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Key information

Access: Open Access

APC: [See article processing charge information below](#)

Accepts preprints? Yes

Identity transparency: Single anonymized

Publishing fees and open access

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If, after peer review, your manuscript is accepted for publication, a one-time article processing charge (APC) is payable to cover the cost of publishing, paid by the funder, institution, or author. There is no charge for submitting a manuscript.

The standard article processing charge (APC) is \$3000 USD.

More details on APCs for specific article types can be found in the Article Type section below.

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The manuscript must be your original work, you must have the rights to the work, and you must have obtained and be able to supply all necessary permissions for the reproduction of any copyright works not owned by you, including figures, illustrations, tables, lengthy quotations, or other material previously published elsewhere.

Article types

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Original Articles.The Editors will consider clinical interventional and observational studies with clearly stated aims, well-reported methodology (including main outcome measures) results, and a discussion of the results in the context of the published literature.

Abstract: Maximum 300 words. Should be structured to include:
Background;Objectives; Design; Methods; Results; Conclusion;Registration (if applicable)

Plain language summary: optional

Word count: up to 6000 words (excluding tables, figure legends and references) is recommended (this can be flexible)

Figures/Tables: no limit

References: no limit

Reporting guidelines: Please ensure you follow the appropriate reporting guidelines when preparing your manuscript and submit the completed checklist as supplementary material. Please state in the methods which guidelines were consulted when preparing the manuscript. More information on reporting guidelines can be found on the [EQUATOR website.](#)

APC: Standard APC, found in the Publishing Fees and Open Access section of these guidelines

Review Articles. These manuscripts are usually commissioned by the Editors but unsolicited reviews will be considered. The following types of high-quality review will be considered:

(a) General reviews that provide a synthesis of an area that fits within the aims and scope of the journal (b) Perspective reviews – review articles that address important new areas of general interest and afford the author the opportunity to present a forward-looking perspective on the topic (c) Drug reviews – review articles focusing on the available evidence for the use of a particular drug or combination therapy.

Abstract: unstructured, maximum 300 words

Plain language summary: optional

Word count: around 4000 – 6000 words (excluding tables, figure legends and references) is recommended. This can be flexible

Figures/Tables: no limit

References: no limit

Reporting guidelines: none

APC: Standard APC, found in the Publishing Fees and Open Access section of these guidelines

Scoping Reviews– These reviews assess the scope of available literature on a topic through comprehensive synthesis. It may help determine whether a systematic review of the literature is needed. These should be submitted under the Original Research article type and made clear from the title that it is a scoping review.

Abstract: Structured, maximum 300 words. Should be structured to include:

Background; Objectives; Eligibility Criteria; Sources of Evidence; Charting Methods; Results; and Conclusions

Plain language summary: optional

Word count: around 4000 – 6000 words (excluding tables, figure legends and references) is recommended. This can be flexible

Figures/Tables: no limit

References: no limit

Reporting guidelines: Please ensure you follow the PRISMA extension for scoping reviews when preparing your manuscript and submit the completed checklist as supplementary material. More information on reporting guidelines can be found on the [EQUATOR website](#).

APC: Standard APC, found in the Publishing Fees and Open Access section of these guidelines

Systematic Reviews– these should answer a specific research question and involve a comprehensive search strategy aimed at identifying, assessing and summarising all the current evidence on a specific topic.

Abstract: Structured, maximum 300 words. Should be structured to include: Background; Objectives; Design; Data Sources and Methods; Results; Conclusion; Registration (if applicable)

Plain language summary: optional

Word count: around 4000 – 6000 words (excluding tables, figure legends and references) is recommended. This can be flexible

Figures/Tables: no limit

References: no limit

Reporting guidelines: Please ensure you follow the PRISMA guidelines when preparing your manuscript and submit the completed checklist as supplementary material. More information on reporting guidelines can be found on the [EQUATOR website](#).

APC: Standard APC, found in the Publishing Fees and Open Access section of these guidelines

Meta-analyses– these include statistical procedures, mainly conducted in the context of a systematic review, that combine the results of multiple independent primary studies addressing the same research question.

Abstract: structured, maximum 300 words. Should be structured to include: Background; Objectives; Design; Data Sources and Methods; Results; Conclusion; Registration (if applicable)

Plain language summary: optional

Word count: around 4000 – 6000 words (excluding tables, figure legends and references) is recommended. This can be flexible.

Figures/Tables: no limit

References: no limit

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APC: Standard APC, found in the Publishing Fees and Open Access section of these guidelines

Case Reports– these structured reports should describe an unusual case and include a full review of the pertinent literature and a section on implications for clinical care.

Abstract: unstructured, maximum 300 words

Plain language summary: optional.

