Policy Regarding Corrections and Retractions

All MDPI journals have the same policy regarding corrections and retractions. We differentiate between Addendum, Erratum, Corrections, Retractions (or Partial Retractions), and Comments.

Addendum
If crucial results (e.g., additional affiliation, clarify some aspect of methods/analysis, etc) were unintentionally omitted from the original publication, the original article can be amended through an Addendum reporting these previously omitted results. The Addendum will be published, with article numbers added, in the current issue of the journal. A hyperlink to the Addendum will also be added to the original publication, but the original paper does not need to be updated.

Erratum
Errata should be published for scientifically relevant formatting changes, or changes to authorship if the author or contributor list is incorrect when a deserving author has been omitted or somebody who does not meet authorship criteria has been included. Scientifically relevant formatting issues that require an Erratum might include missing or unclear figures, or errors introduced during proofreading (e.g., missing text). Minor errors that do not affect readability or meaning (e.g., spelling or grammatical errors) do not qualify for an Erratum. All authors should proofread the final version carefully.

Author Name Change Policy: Some authors might wish to change their name following publication. In such cases, MDPI will update and republish the article and re-deliver the updated metadata to the appropriate indexing services (please note that all updates are dependent upon the policies of the databases). Our teams are aware that name changes can be sensitive and/or private in nature, for a variety of reasons that may include alignment with gender identity, marriage, divorce, or religious conversion. Therefore, to protect author identity, an Erratum will not be published and co-authors will not be notified. Authors should contact the journal’s Editorial Office with their name change request.

Corrections
Corrections should be submitted for any scientifically relevant errors in published articles. Any changes may be evaluated by the academic editors.
Any changes after publication that affect the scientific interpretation (e.g., changes to a misleading portion of an otherwise reliable publication, an error in a figure, error in data that does not affect conclusions, or addition of missing details about a method) are announced using a Correction. This is a separate publication that links to the original paper, which is updated. A note will also be added to the Article Versions Notes and to the abstract page, which tells the readers that an updated version was uploaded.

**Retractions**
Sometimes an article needs to be completely removed from the body of research literature. This could be due to inadvertent errors made during the research process, gross ethical breaches, fabrication of data, large amounts of plagiarism, or other reasons. Such articles threaten the integrity of scientific records and need to be retracted. MDPI follows the recommendations of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) for retraction. Potential Retractions are thoroughly investigated by the Editorial Office with the support of the Editorial Board and final approval by the Editor-in-Chief. Other persons and institutions will be consulted as necessary, including university authorities, or experts in the field. If a Retraction is published, the original publication is amended with a “RETRACTED” watermark, but will still be available on the journal’s website for future reference. However, retracted articles should not be cited and used for further research, as they cannot be relied upon. The Retraction is published, with page numbers added, as a separate item in the current issue of the journal, so that after issue release, the Retraction can be marked within indexing databases. Partial Retractions might be published in cases where results are only partially wrong. A paper will only be completely removed in very exceptional circumstances, where leaving it online would constitute an illegal act or be likely to lead to significant harm.

**Expression of Concern**
For complex, inconclusive, or prolonged situations, an Expression of Concern may be published. If investigations into alleged or suspected research misconduct have not yet been completed or prove to be inconclusive, an editor or journal may wish to publish an Expression of Concern, detailing the points of concern and what actions, if any, are in progress. Very rarely used.

**Comments and Replies**
Comments are short letters to the editors from readers questioning either the results reported or the experimental methods used in a specific article. Usually, a reader will approach the Editorial Office or the Editor-in-Chief of a journal, if he/she finds an article intriguing. In such circumstances, the Editorial Office may invite the reader to write a short and reasoned Comment on the article. After consideration and review by the Editor-in-Chief, the Comment may be published, in which case the Editorial Office will approach the authors of the article in question and invite them to prepare a Reply. If the reader’s complaints are substantiated, the authors or
the Editorial Office may consequently publish a Correction or retract the paper entirely.

Both comments and replies will be refereed to ensure that

1. the comment addresses significant aspects of the original paper without becoming essentially a new paper;
2. the reply responds directly to the comment without becoming evasive; and
3. the tone of each is appropriate for a scientific journal.

A comment will first be sent to academic editors for an initial check. If it is approved, it will be sent to the author of the original paper, who will be given the opportunity to write a reply. Normally, the editor will provide a deadline for receipt of the reply in order to assure prompt publication of the discussion. If a reply is submitted in a timely way, the editor will have both the comment and reply reviewed. If the original author chooses not to submit a reply, the editor may elect to proceed without a reply.

In most cases, editors will invite previous reviewers to review both the Comment and Reply (if available). After receiving review reports, editors will send the Reply and review reports to the author of the Comment. The author will be given only one chance to revise the Comment.

The revised Comment and review reports will be sent to the authors of the Reply. The authors will also be given only one chance to revise the Reply. Lastly, editors will send the revised Comment/Reply to the academic editor for a final decision.

Version: 22 April 2021