

## **Notes for Contributors**

The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health is concerned with public health issues. Authors are encouraged to place their work in the wider context of public health – the ‘Discussion’ should contain analysis or comment relevant to this requirement. Reports of finished research projects are the Journal’s staple diet, but reviews, methodological notes and brief research reports are also considered.

Contributors come from almost all of the human, natural and social science disciplines. The research reported includes formal epidemiological inquiries into the correlates and causes of diseases and health-related behaviour, analyses of public policy affecting health and disease, and detailed studies of the cultures and social structures within which health and illness exist.

In keeping with PHA policy, authors will be required to sign a declaration, before publication, that:

*"This work was conducted without any financial or other support or assistance from any tobacco company or individual or entity acting on behalf of the tobacco industry."*

Manuscripts are acceptable only if offered exclusively to this Journal. If a form of the paper or a related report from the same study is planned or has been prepared (e.g. for a granting or commissioning body) or published, you should draw the editor’s attention to this in the submission letter accompanying the manuscript. Presentation of the paper at a conference will not preclude publication in this Journal, as long as the paper has not been published in full in proceedings or similar publications.

### **Submission procedure**

Manuscripts are subject to assessment by independent referees and editorial revision. Manuscripts deviating significantly from format requirements may be returned for revision before consideration by the editor. When a submitted manuscript is received, it is given a number and an acknowledgment is sent to the authors. Please quote this number when making any further queries about the paper. The appropriateness of the topic area and treatment is then considered by the editor, sometimes with advice from members of the editorial board. If appropriate, the manuscript is sent for review, generally by two or three referees. A decision, including referees’ comments, is usually sent to the authors within two or three months. The paper may be accepted or rejected, or you may be invited to revise the paper and resubmit it. In the latter case, the Journal does not undertake to publish the paper even if the revisions are satisfactory, as pressure of space may make acceptance and publication impossible.

### **Length**

There is no strict word limit for submitted papers. However, the Journal receives far more acceptable material than it has space to print, so brief, pithy articles have a better chance of acceptance than long, wordy ones. Similarly, a paper with a complete description of a study, including conceptual development, validation of methods, process issues, outcomes and long-term implications, has a better chance of acceptance

than a paper covering only one or two of these aspects. A long article may have to be shortened at the editing stage.

*As a guide:*

**Articles:** 3,000-3,500 words (plus up to 50 references);

**Brief Report or Point of View:** no more than 1,500 words (up to 20 references); no more than two figures or tables;

**Letter to the Editor:** 500-600 words, no more than one table;

**Editorial:** 800-1000 words.

*The Editor reserves the right to accept submissions outside these word limits.*

### **Presenting your manuscript**

The manuscript should be accompanied by a letter stating the title and authors of the paper (see 'Authorship') and indicating the name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of the corresponding author, and a word count, including abstract and references. This letter must be signed by all authors. Submit one printed copy of your paper (single-sided, double-spaced) including all figures and tables, accompanied by a computer disk with the file in a PC Word for Windows compatible file. This file will be sent on to the Editor and Reviewers, so please ensure that any graphics are in a readable format and that the text is in a standard font, e.g. Times Roman. Please do not e-mail initial submissions.

The printed copy should be on one side of white, A4 paper, with margins of at least 25mm all round. Double or 1½ spacing and clear 11-point or 12-point type are recommended, to make the manuscript clear and easy for reviewers to read. Number all pages consecutively, including abstract, text, acknowledgments, references, tables and figures. Do not use more than three levels of sub-heading or type text or heading in capitals. Do not use footnotes or endnotes for parenthetical matter – include it in the text or delete it. Do not use automatic reference numbering. If you have not published a Journal article before, consult a book such as Robert A. Day's *How to write and publish a scientific paper* (3rd edition, Cambridge University Press, 1989) for advice on the accepted approach and structure. Contributors with previous experience in the humanities rather than empirical sciences may also find this helpful.

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## **Authorship**

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- a) Conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data
- b) Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content
- c) Final approval of the version to be published.

Conditions a, b and c must all be met. Participation solely in the acquisition of funding or the collection of data does not justify authorship. General supervision of the research group is also not sufficient for authorship. Any part of the article critical to its main conclusion must be the responsibility of at least one author. A paper with corporate (collective) authorship must specify the key persons responsible for the article; others contributing to the work should be recognised separately (see 'Acknowledgments'). The editor may require authors to justify the assignment of authorship, particularly if there are more than six authors.

