif"). Please note that figures that include several parts (i.e., panels A, B, C, D) should be uploaded as one single-page file. Color figures will be e-color only (black and white in print and color online) unless the author specifies otherwise and incurs the cost of print color. Only one set of figures is needed; please do not upload two versions of the same figure.

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Occasionally articles will be highlighted on the *BJ* website using sliders. If you are asked to submit a slider with your final article file, please refer to the [Slider Image Guidelines](#).

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SUPPORTING MATERIAL

Supporting Material will be published in the online version of *BJ*. It should enhance the article in the printed version and provide additional substantive material. The supplementary information will be evaluated during the peer review process, along with the article manuscript. It will be accepted only if the reviewers and/or the editors determine that the information provides additional substance to the printed version of the article and enhances the reader's scientific understanding of the article.

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