

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

*Effective January 2012, the journal now requires all authors to complete the ICMJE conflict of interest form (available at [http://www.icmje.org/coi\\_disclosure.pdf](http://www.icmje.org/coi_disclosure.pdf)) and to upload these forms on the editorial website at the end of all new manuscript submissions.*

## Overview

*Academic Pediatrics* strives to improve the health and well-being of children, their families, and their communities through:

- Providing a forum for the publication of general pediatric studies, commentaries and reviews that are of interest to learners and professionals who care for children and adolescents;
- Helping to advance the field of academic pediatrics;
- Strengthening the research and educational base of academic pediatrics; and
- Providing the evidence base for optimal child health care, pediatric education, and child health policy.

The content areas of the Journal reflect the general interests of Academic Pediatric Association members and other health professionals who care for children. Areas of particular interest include child health services research, quality of clinical care, pediatric education, child health policy, and research methodology. Content areas for the Journal include such diverse topics as adolescent medicine, child maltreatment and protection, chronic illness, community pediatrics, developmental and behavioral pediatrics, emergency medicine, environmental medicine, financing, global pediatrics, health disparities, holistic medicine, hospital medicine, informatics, injury, medical education across the continuum, pediatric advocacy, prevention, pediatric primary care problems, and public health.

Please address editorial questions to:  
Peter G. Szilagyi, MD, MPH, Editor-in-Chief  
*Academic Pediatrics*  
Department of Pediatrics  
University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry  
Strong Memorial Hospital  
601 Elmwood Avenue  
Box 777  
Rochester, NY 14642  
Phone: 585-275-5798  
Fax: 585-276-2595  
e-mail: [journal@academicped.org](mailto:journal@academicped.org)

## Article Types

### **Research articles – Quantitative and Qualitative Research**

Most research articles published in the Journal use quantitative methods and the maximum length for these manuscripts is 3500 words. The word limit for manuscripts reporting qualitative research is 4000 words. Mixed methods research will also be accepted. Manuscripts reporting original research should have clear organization with:

- A structured abstract less than 250 words (see below).
- A description, no more than 40 words, of key findings for the What's New section.
- An introduction that describes the importance of the problem addressed.
- A methods section that briefly explains the study design and procedures. For randomized clinical trials (RCTs), please include the CONSORT flow diagram in the methods section, and submit the CONSORT Checklist with the manuscript. *Academic Pediatrics* now requires registration of clinical trials in a public trials registry

(e.g., [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov)), as described by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).<sup>1</sup>

- A results section that describes the key characteristics of the sample and then describes the findings for the dependent (outcome) variables and key independent variables.
- A discussion section that begins with a brief statement of the important findings of the study and then places these results in the context of previous related research. Please make specific recommendations rather than a general plea for more research.

Articles describing educational research and interventions should measure and report outcomes beyond participants' reactions and change in knowledge. Demonstration of the impact of educational interventions should include changes in observed behaviors of learners as a result of the intervention. Ultimately, new learned behaviors should have measurable impact through improved patient outcomes and/or enhanced child health.

### **Brief Reports**

The Journal also publishes brief reports that describe interesting new ideas or innovations in pediatric medicine, health services, and medical education. Brief reports typically raise new questions of interest to the Journal readership. Brief reports should have no more than 2000 words (excluding abstract, tables, and references) and a maximum of three tables or figures and 25 references. Other elements (abstracts and references) meet usual Journal requirements for length and formatting.

### **Perspectives**

Perspectives presents pediatric topics, with an emphasis on research findings in the previous five years and identifying areas for future study. The Perspectives Editors solicit most articles with input about topics and potential authors from the Journal's senior editorial group. Authors will generally be respected authorities in the area and may include a fellow or junior faculty member as a co-author. The manuscript should be about 4500-5000 words. It should include an overview of key questions and important research in a field, indicating the recent advances in the underlying science, and ending with a vision of the research and/or policy issues that should be addressed in the near future. Where appropriate, Perspectives should also discuss implications for pediatric education and practice. The editors will work with authors as needed and may request an annotated outline of the manuscript. All Perspectives manuscripts are peer-reviewed. For questions or suggestions about a Perspectives topic, please contact John Pascoe at: [john.pascoe@wright.edu](mailto:john.pascoe@wright.edu) or Daniel West at: [westdc@peds.ucsf.edu](mailto:westdc@peds.ucsf.edu).