Word count: up to 2500 words (excluding tables, figure legends and references) is recommended. This can be flexible

Figures/Tables: no limit

References: no limit

Reporting guidelines: Please ensure you follow the CARE guidelines when preparing your manuscript and submit the completed checklist as supplementary material. More information on reporting guidelines can be found on the [EQUATOR website](#).

APC: Standard APC, found in the Publishing Fees and Open Access section of these guidelines

Case Series– these descriptive structured reports (which do not involve formal hypotheses or pre-specified methodology or analyses) of a small group of patients should include a full review of the pertinent literature and a section on implications for clinical care.

Abstract: unstructured, maximum 300 words

Plain language summary: optional

Word count: up to 6000 words (excluding tables, figure legends and references) is recommended. This can be flexible

Figures/Tables: no limit

References: no limit

Reporting guidelines: please ensure you follow the CARE guidelines when preparing your manuscript and submit the completed checklist as supplementary material. More information on reporting guidelines can be found on the [EQUATOR website](#).

APC: Standard APC, found in the Publishing Fees and Open Access section of these guidelines.

Study Protocols– these can be for forthcoming or ongoing research. Information on trial registration (where applicable) and ethics approval should be included in the manuscript.

Abstract: structured, maximum 300 words. Should be structured to include: Background; Objectives, Design; Methods and Analysis, Ethics (if applicable), Discussion, Registration (if applicable)

Plain language summary: optional.

Word count: up to 6000 words (excluding tables, figure legends and references) is recommended. This can be flexible

Figures/Tables: no limit

References: no limit

Reporting guidelines: Reporting guidelines: Please ensure you follow the appropriate reporting guidelines when preparing your manuscript and submit the completed checklist as supplementary material. Please state in the methods which guidelines were consulted when preparing the manuscript. More information on reporting guidelines can be found on the [EQUATOR website](#).

APC: Standard APC, found in the Publishing Fees and Open Access section of these guidelines

Brief reports– these articles should present original research in a concise format. Brief reports should, in general, describe research that builds on previously published data, such as a subgroup or secondary analysis of a larger study, the interim results from ongoing research, or the results of small-scale studies, including pilot and feasibility studies. The suggested format for these articles is listed below.

Abstract: Maximum 150 words. Should be structured to include:
Background; Objectives; Design; Methods; Results; Conclusion

Plain language summary: optional.

Word count: up to 2000 words (excluding tables, figure legends and references)

Figures/Tables: 2 in total

References: a maximum of 20 references

Reporting guidelines: please ensure you follow the appropriate reporting guidelines when preparing your manuscript and submit the completed checklist as supplementary material. Please state in the methods which guidelines were consulted when preparing the manuscript. More information on reporting guidelines can be found on the [EQUATOR website](#).

APC: Standard APC, found in the Publishing Fees and Open Access section of these guidelines.

Editorials – these are introductory articles, submitted on invitation, which provide insight into the topic of the thematic issue, or a balanced overview of relevant and up to date subjects concerning the Journal's aim or future direction.

Abstract: Optional, unstructured

Plain language summary: optional.

Word count: up to 2000 words (excluding tables, figure legends and references)

Figures/Tables: no limit

References: a maximum of 20 references

Reporting guidelines: none

APC: Free of charge

Letters to the Editor– Submit letters if you wish to provide alternative viewpoints or offer counter arguments to previously published articles. These must be written in a professional tone and include references to support all claims if appropriate.

Abstract: None

Plain language summary: None

Word count: Up to 500 words (excluding references) is recommended

Figures/Tables: There is a limit of one figure or one table

References: these should not exceed 10 references

Reporting guidelines: none

APC: Free of charge

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If you are interested in submitting a PLS-P, more information can be found on our [Author Gateway](#).

APC: \$5000

The journal considers the results of rigorous, well-designed studies that demonstrate “no effect” or that fail to replicate previous work (“negative results”) as important to the advancement of science. We welcome brief reports on null or negative results as long as the papers are based on strong hypothesis testing.

We encourage our authors to use respectful and inclusive language when writing their articles. Any language that is deemed inappropriate or offensive by our Editors and Reviewers will be highlighted during the peer review process and should be modified or removed before publication. You can find more information in our [Inclusive Language Guide](#).

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The journal conforms to the [ICMJE requirement](#) that clinical trials are registered in a [WHO-approved public trials registry](#) at or before the time of first participant enrollment 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.

The journal endorses the [ICMJE requirement](#) that clinical trials are registered in a [WHO-approved public trials registry](#) at or before the time of first participant enrollment. However, consistent with the [AllTrials campaign](#), retrospectively registered trials will be considered if the justification for late registration is acceptable. The trial registry name and URL, and registration number must be included at the end of the abstract.

