Editorial

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What an Editor should do in the beginning of era of Artificial intelligence?

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I started this editorial because in the last year many editorials and reviews related to the use of Artificial intelligence (AI) and especially of ChatGPT, an AI tool, in writing scientific papers were published [1-7] (I have to be excused, I could not cite all the published papers!). This fact translates the editors' concern about the quality, veracity, correctness, and accuracy of the manuscripts sent and approved for publication.

I really understand the utility and advantages of using ChatGPT as Nazir et al [4] showed in a recent review, but at the same time I am concern about the future of the editorial process. Is not about to forbid the authors to use a tool that is at their fingertips and that greatly facilitates their work, but to understand how to correctly use it.

Despite its utility, ChatGPT generated articles in which false or plagiarized content of the published literature may be introduced and during the peer review process these may not be detected. Especially the ChatGPT-generated text is nowadays difficult to be distinguished from the text written by an author. For the English native speakers, the grammar of the English language come naturally, but for other languages speakers the capacity offered by Chat GPT in writing a correct and more understandable manuscript comes as an unexpected help [4,5]. And this bring to a huge question: how the editor should proceed in the future in analysing a manuscript?

I read the recommendations of International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) in defining the role of authors and contributors [8] and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) recommendations related to the scholarly publications and the use of chatbots or ChatGPT [9]. The need for a global attitude of the editors related to the use of AI is mandatory and these recommendations are a step forward.

ICMJE [8] underline the necessity of journals to require authors to specify if they used AI in the manuscript production and to not list as author the chatbots used. The authors (humans) are totally responsible of the whole content of the manuscript. The authors must state specifically the name, version, model, and source of the used chatbot and what methods they used (query structure, syntax, etc).

One of the most important ideas that WAME underlined is the necessity of editors to have appropriate tools for detecting parts of the manuscript written by AI and that that these tools should be available for all editors "regardless of their ability to pay" [9].

The International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (SMT), an important association of scholarly publishers, released in august 2023 "The Global Principles of Artificial Intelligence" and in December 2023 the "Ethical and Practical Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in the Publication Process" [10]. As ethical principles, SMT recommend that AI can be used "as a basic tool that supports authors in refining, correcting, formatting, and editing texts" but "cannot be used to create, alter, or manipulate original research data and results" and "cannot be credited as an author of a published work."

To conclude, what should I do as Editor?

- Establish an Editorial Committee meeting, discuss the problem, and modify the Guidelines for authors taking in account the aforementioned recommendations. All the platforms used for submission (like Scholar One, Editorial Manager, and all the others) should incorporate in their construction special items where the authors should complete the data about the use of AI in their manuscript.

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- Read carefully the new published papers on the topic, especially those related to the Editor perspective. To see how the others proceed and what problems they encountered.
- To be to be aware of the moment when a tool will be put on the market, tool that will be useful in identifying the parts of text written by AI (and to buy it?)
- In between, to hope that all our submitters have dignity of science [6].

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