

Annals of Clinical Biochemistry: International Journal of Laboratory Medicine

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Submission guidelines



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Manuscript Submission Guidelines: *Annals of Clinical Biochemistry*

This Journal is a member of the [Committee on Publication Ethics](#).

This Journal recommends that authors follow the [Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals](#) formulated by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

Please read the guidelines below then visit the Journal's submission site <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/acb> to upload your manuscript. Please note that manuscripts not conforming to these guidelines may be returned.

Only manuscripts of sufficient quality that meet the aims and scope of *Annals of Clinical Biochemistry* will be reviewed.

There are no fees payable to submit or publish in this Journal. Open Access options are available - see section 3.3 below.

As part of the submission process you will be required to warrant that you are submitting your original work, that you have the rights in the work, that you are submitting the work for first publication in the Journal and that it is not being considered for publication elsewhere and has not already been published elsewhere, and that you have obtained and can supply necessary permissions for the reproduction of any copyright works not owned by you.

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1. What do we publish?

1.1 Aims & Scope

Before submitting your manuscript to *Annals of Clinical Biochemistry*, please ensure you have read the [Aims & Scope](#).

1.2 Article Types

Annals of Clinical Biochemistry is the fully peer reviewed international journal of the Association for Laboratory Medicine.

Annals of Clinical Biochemistry accepts papers that contribute to knowledge in all fields of laboratory medicine, especially those pertaining to the understanding, diagnosis and treatment of human disease. It publishes papers on clinical biochemistry, clinical audit, metabolic medicine, immunology, genetics, biotechnology, haematology, microbiology, computing and management where they have both biochemical and clinical relevance. Papers describing evaluation or implementation of commercial reagent kits or the performance of new analysers require substantial original information. Unless of exceptional interest and novelty, studies dealing with the redox status in various diseases are not generally considered within the journal's scope. Studies documenting the association of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) with particular phenotypes will not normally be considered, given the greater strength of genome wide association studies (GWAS). Research undertaken in non-human animals will not be considered for publication in the *Annals*.

Editorials

Articles referring to research published elsewhere in that issue of the journal, or to important events in clinical biochemistry. Editorials are generally invited and do not include an Abstract.

Review Articles

Articles of a substantial and topical nature. Review Articles are generally invited and should be less than 6000 words, excluding the abstract and references.

Mini-Review Articles

Articles intended to provide a general overview of a topic. Mini-Review Articles are generally invited and should be less than 3500 with a structured abstract of up to 250 words. The Mini-Review Article should have no more than 50 references.

Research Articles

Articles describing substantial original research that falls within the scope of the journal. These should be less than 5000 words, excluding the abstract and references, and have no more than six figures and tables. Structured headings are required.

Short Reports

Brief technical notes and preliminary communications. These should be less than 1000

words, excluding the abstract and references, and have only one small figure or table and no more than six references. Structured headings, including a conclusion, are desirable.

Best Practice

Best practice articles will normally be commissioned by the journal. These articles should focus on an area of active practical interest to clinical biochemists. Prospective authors should summarise the available literature/evidence on specific aspects of the topic, with recommendations embedded within the text. (Depending on the number of recommendations, it may also be appropriate to list these separately in an appendix). Articles should include a section in which gaps in the literature are identified, along with areas for further research. Word limit: approximately 6000 words, excluding abstract and references.

Case Reports

Articles describing clinical cases that have significant novel original observations, are instructive, include adequate methodological details and provide conclusions. These should be less than 2000 words, excluding the abstract and references, and have no more than two figures and tables. Structured headings are desirable. Please note the below comments regarding obtaining written informed consent.

Letters to the Editor

Letters arise normally but not exclusively from papers published in this and other scientific journals. These are usually less than 500 words.

1.3 Writing your paper

The Sage Author Gateway has some general advice and on [how to get published](#), plus links to further resources. [Sage Author Services](#) also offers authors a variety of ways to improve and enhance their article including English language editing, plagiarism detection, and video abstract and infographic preparation.

1.3.1 Make your article discoverable

When writing up your paper, think about how you can make it discoverable. The title, keywords and abstract are key to ensuring readers find your article through search engines such as Google. For information and guidance on how best to title your article, write your abstract and select your keywords, have a look at this page on the Gateway: [How to Help Readers Find Your Article Online](#).