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

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Title

Your manuscript's title should be concise, descriptive, unambiguous, accurate, and reflect the precise contents of the manuscript. A descriptive title that includes the topic of the manuscript makes an article more findable in the major indexing services.

Abstract

Please include a structured or unstructured abstract, as outlined for each article type above, between the title and main body of your manuscript that concisely states the purpose of the research, major findings, and conclusions. If your research includes clinical trials, the trial registry name and URL, and registration number must be included at the end of the abstract. Submissions that do not meet this requirement will not be considered.

For clinical trials, the trial registry name and URL, and registration number must be included at the end of the abstract.

This journal includes Video abstracts, [Infographics](#), Plain language Summaries. For more information on how to prepare a plain language summary, [please see this page](#).

Plain language summaries

A plain language summary (PLS) must be provided for all article types that require an abstract. The plain language title (approx. 50 words) and plain language summary (approx. 300 words) should describe the article using non-technical language, making it accessible to a wider network of readers. More information and [guidance on how to write a PLS](#) can be found on our Author Gateway.

PLS are published directly below the scientific abstract and are open access making it available online for anyone to read. Peer review of the PLS will be conducted following our [PLS reviewer guidelines](#). When submitting, authors should enter their plain language title and plain language summary into the box provided in the submission system. The PLS does not need to be provided in the manuscript text or as a separate file. Manuscripts without a PLS, or a PLS which is a direct copy of the scientific abstract, will be returned. If the article type does not require an abstract and therefore does not require a PLS please enter “N/A” in each box.

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Keywords

Please include a minimum of 2 keywords, listed after the abstract. Keywords should be as specific as possible to the research topic.

Artwork, figures, and other graphics

For guidance on the preparation of illustrations, pictures, and graphs in electronic format, please read Sage’s [artwork guidelines](#).

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Acknowledgments

If you are including an Acknowledgements section, this will be published at the end of your article. The Acknowledgments section should include all contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship. Per [ICMJE recommendations](#), it is best practice to obtain consent from non-author contributors who you are acknowledging in your manuscript.

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As part of our commitment to ensuring an ethical, transparent and fair peer review and publication process, this journal has adopted [CRediT \(Contributor Roles Taxonomy\)](#). CRediT is a high-level taxonomy, including 14 roles, which is used to describe each author's individual contributions to the work.

You will be asked to list the contribution of each author as part of the submission process. Please include the Author Contributions heading within your submission after the Acknowledgements section. The information you give on submission will then show under the Author Contributions heading later at the proofing stage.

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Please include a section with the heading 'Statements and Declarations' at the end of your submitted article, after the Acknowledgements section [and Author Contributions section if applicable] including each of the sub-headings listed below. If a declaration is not applicable to your submission, you must still include the heading and state 'Not applicable' underneath. Please note that you may be asked to justify why a declaration was not applicable to your submission by the Editorial Office.

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Please include any participant consent information under this heading and state whether informed consent to participate was written or verbal. If the requirement for informed consent to participate has been waived by the relevant Ethics Committee or Institutional Review Board (i.e. where it has been deemed that consent would be impossible or impracticable to obtain), please state this. If this is not applicable to your manuscript, please state 'Not applicable' in this section. More information and example statements can be found on our [Publication ethics and research integrity policies page](#).

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Declaration of conflicting interest

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 - All figures must be numbered consecutively in the order in which they appear in the text – they will appear in the published article in the order they are numbered.
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Peer review policy

The following summary describes the peer review process for this journal:

Identity transparency: Single-anonymized

Reviewer interacts with: Editor

Review information published: None

Your manuscript will undergo an initial evaluation. If it does not conform to the requirements laid out in these guidelines, it will be returned to you for amendments prior to peer review. Manuscripts may be desk rejected without peer review at this point if they are out of scope for the journal or otherwise unsuitable.

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To ensure the integrity of the peer review process we assign reviewers and cannot accept author recommendations.

All manuscripts are reviewed as rapidly as possible, while maintaining rigor. Reviewers make comments to the author and recommendations to the Associate Editors, Associate Editors then make their recommendations to the Managing Editor who then makes the final decision on all manuscripts, including those appearing in a special issue or special collection. 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. The journal has an Editorial Board and Editorial Review Board who serve the journal as external peer reviewers. Each member of the Editorial Review Board and Editorial Board are active researchers in the field and selected based on strict criteria, ensuring they possess the necessary expertise and experience. The Editor(s) may use one Editorial Review Board member or Editorial Board Member as a reviewer for each manuscript, and will then reach beyond this pool to include additional reviewers to meet the required number before a decision can be made. This ensures a comprehensive and robust peer review process, aligning with our commitment to publish the most credible and valid research. Care is taken not to invite any Editorial Review Board Member or Editorial Board Member that has any potential conflict of interest with any author of the paper.

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