Guidelines for Authors

Criteria

The Journal's aim is to publish original scientific contributions in psychiatry, psychological medicine, and related basic sciences (neurosciences, biological, psychological, and social sciences). Its scope includes any subspecialties of the above, eg. behavioural pharmacology, biological psychiatry, child and adolescent psychiatry, mental handicap, forensic psychiatry, psychotherapies, psychiatry of old age, epidemiology, rehabilitation, psychometrics, substance misuse, sexual studies, linguistics, and the history, philosophy and economics of psychiatry.

The Journal will accept original papers, clinical case reports, brief research reports, review articles, perspective articles, historical papers, editorials, practice reviews (medical audits), letters to the editor and book reviews. Review articles are usually invited. Original data papers receive top priority for speedy publication. Manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.[1]

Format

The page following the title page should carry an Abstract followed by a list of three to 10 key words or short phrases drawn, if possible, from the medical subject headings (MeSH) list of Index Medicus.

The Title, Key Words and Abstract should be chosen to help future literature searchers. The Abstract, up to 150 words for an unstructured or 250 words for the structured abstract,[2] should state specifically the main purposes, procedures, findings and conclusions of the study, emphasising what is new or important. For original papers, brief research reports, medical audits and review articles, a structured abstract[2] is required, using the headings Objectives, Methods, Results (Findings for review articles) and Conclusions.

Under the Abstract heading of Method, include wherever applicable the study design, setting, patients/participants (selection criteria, description), interventions, observational and analytical methods and main outcome measures. For review articles specify the methods of literature search and selection. Under the Abstract heading of Results, give the most important specific data together with their statistical significance.

Figures and graphs should be clear and of good quality, and should be accompanied by relevant data to facilitate redrawing where necessary. All materials sent for publication should be accompanied by a covering letter signed by all the authors, and such material will become the property of the Journal until, and if, publication is refused. Material so referred should not be sent elsewhere for publication. Hard copies and the original covering letter should be emailed to: **psychological@medmedia.ie** Full postal address, telephone numbers etc. should be included.

References

Timely references should highlight the study's relevance to current research or clinical practice. References to journal articles[1-3] and to books[4-6] illustrate the 'Vancouver' style,[1] ie. number references in the order they appear in the text, do not alphabetise. Journal titles should be abbreviated as in *Index Medicus*. The Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals[5] has two paragraphs on statistical guidelines. These have been explained by Bailar and Mosteller.[3]

Anonymous peer-review

All contributions are peer-reviewed by three anonymous assessors and, where relevant, by the Statistical Editor. Assessments will be sent to the corresponding author usually within six weeks. Where revisions are sought prior to publication, authors are advised to return their revision, incorporating any suggestions which they agree would improve their paper. The covering letter should respond to each comment, numbered, of each assessor, indicating where the revision deals with it, or why the authors disagree or have not incorporated it. Each assessor then receives the authors' revision, covering letter and the previous comments. After the assessors' further comments have been received, the senior editors will make the final decision, including priority and time of publication, and the right to style and if necessary shorten material for publication.

Previous publication

Manuscripts are considered with the understanding that they have not been published previously, either in print or electronic format.

Statement of Conflict of Interest

In the interests of accountability and credibility all financial/material support for the work should be clearly stated.[7] Authors of original data must take responsibility for the integrity of the data and accuracy of the data analysis. All authors must have full access to all the data in the study.[8] Conflict of interest exists when an author (or the author's institution), reviewer, or editor has financial or personal relationships that inappropriately influence (bias) his or her actions (such relationships are also known as dual commitments, competing interests, or competing loyalties).[9]

Statement of Informed Consent

Patients have a right to privacy that should not be infringed without informed consent. When informed consent has been obtained it should be indicated in the published article. Authors should identify individuals who provide writing assistance and disclose the funding source for this assistance.[9]

Statement of Human and Animal Rights

When reporting experiments on human subjects, authors should indicate whether the procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation and with the Helsinki Declaration.[9]

Acknowledgments

Authors should obtain permission from those named in Acknowledgments, since readers may infer endorsement.

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5. Gardner MJ, Altman DG, editors. Statistics with confidence – confidence intervals and statistical guidelines. London: British Medical Journal, 1989: 103-5. [Note: British Medical Journal here is the publisher of a book, not the journal BMJ.
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9. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors ('Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals') February 2006.

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