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Editorial policies

2.1 Peer review policy

All papers submitted for publication undergo peer review.

Covering letter

The covering letter is important. To help the Editor in their preliminary evaluation, please indicate why you think the paper suitable for publication. If your paper should be considered for fast-track publication, please explain why.

As part of the submission process you will be asked to provide the names of peers who could be called upon to review your manuscript. Recommended reviewers should be experts in their fields and should be able to provide an objective assessment of the manuscript. Please be aware of any conflicts of interest when recommending reviewers. Examples of conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to) the below:

- The reviewer should have no prior knowledge of your submission
- The reviewer should not have recently collaborated with any of the authors
- Reviewer nominees from the same institution as any of the authors are not permitted

Please note that the Editors are not obliged to invite/reject any recommended/opposed reviewers to assess your manuscript.

The Editor or members of the Editorial Board may occasionally submit their own manuscripts for possible publication in the journal. In these cases, the peer review process will be managed by alternative members of the Board and the submitting Editor/Board member will have no involvement in the decision-making process.

Please note that there may be rare instances where, despite our best efforts, we are unable to secure appropriate reviewers for a manuscript. This challenge often arises due to the highly specialized nature of certain topics or limited availability of qualified reviewers.

In such cases, and only after exhaustive attempts to identify suitable reviewers, we may be unable to proceed with the review process. As a result, the manuscript may need to be declined without review. We assure authors that this decision is made with great reluctance and is not a reflection of the quality or potential of the work but rather logistical limitations in the review process.

2.2 Authorship

Papers should only be submitted for consideration once consent is given by all contributing authors. Those submitting papers should carefully check that all those whose work contributed to the paper are acknowledged as contributing authors.

The list of authors should include all those who can legitimately claim authorship. This is all those who:

1. Made a substantial contribution to the concept or design of the work; or acquisition, analysis or interpretation of data,
2. Drafted the article or revised it critically for important intellectual content,
3. Approved the version to be published,
4. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content.

Authors should meet the conditions of all of the points above. When a large, multicentre group has conducted the work, the group should identify the individuals who accept direct responsibility for the manuscript. These individuals should fully meet the criteria for authorship.

Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of the research group alone does not constitute authorship, although all contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in the Acknowledgments section. Please refer to the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\) authorship guidelines](#) for more information on authorship.

Please note that AI chatbots, for example ChatGPT, should not be listed as authors. For more [information see the policy on Use of ChatGPT and generative AI tools](#).

2.3 Acknowledgements

All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in an Acknowledgements section. Examples of those who might be acknowledged include a person who provided purely technical help, or a department chair who provided only general support.

2.3.1 *Third party submissions*

Where an individual who is not listed as an author submits a manuscript on behalf of the author(s), a statement must be included in the Acknowledgements section of the manuscript and in the accompanying cover letter. The statements must:

- Disclose this type of editorial assistance – including the individual's name, company and level of input
- Identify any entities that paid for this assistance
- Confirm that the listed authors have authorized the submission of their manuscript via third party and approved any statements or declarations, e.g. conflicting interests, funding, etc.

Where appropriate, Sage reserves the right to deny consideration to manuscripts submitted by a third party rather than by the authors themselves.

2.3.2 Writing assistance

Individuals who provided writing assistance, e.g. from a specialist communications company, do not qualify as authors and so should be included in the Acknowledgements section. Authors must disclose any writing assistance – including the individual's name, company and level of input – and identify the entity that paid for this assistance”).

It is not necessary to disclose use of language polishing services.

2.4 Conflicting interests statement and other declarations

All authors are required to declare any conflicts of interest when submitting papers for publication. Declarations of funding sources, a guarantor and a statement of contributorship are also required.

Please visit the Funding Acknowledgements page on the Sage Journal Author Gateway to confirm the format of the acknowledgment text in the event of funding, or state that: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

The guarantor is the person willing to take full responsibility for the article, including for the accuracy and appropriateness of the reference list. This will often be the most senior member of the research group and is commonly also the author for correspondence. Please state author names as initials.

