

General articles

These guidelines are designed to help you submit suitable articles to the evidence & practice section of the RCNi journals

Please note that your manuscript must be submitted to one journal ONLY, whether it is published by RCNi or any other company. Submission to more than one journal will not increase your chances of publication. Editors will not consider articles that have been published elsewhere.

Presenting a clinical article

Articles should be of interest to nurses working in clinical practice, have something new to say or offer a fresh approach to a subject, challenge current thought or practice, predict future trends, or review current thinking. One of the best ways to understand how to write in the correct style is to read a selection of articles previously published in the chosen journal. There are various styles of article:

Literature review

This article is a thorough and comprehensive review of current writing on a particular aspect of nursing. Up-to-date referencing is essential, as is a strong conclusion to bring the subject together. The article should begin with an abstract of about 50-100 words.

Systematic reviews and original research

These articles should be written in the classic research style, that is: abstract; introduction; literature review; aim; method; results or findings; discussion and conclusion. The abstract should be about 150 words and summarise the aim, method, results or findings and conclusion.

A box highlighting the implications of the research for practice should be presented in bullet points at the end of the article. Please refer to the research guidelines when submitting research articles.

Innovations in practice

This article describes logically and critically a particular nursing procedure, the work of a ward or unit, or the role and function of a nursing post or specialty. The relevance of this work to other nurses or areas of nursing should be discussed.

Length

Word limits vary depending on article type. Opinion pieces can have as few as 250 words, for example, while continuing professional development articles may have between 4,000 and 5,000, excluding the references. Please note your word count at the end of the article. Please be aware that articles exceeding this word limit may be sent back to the author to make cuts before being sent for external peer review.

Diagrams and illustrations

Please ensure that any illustrative material is numbered, titled and annotated, and that copyright has been obtained, if necessary, before you submit your article for publication. Please ask the journal editor for advice. Photographs should be

supplied in a high-quality, uncompressed JPEG format. Please also remember that articles will appear online, so consider podcasts and video clips to enhance your work. Again, the editor can advise.

Acknowledgements

If you wish to acknowledge a person(s) or organisation(s), please contact the relevant person(s) or organisation(s) and ensure that they are happy to be named in your article and confirm this in writing.

Conflict of interest

Authors should declare any conflict of interest, financial or otherwise. If this applies to you, please provide a statement acknowledging this at the end of the article.

References

All written material should be referenced using current literature and primary sources. Please adhere to the Harvard style for writing references (see below) and ensure that all the information required is included.

It is the author's responsibility to ensure that references are accurate. Overuse of online internet references is not advisable because these may be unreliable; links can break easily and information may be withdrawn at any time.

References in the text

Please ensure that you use the Harvard (name and year) system for references in the text. For example, 'It has been suggested that nurses should examine their relationship with patients (Brown 2015)'. For three or more authors, print the first author's name followed by 'et al', for example 'White et al (2016) argued.' Note that White et al is acceptable for White, Red and Blue but not for White and Red, which should be written as 'White and Red (2016)'.

When several references are cited simultaneously the order should be chronological, from earliest to most recent. If there are two or more references to the same author, the order should also be chronological, for example '(NICE 2016, 2017)'.

References in the reference list

Each journal reference should include (in this order):

1. The author's surname and initial(s): write the surname and initial(s) of all authors for references with three authors or fewer. For four or more authors, write the first three and add 'et al'.
2. The year of publication in brackets.

3. The title of the article in full.
4. The name of the journal in full.
5. The volume, issue number and first and last page numbers, separated by a hyphen.
6. Use alphabetical order for references. If there are two or more references to the same author, use chronological order.

Each book reference should include (in this order):

1. The author's surname and initial(s). Please indicate if the people cited are editors.
2. The year of publication in brackets.
3. The title of the book in full.
4. The edition (if not the first).
5. The publisher.
6. The city of publication (and the state if in the US, province or territory in Canada, and territory in Australia).
7. If you are citing a chapter in a book, supply the author's name, chapter title and page numbers.
8. Use alphabetical order for references. If there are two or more references to the same author, use chronological order.