## **Guidelines on preparing abstracts**

Articles, review articles and brief reports are required to have abstracts. The abstract must be no longer than 250 words (150 words for a Brief Report) and contain the following headings: Objective, Methods, Results, Conclusions and Implications (for public health practice). The abstract must state the purposes of the study or investigation (Objective); basic procedures, e.g. selection of study subjects and observational and analytical methods, as well as date and place of study (Method); main findings – specific data and their statistical significance, if possible (Results); and the principal conclusions you have drawn from the findings. Finally, what are the implications of your study for public health practice? The abstract should not be a description of your paper or an advertisement for it – do not dwell on how remarkably original or successful your study was, or use phrases like "The implications of these findings for heart disease prevention programs are discussed", or say that further work needs to be done (it always does). Instead, state the main implications for other programs, treatment etc, in one bald sentence. Do not report any information or opinion that is not in the article itself. The abstract should not have any footnotes or references to the literature, or any tables or figures. The abstract will be read in international databases by people who never see the article. People will use the abstract to decide whether to read the full article, so it should be clear, concise, readable and appealing – try to make it vivid and brisk.

Consider carefully how much detail you wish to include; too much detail often clouds comprehensibility and puts readers off. Many of the people reading the abstract will not be native readers of English, so be as straightforward and unambiguous as possible. Do not use any acronyms that are likely to be parochial in application; however, for the sake of brevity, you could use an acronym that is internationally familiar to workers in a wide field (such as AIDS or HIV). If you have to use the acronym or abbreviation

because you use a long expression or title several times during the abstract, explain it in full the first time you use it (and do so again in the beginning of the article itself).

## **Checklist – must contain these headings**

### **Objective:**

- Reasons for study, question to be answered or hypothesis to be tested

### **Method:**

- Place and time of study (e.g. Perth, Western Australia, 1990);
- Study type (e.g. randomised double-blind crossover study or content analysis of health promotion leaflets); and
- Sample, population or study subjects (who or what they were and how many of them).

### **Results:**

- Main results only

### **Conclusion(s):**

- Again, only the main ones.

### **Implications:**

- Lessons for public health practice

### **Acknowledgments**

Acknowledgments should be kept brief. They may include technical and managerial assistance (e.g. data management, library research, funding sources [any relevant financial interests should be declared]) and, if necessary, clerical assistance, typing, text editing and useful comments.

### **References**

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Submitted manuscripts are required to follow Vancouver style, that is, the style of the '*Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals*' agreed on by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (see Medical Journal of Australia, vol. 155, 1991, pp197-201 or go to the website:

<http://www.mja.com.au/public/information/uniform.html>

Number references consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text. Identify references in the text by superscript Arabic numerals. For repeated (identical) references, reuse the original reference number. Unless ambiguity ensues, locate the numeral at the end of the paragraph or sentence after any punctuation mark.

Journal titles should be abbreviated in the style used in Index Medicus. List all authors up to four. When more than four, add 'et al.' Copies of the 'Uniform requirements' and examples of references are available from the Editorial Office.

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Standard for bibliographic references:

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The following is a condensation of the recommendations of ISO 690 Part 2.

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Tables should be numbered consecutively and have a fully identifying title at the top. They should contain no vertical lines and only three horizontal lines: above and below the main column headings and at the bottom. Notes to tables (qualifying comments, sources, statistical tests, etc) should be indicated by superscripts: a, b etc. As a general rule, a table should be longer than it is wide, to fit into either a single text column of the Journal (90mm wide, up to about 55 characters or spaces) or two text columns (185mm, about 120 characters or spaces). If it is wide with many columns, it may be improved by rotating it through 90° and making the column headings into row headings. A complex table with sub-sections may be better made into two or more separate clear, simple tables. Complex tables that would need to be laid out in landscape (sideways) are not acceptable. Unformatted electronic versions of the tables, with columns separated only by tab marks, are required with submission of accepted papers.

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Figures should be numbered consecutively and have fully identifying separate figure legends. When designing your figures, remember that they will be reduced to fit into one Journal column (90mm wide) or laid out across two columns (185mm). Information about the figure, such as keys and notes, should be included in the separate legend. Any labelling, apart from the figure legend (or caption), should be within the boundaries of the figure itself. Any lettering on the figure should be in a sans serif font (Futura, Helvetica, Arial), sized so that it will be clearly legible after the figure is reduced to size. Make sure that the weight of the lines and axes is sufficient to remain clear at the final size. Graphs should be as simple as possible; they should not have grid lines, unnecessary ticks on the axes or superfluous graphic devices/effects. Remember that they will be reproduced in black and white: do not use colours. Histograms should have simple bars, not three-dimensional blocks. Use black and white bars, and if there are more than two, various patterns should be used to distinguish them. Do not use shading, as this does not reproduce well. So that your artwork can be reproduced in a legible and attractive form in the Journal, we may contact you about the figures and ask you to revise them or prepare them to camera-ready quality. For example, we may ask you to have a figure redrawn or printed out on a laser printer. Camera-ready figures should be identified with the name of the first author and the figure number on a label on the back. Electronic versions of figures are permissible, but must be accompanied by reproducible quality printouts. More detailed information about the acceptable electronic formats is available from the Editorial Office or will be provided on acceptance of a paper.

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