Editorial

AI tools in rehabilitation research: a call for full disclosure

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ABSTRACT

Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) are rapidly transforming rehabilitation research, from predictive models of gait and recovery to AI driven robotics and tele-rehabilitation systems. Such work promises more personalized therapy, but it also raises a question about fully disclosing AI tool's use in research. Despite the hype, recent study shows that AI involvement in medical research is often underreported. In a systematic review of 65 clinical trials involving AI, only 10 explicitly mentioned that they used AI, and many AI specific details were missing[1]. These findings suggest that there is wide transparency gap.

Some authors simply may not realize that standard reporting guidelines and others may resist publishing code or details of AI usage. Resnik and Hosseini (2025) reported that some publishers different and sometimes contradictory policies on AI disclosure[2]. So, without clear directives, many investigators share minimum information. However, whatever the reason is, if methodology isn't fully reported, it can't be independently verified or reproduced. Failing to declare AI methods is not a mere editorial oversight, it poses real risks to science and patients. From a scientific standpoint, transparency is essential for reproducibility.

Finally, not disclosing AI use can backfire academically. Many journals and professional societies now recognize that using AI (even for writing or image generation) can raise questions of authorship and ethics. The ICMJE updated its guidelines to address AI explicitly, noting that manuscripts must disclose information on how work conducted with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) technology [3]. So, the publishers are moving toward mandatory disclosure: if you used AI in any substantive way, you must tell readers. Rehabilitation research must get ahead of this curve rather than be caught unprepared.

However, merely having guidelines is not enough, they must be adopted. As noted several Rehabilitation journals have not issued AI-specific author instructions. Specialty fields may assume general reporting standards suffice, but AI's complexity demands explicit mention. We believe The Rehabilitation Journal and peer publications will adopt and consider revising their policies and submission checklists to explicitly ask about the use of any AI tools in this study, If so, describe in detail. Without these directives, underreporting is likely to continue. By embracing clear guidelines and ethical norms today, we can use AI's potential to improve rehabilitation without compromising the integrity or equity of our science.

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Not Applicable

AI Use Statement

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Conflicts of Interest

None to declare.

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