Examples

Department of Health (2012) *Liberating the NHS: No Decision About Me, Without Me*. The Stationery Office, London.

Smith B, Wright K (2017) Pressure ulcers. In Jones P, Don T (Eds) *Care of the Patient*. Second edition. Guild Publishers, London.

Simpson E (2016) How to manage a choking adult. *Nursing Standard*. 31, 3, 42-46.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unreferenced use of others' published work or unpublished ideas or opinions that are represented as your own work: for example, copying or paraphrasing text, a sentence, paragraph, table or figure from another's work and not referencing it. Plagiarism also applies to work that you have published previously.

The article must be your own work and should be written in your own words. All mention of others' work must be attributed to the originating author(s) and referenced in full. Any direct quotations must be included in single quotation marks. If substantial sections of text or illustrative material are used in the article, you must obtain written permission from the copyright holder before submitting the article for publication. All articles submitted to RCNi are checked for plagiarism using an automated software package.

Deadlines

Editorial deadlines are set to allow time for the articles to be peer reviewed and edited. Articles are subject to peer review. It is imperative that authors keep to the deadlines agreed with the commissioning editor so production schedules can be maintained and the high-quality of the articles ensured. You will be sent PDF proofs for checking in advance of printing. If for any reason you are unable to meet the agreed deadline, please inform the commissioning editor as soon as possible.

Preparing your text

While Word format is preferred, you may submit your article in any widely used text-editing file format. The submitted file should not contain the abstract (entered separately) and articles should be set up to print on one side of A4 paper, with clear, plain, dark, serif print (such as Times New Roman) using double line spacing. Leave margins of one inch and a half for reviewers' comments and ensure the pages are numbered. Remember to keep a copy for your records. If you have any queries about *Nursing Standard*, contact Julia Mariappa on 020 8872 3171; if you have any queries about any of the other, specialist titles, contact Helen Hyland on 020 8872 3138.

Submitting your manuscript

Manuscripts should be submitted through the online submission system, Editorial Manager. To access this system, please go to your chosen journal in the 'Explore our journals' section, at rcni.com/write-us/explore-our-journals

A tutorial to help authors use the system is available through the 'Instructions for authors' link on that page. The registration and submission process will ask for your contact details and the following information for all other authors of your article: full name, job title, institution, email address and country.

What happens to your manuscript?

You will receive an email acknowledging receipt of your submission and will thereafter be able to track its progress online. The manuscripts are assessed internally before being sent to external experts for peer review.

Most, but not all, of our journals use double-blind peer review. This means that the reviewers do not know who the author is and the author is not informed who the reviewers are. This helps to ensure that manuscripts are given an objective and unbiased review.

Authors can expect to wait about 12 weeks after acknowledgment before receiving a response. This will be either acceptance without revision, a request for revision or rewrite, or a letter explaining that your manuscript has not been accepted for publication.

Accepted

If your manuscript is accepted, you will be asked to complete an author's form and sign a publisher's agreement for the purposes of copyright. The article will be scheduled to appear in an issue. Articles will not be published without acceptance of the publisher's agreement from each author, and emails will be sent requesting this automatically.

Shortly before your article is due to be published, you will be asked to proofread both an edited version and confidential word proofs, and to answer any editorial queries raised.

Request for revise or rewrite

In most cases, authors are asked to revise their manuscripts in the light of the comments made by external reviewers and editorial staff. These comments are intended to be constructive and to help produce a high-quality article. In this case, the manuscript will be made available to you with a copy of the

reviewers' comments, and a deadline for resubmission will be set. Revised manuscripts are usually returned to external reviewers to ensure that the changes made are satisfactory.

Not accepted for publication

There are many reasons why your manuscript may not be accepted for publication and these may not necessarily reflect the quality of the submission. Where possible, we will try to

explain why. We retain the right, however, not to engage in further correspondence.

Complaints

RCNi is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which will investigate complaints that members have not followed the COPE code of conduct for journal editors. www.publicationethics.org.uk

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