

AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICAL SCIENCE **INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS**

The following instructions are based on the “Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals”, also known as the Declaration of Vancouver, and on the Australian Government *Style manual: for authors, editors and printers*, 6th edition, 2002. URLs were correct on September 29th, 2008.

Manuscripts that do not fully comply with the following ‘Instructions to Authors’ may be returned for revision before they are considered for publication.

The *Australian Journal of Medical Science (AJMS)* will consider for publication any paper relevant to the field of Medical Science. Disciplines include blood banking, clinical biochemistry, haematology, histopathology, immunology, microbiology and molecular biology. Areas of general interest to medical laboratory scientists, including toxicology, epidemiology, public and community health, and professional and management issues will also be considered.

Papers published in the *AJMS* are in the form of:

- Review Articles
- Original Articles
- Brief Communications
- Technical Notes
- Case Studies
- Letters to the Editor
- Book Reviews

Articles submitted for publication are understood to be offered only to the *AJMS* and those accepted become the property of the *AJMS*.

All individuals listed as authors must have made a substantial contribution to the conception and design of the study, the acquisition of data or the analysis and interpretation of data; the drafting of the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and final approval of the version to be published. The corresponding author must take responsibility for obtaining permission from all the authors for the submission of any version of the manuscript and for any changes in authorship.

When the manuscript is submitted the authors must disclose any potential conflict of interest and/or commercial support.

Requirements and preparation of manuscripts

General

Articles should be submitted in electronic format to ajms@aims.org.au. If an article is too large to be submitted by email, it should be submitted on a CD.

Number pages consecutively commencing with the title page.

Arrange the article in the following sequence:

- Title page
- Abstract and key words
- Main Text
- Acknowledgements
- References
- Tables - each table, complete with title and footnotes, on a separate page
- Legends for illustrations.

Authors should ensure that their manuscript communicates their ideas and concepts simply and clearly so that the article is easily read and understood. Authors are strongly recommended to refer to the recommendations on reporting standards as outlined in the statements and checklists of the CONSORT group (see: <http://www.consort-statement.org/>) and similar groups such as STARD (see: <http://www.stard-statement.org/>). The principles outlined in these standards may be used as general guidelines and not just as applied to clinical trials and diagnostic studies.

Title Page

The title of the article should not exceed three lines (40 characters per line), including punctuation and spacing. All authors must be identified on the title page (e.g., William Smith, Susan Yeo, ...”). Where applicable, the title page should also include the name of the institution with which each author is affiliated and to which the work should be attributed. In the case of multiple authors, the name, postal address, email address, telephone and facsimile number of the author responsible for correspondence relating to the manuscript should be indicated.

Abstract and Keywords

The abstract should be approximately 150 words and should make sense when read alone or in conjunction with the article. The abstract should be a concise overview that describes the important details of the article including the purpose of the study/investigation, basic procedures (study subjects/experimental animals/observational and analytic methods) and the results and principal conclusions. New and important aspects of the work and its implications may also be included. References should not be included.

Three to ten keywords may be listed. Authors are advised to comply with the terms from the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) list from *Index Medicus* (see <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/>). Keywords should be given below the Abstract.

Text

The style of writing should conform to acceptable English usage. Do not use slang, medical jargon or unnecessary abbreviations. Accepted spelling is the first choice given in the latest edition of the Macquarie Dictionary.

Wherever possible observational or experimental articles should be divided into sections headed:

- Introduction
- Materials and methods
- Results
- Discussion
- References

For other types of articles such as commentaries, reports and reviews, use an appropriate format or consult the Editors for guidance.

Introduction

Clearly state the purpose of the article leading the reader from the known to the unknown. Summarise the rationale for the study and state the question to be answered as appropriate. Give only strictly pertinent references, and do not review the subject extensively.

Materials and methods

Present the materials and methods in a logical sequence. Describe the selection of the observational or experimental subjects (patients or experimental animals, including controls) clearly. Notification of ethics approval must be given where relevant. Identify the methods, apparatus and procedures in sufficient detail to allow other workers to reproduce the results. Give references to established methods, including statistical methods. Adequately describe new or substantially modified methods. Identify precisely all drugs and chemicals used, including generic name(s), dosage(s), and route(s) of administration. Do not identify patients or hospitals without consent.

Results

Present the results in the same sequence as given in the Materials and methods; use tables and illustrations where these will help the reader understand the work being presented. Do not repeat in the text all the data in the tables or illustrations.

Discussion

Indicate the new and important aspects of the study and emphasise the conclusions that follow. Do not repeat in detail data given in the Results section and do not add new data. Include in the Discussion the implications of the findings and their limitations and compare the observations to other relevant studies. Recommendations may be included if appropriate. Link the conclusions with the goals of the study and answer the experimental question stated in the Introduction. However, avoid unqualified statements and conclusions not completely supported by your data. Avoid

claiming priority and alluding to work that has not been completed. State new hypotheses when warranted, but clearly label them as such.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledge individuals who have made substantial contributions to the study including technical work and financial support. Authors are responsible for obtaining consent from all the individuals acknowledged by name as inclusion may be interpreted as an endorsement of the article's contents.

References

The *AJMS* uses a modified Harvard System (author-date system).