For example:

Declaration of competing interests: HG is an employee of Statins Incorp. EF has received grants from Globescape plc. LM provides consultative advice to Lab Tests Ltd

Funding: This research was funded by the University of York

Ethical approval: The ethics committee of Northern Yorkshire approved this study (REC number: GH23335H)

Guarantor: EF

Contributorship: LM and HG researched literature and conceived the study. EF was involved in protocol development, gaining ethical approval, patient recruitment and data analysis. AB wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and edited the manuscript and approved the final version of the manuscript



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For additional guidance on conflict of interest statements, please see the ICMJE recommendations [here](#).

2.5 Research ethics and patient consent

Medical research involving human subjects must be conducted according to the [World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki](#).

Submitted manuscripts should conform to the [ICMJE Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals](#), and all papers reporting animal and/or human studies must state in the methods section that the relevant Ethics Committee or Institutional Review Board provided (or waived) approval. **Please ensure that you have provided the full name and institution of the review committee and an Ethics Committee reference number.**

Any article containing identifiable patient information must be accompanied by a letter from the authors confirming that the patient has given written informed consent to publication. A statement to this effect should also be included in the Ethical approval section of the declarations. Patient's names, initials or hospital numbers should never be published in written descriptions. Other information (age, gender, race, etc.) should only be included where it is essential for scientific purposes and the patient (or parent or guardian) has given written informed consent. The Editors may also ask authors to remove personal information that, whilst interesting and colourful, does not add to the substance of an article, but does increase the likelihood of parties being identified. If there is any doubt about whether or not information is identifiable, the Editors are happy to discuss this before an article is submitted. Reviewers will also be asked to take careful account of issues relating to patient confidentiality when reviewing articles.

Case studies are not the only kinds of article to which this rule will be applied, but they will be subject to additional scrutiny. Not only should submissions be accompanied by the letter confirming written informed consent, but the Editors also expect to be informed about the measures that have been taken to anonymise the details that could have led to parties being identified. They also reserve the right to work with the authors to make additional anonymising changes as they or the reviewers see fit.

In order to ensure that valuable and novel issues are aired, the Editors will sometimes consider publishing cases studies that contain potentially identifiable information where it has been impossible or clearly undesirable to seek consent from relevant parties. However, given the strong preference for consent having been sought and obtained the

reasons for not seeking consent must be compelling, and the public interest arguments for publishing the case must be powerful. In cases where consent has not been obtained, the authors must provide a statement from a Medical Director or equivalent that the hospital or medical centre is happy for the case to be published.

Please do not submit the patient's actual written informed consent with your article, as this in itself breaches the patient's confidentiality. The Journal requests that you confirm to us, in writing, that you have obtained written informed consent but the written consent itself should be held by the authors/investigators themselves, for example in a patient's hospital record. The confirmatory letter may be uploaded with your submission as a supplementary file.

[A template form for obtaining written informed consent can be obtained here](#)

Please also refer to the [ICMJE Recommendations for the Protection of Research Participants](#).

2.6 Clinical trials

Annals of Clinical Biochemistry conforms to the [ICMJE requirement](#) that clinical trials are registered in a WHO-approved public trials registry at or before the time of first patient enrolment as a condition of consideration for publication. The trial registry name and URL, and registration number must be included at the end of the abstract.

2.7 Reporting guidelines

The relevant [EQUATOR Network](#) reporting guidelines should be followed depending on the type of study. For example, all randomized controlled trials submitted for publication should include a completed [CONSORT flow chart](#) as a cited figure and the completed [CONSORT checklist](#) should be uploaded with your submission as a supplementary file. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses should include the completed [PRISMA](#) flow chart as a cited figure and the completed PRISMA checklist should be uploaded with your submission as a supplementary file. The [EQUATOR wizard](#) can help you identify the appropriate guideline.

Other resources can be found at [NLM's Research Reporting Guidelines and Initiatives](#)

[STARBIV guidelines](#) are a reporting standard for biological variation (BV) data studies, it is a structured framework designed to improve the planning, conduct, and reporting of research that generates biological variation data. The guidelines aim to ensure that such studies are transparent, consistent, and usable in clinical and laboratory settings.

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3. Publishing Policies

3.1 Publication ethics

Sage is committed to upholding the integrity of the academic record. We encourage authors to refer to the Committee on Publication Ethics' [International Standards for Authors](#) and view the Publication Ethics page on the [Sage Author Gateway](#).

