

Instructions to authors

The following are the major requirements for manuscripts submitted for publication.

All material submitted for publication is assumed to be submitted exclusively to the *BMJ* unless the contrary is stated.

A stamped addressed envelope or an international reply coupon *must* accompany the manuscript if acknowledgement of receipt is desired.

(1) **Original articles** and those submitted for the Practice Observed and Medical Practice sections are normally up to 2000 words long; Short Reports should have no more than 600 words (with one table or figure and up to five references) and letters normally no more than 400 (with up to 10 references). Contributions for the Personal View and Materia Non Medica columns should contain up to 1150 and 400 words respectively.

(2) **Authors** should give their names and initials, their posts at the time they did the work and their current appointments, and not more than two degrees or diplomas each. Each author must sign his consent to publication, and the paper will be assumed to be submitted exclusively to the *BMJ* unless the contrary is stated.

(3) **Three copies** should be submitted. Two will be returned if the manuscript is rejected.

(4) **Typing** should be on one side of the paper, with triple spacing between the lines and 5-cm margins at the top and left-hand side of the sheet.

(5) **Abstracts** should accompany all original articles. They should be no longer than 150 words and should set out what was done and the principal findings and their implications in terms that will be understood by clinicians in other disciplines.

(6) **Spelling** should conform to that of *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*.

(7) **Drugs** should be given their approved names not their proprietary names, and the source of any new or experimental preparations should be given.

(8) **Abbreviations** should be spelt out when first used in the text. Full points are not used in contractions or abbreviations: FRCS, 11 g/dl, Dr, etc.

(9) **SI units** are used for scientific measurements. In the text they should be followed by traditional units in parentheses. In tables and illustrations values are given only in SI units, but a conversion factor must be supplied. For general guidance on the International System of units, and some useful conversion factors, see *The SI for the Health Professions* (WHO, 1977).

(10) **Statistical procedures** should be described in the methods section or supported by references.

(11) **Tables** and illustrations should be separate from the text of the paper. Tables should be simple and not duplicate information in the text of the article.

(12) **Photographs** should be trimmed to remove all redundant areas and their tops should be marked on the back of each print. Staining techniques and the original magnification of the photomicrograph should be stated.

(13) **References** must be in the Vancouver style. (*BMJ*, 24 February 1979, p 532) and their accuracy checked before submission. References should be numbered in the order in which they appear in the text. Each reference should include the names and initials of each author (or, if more than six, the first three followed by *et al*), the title of the article, the title of the journal (abbreviated according to the style of *Index Medicus*), the year, the volume, and first and last page numbers. Titles of books should be followed by the place of publication, the publisher, and the year. "Unpublished observations" may not be used as references but may be cited only in the text.

(14) **Letters to the Editor** submitted for publication must be signed personally by all authors.

(15) **Proofs** of accepted articles are sent to their authors after they have been prepared for press; proofs of letters are not normally sent. Corrections should be kept to a minimum and should conform to the conventions described in *Whitaker's Almanack* (p 1219 (p 81 in 1981 edition)).

(16) **The Editor** reserves the customary right to style and if necessary shorten material accepted for publication and to determine the priority and time of publication.

(17) **Detailed instructions** are given in the *BMJ* of 3 January 1981, p 6.

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