Throughout the body of the manuscript cite the author/s name and the publication year in parentheses as in the following examples:

- (i) Research in this area (Jones 1999) ...
- (ii) It has been successfully demonstrated that ... (Smith and Brown 1981; Auteur 1995; Scenziato *et al* 2007).
- (iii) Following further investigation, Wetenschapper (2002) highlighted the difficulties inherent in...

Where there are three or more authors, acknowledge only the first author, e.g., (Smith *et al* 2007). For two authors the following style should be used: (Smith and Brown 2007).

The reference list should be in the format described below. Journal titles should be abbreviated in *Index Medicus* format (see: <ftp://nlmpubs.nlm.nih.gov/online/journals/ljiweb.pdf>) using standard abbreviations from the ISSN List of Title Word Abbreviations (see: <http://www.issn.org/en/node/344>) All authors should be given in the reference list.

Do not use abstracts as references. "Unpublished observations" and "personal communications" may not be used as references, although references to written, not verbal, communications may be cited (in parentheses) in the text. Include in the references manuscripts accepted but not yet published, designate the journal followed by "in press" (in parentheses). Information from manuscripts submitted but not yet accepted should be cited in the text as "unpublished observations" (in parentheses).

Examples of the correct form for references are given below:

- i) *Journal Reference:*

Stein MK, Downing RW, Rickels K 1978. Self-estimates in anxious and depressed outpatients treated with pharmacotherapy. *Psychol Rep* 43: 487-492.

ii) *Personal Author(s) of a book:*

Osler AG 1976. *Complement: mechanisms and functions*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

iii) *Editor, Compiler, Chairman as Author:*

Rhodes AJ, Van Rooyen CE, comps. 1968. *Textbook of virology: for students and practitioners of medicine and the other health sciences*. 5th ed. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins.

iv) *Chapter in Book:*

Weinstein L, Swartz MM. 1974. Pathogenic properties of invading microorganisms. In: Sodeman WA Jr, Sodeman WA, eds. *Pathologic physiology: mechanisms of disease*. Philadelphia: WB Saunders; 457-472.

v) *Online documents:*

National Center for Biotechnology Information. OMIM: online Mendelian inheritance in man. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/omim>. Accessed February 25, 2007.

Tables

Number tables consecutively with Arabic numerals and supply a brief title for each. Give each column a short or abbreviated heading. Place explanatory matter in footnotes, not in headings. Explain in footnotes all non-standard abbreviations used in each table.

For footnotes, use the following symbols in this sequence:

* † ‡ § ¶ ** ††

In preparing tables, consideration should be given to the page width of the Australian Journal of Medical Science. All tables should be prepared for publication vertically. In the text, cite each table in consecutive order, and mark in the margin of the text its approximate location.

If data from another published or unpublished source is used, written permission must be obtained and a copy must accompany the manuscript.

Illustrations

Colour illustrations may be submitted on a CD. Images should be scanned at a minimum of 300 dpi.

When plotting points, the following symbols are preferred:



In most instances, figures will be reduced to one column in width. All letters and numbers should be drawn to be at least 1.5 mm high after reduction, symbols at least 1.0 mm. Titles for illustrations belong in the legends for illustrations and not on the illustrations themselves.

Photomicrographs must have internal scale markers and the magnification must be stated. Symbols, arrows, or letters used in the photomicrographs should contrast with the background.

Cite each figure in the text in consecutive order, e.g., “Figure 1 illustrates ...” or “... as shown (fig. 2)”. If a figure has been published, acknowledge the original source and submit with the manuscript written permission from the copyright holder to reproduce the material. Permission is required, regardless of authorship or publisher, except for documents in the public domain.

Legends for illustrations

When symbols, arrows, numbers, or letters are used to identify parts of illustrations, identify and explain each one in the legends. The figure legend must contain a boldface (a) name (“Figure” + arabic figure number) and (b) substantive title.

Abbreviations

Use only standard abbreviations (see list of commonly used abbreviations, below).

Avoid abbreviations in the title. The full term for which an abbreviation stands must precede its first use in the text unless it is a standard abbreviation for a unit of measurement.

Report measurements in the units in which the measurements were made. In most countries the International System of Units (SI) is standard.

Commonly used abbreviations

Abbreviation or Symbol

Standard Units of Measurement

g	gram
g	gravity
Hz	hertz
h	hour
IU	international unit
K	kelvin
kg	kilogram
L	liter, litre
m	meter, metre
min	minute

M	molar
mL	millilitre
mol	mole
N	newton
nm	nanometre
rpm	revolutions per minute
s	second
wk	week
yr	year

Additional information

The following are useful sources of information. The first two publications are used by the *AJMS* as standard references.

1. Style Manual Committee. Council of Biology Editors. *Scientific style and format: the CBE manual for authors, editors, and publishers*. 6th ed. Cambridge University Press, 1994.
2. *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*. 6th ed. John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd, 2002.
3. O'Connor M, Woodford FP. *Writing scientific papers in English: an ELSE-Ciba Foundation guide for authors*. Amsterdam, Oxford, New York: Elsevier-Excerpta Medica, 1975.
4. Day RA. *How to write and publish a scientific paper*. Philadelphia, Institute for Scientific Information Press, 1979.
5. Zeiger M. *Essentials of writing biomedical research papers*. 2nd ed. New York, McGraw-Hill, 2000.
6. Matthews JR, Matthews RW. *Successful scientific writing: a step-by-step guide for the biological and medical sciences*. 3rd ed. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007 [Also available in [eBook format](#).]