3.1.1 Plagiarism

Annals of Clinical Biochemistry and Sage take issues of copyright infringement, plagiarism or other breaches of best practice in publication very seriously. We seek to protect the rights of our authors and we always investigate claims of plagiarism or misuse of published articles. Equally, we seek to protect the reputation of the journal against malpractice. Submitted articles may be checked with duplication-checking software. Where an article, for example, is found to have plagiarised other work or included third-party copyright material without permission or with insufficient acknowledgement, or where the authorship of the article is contested, we reserve the right to take action including, but not limited to: publishing an erratum or corrigendum (correction); retracting the article; taking up the matter with the head of department or dean of the author's institution and/or relevant academic bodies or societies; or taking appropriate legal action.

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4. Preparing your manuscript for submission

4.1 Formatting

The preferred format for your manuscript is Word. LaTeX files are also accepted. Word and (La)TeX templates are available on the [Manuscript Submission Guidelines](#) page of our Author Gateway.

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If preparing statistical data for publication, please read these [statistical guidelines](#). Please note that these guidelines are not a substitute for the detailed guidance required to design a study or perform a statistical analysis.

4.3 Abbreviations and units

Abbreviations: Symbols and abbreviations should be those currently in use. Authors should not create new abbreviations and acronyms. Please refer to the [Style Notes for Authors](#) for additional guidance on abbreviations used by the *Annals*.

Units: All measurements should be expressed in SI units.

4.4 Artwork, figures and other graphics

For guidance on the preparation of illustrations, pictures and graphs in electronic format, please visit Sage's [Manuscript Submission Guidelines](#)

Figures supplied in colour will appear in colour online regardless of whether or not these illustrations are reproduced in colour in the printed version. For specifically requested colour reproduction in print, you will receive information regarding the costs from Sage after receipt of your accepted article.

4.5 Supplementary material

This journal is able to host additional materials online (e.g. datasets, podcasts, videos, images, etc) alongside the full-text of the article. For more information please refer to our [guidelines on submitting supplementary files](#).

4.6 Reference style

Annals of Clinical Biochemistry adheres to the Sage Vancouver reference style. View the [Sage Vancouver](#) guidelines to ensure your manuscript conforms to this reference style.

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4.7 English language editing services

Authors seeking assistance with English language editing, translation, or figure and manuscript formatting to fit the journal's specifications should consider using Sage Language Services. Visit [Sage Language Services](#) on our Journal Author Gateway for further information.

4.8 Accessibility Guidelines

Authors should familiarize themselves with [Sage's Accessibility Guidelines](#) to ensure their manuscripts meet recognized accessibility standards.

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5. Submitting your manuscript

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Each manuscript should contain:

(i) Title page: the first page should contain the full title of the manuscript, the author(s) name(s) and affiliation(s), the name, postal and email addresses of the author for correspondence, a full list of declarations, as well as the abstract word count and the article word count (excluding the abstract and references). The title should be concise and informative, accurately indicating the content of the article.

(ii) Abstract: a structured abstract of no more than 250 words must accompany all Research Articles and Short Reports. The abstract should use four headings: Background (context and rationale); Methods (type of study, patients, materials, techniques); Results (main numerical data and statistical information); and Conclusions (main objective and verifiable conclusions). Reviews and Case Reports should be accompanied by an unstructured abstract of up to 250 words. Letters to the Editor do not require an abstract.

(iii) Keywords: please supply between three and seven keywords/phrases.

Tables and figures may be submitted as separate files, in which case the files should be uploaded in the following order: (1) main text, including title page, abstract and references; (2) tables; (3) figures; (4) supplementary files.

5.1 ORCID

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5.2 Information required for completing your submission

You will be asked to provide contact details and academic affiliations for all co-authors via the submission system and identify who is to be the corresponding author. These details must match what appears on your manuscript. At this stage please ensure you

have included all the required statements and declarations and uploaded any additional supplementary files (including reporting guidelines where relevant).

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6. On acceptance and publication

6.1 Sage Production

Your Sage Production Editor will keep you informed as to your article's progress throughout the production process. Proofs will be sent by PDF to the corresponding author and should be returned promptly. Authors are reminded to check their proofs carefully to confirm that all author information, including names, affiliations, sequence and contact details are correct, and that Funding and Conflict of Interest statements, if any, are accurate.

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6.3 Annals Express

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7. Further information

Any correspondence, queries or additional requests for information on the manuscript submission process should be sent to the *Annals of Clinical Biochemistry* editorial office as follows:

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