### **Systematic Reviews**

Systematic Reviews are systematic, critical assessments of literature and data sources pertaining to one of four areas: 1) pediatric research methods, 2) pediatric education and pediatric professional development, 3) pediatric health policy, and 4) pediatric health care delivery. All articles or data sources should be selected systematically for inclusion in the review and critically evaluated, and the selection process should be described in the article. Typical length: 2000 to 3500 words (not including

tables, figures, and references). Evidence tables that list specific studies would generally be published in an online-only appendix, while the print version would include the critical summary tables. Any manuscript over 4000 words will not be considered unless this has been previously discussed with the editor.

Submissions should meet at a minimum the standards published by an international group by David Moher, Ph.D. of the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute (OHRI) and the University of Ottawa entitled Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). Authors should access the PRISMA Statement ([www.prisma-statement.org](http://www.prisma-statement.org)), which consists of the 27-item PRISMA Checklist, the PRISMA Flow Diagram, and the PRISMA Explanation and Elaboration Document.<sup>2</sup> The PRISMA Explanation and Elaboration Document also includes additional considerations for systematic reviews of non-randomized intervention studies or for other types of systematic reviews. We would encourage authors also to consider the recommendations of the Meta-analysis of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (MOOSE) Group.<sup>3</sup>

The submitted report should include all 27 PRISMA items listed on the PRISMA Checklist including the PRISMA Flow Diagram (Item 17 on the checklist). The flow diagram depicts the flow of information through the different phases of a systematic review. It maps out the number of records identified, included and excluded, and the reasons for exclusions. We will publish the flow diagram as a figure as part of the print version as well as the online version. As stated above, we will publish evidence tables to address Item 18 on the checklist in the online version only, which, nevertheless, is the article of record for the journal.

The submitted manuscript should include a Title Page. On a separate page, list MeSH Key Words for the purpose of indexing the report. Include on a separate page an Abstract. Structure the abstract as a summary of the report and include the following headings, as applicable, as prescribed in the PRISMA checklist: Background; Objectives; Data Sources; Study Eligibility Criteria, Participants, and Interventions; Study Appraisal and Synthesis Methods; Results; Limitations; Conclusions and Implications of Key Findings; and Systematic Review Registration Number. For the body of the paper, use the major headings of Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. Also, on a separate page, list Acknowledgments. Acknowledgments should specify the sources of funding for the systematic review and other support and note the role of the funders for the systematic review. Refer to the PRISMA Flow Diagram as a figure in the Results section. Include each figure and table as separate pages in the manuscript to follow the References. Use this journal's Instructions for Authors for details regarding citations. Along with the figures and tables, include on a separate page a box containing no more than 40 words to be entitled, "What this Systematic Review Adds" describing perhaps in three bullet points this systematic review's contribution to the literature. Also, include on a separate page a box containing no more than 40 words to be entitled "How to Use this Systematic Review" and discuss, perhaps in 3 bullets, how academic pediatricians should apply these findings to their work.

### **In the Moment – Personal Narratives**

We invite submissions to "In the Moment," the personal narratives section of *Academic Pediatrics*. "In the Moment" is a forum for authors to relate their personal experience of pediatrics. We are seeking narrative pieces about research, contact with patients, the influence of mentors, the impact of policy and current events, and the relationship of the author's work to their lives and the lives of others. Essays should describe these experiences and make connections to larger themes in pediatrics education, research, policy, and clinical care. The section is a vibrant forum for all of us to relate the stories and perspectives that are such an important part of our work and ongoing medical education.

Submissions should be no more than 2500 words in length and do not need abstracts or "What's New" descriptions. Data and the work of others must be appropriately referenced. Papers should be submitted through the editorial website. Please direct questions to Anjali Jain, MD ([anjali.jain@lewin.com](mailto:anjali.jain@lewin.com)).

### **Commentaries**

The editors occasionally solicit brief (about 1000 words) commentaries regarding papers published in the Journal or recent reports of activities of interest to readers. Commentaries differ from Perspectives by being briefer and more focused on specific topics, questions, or manuscripts. If you wish to submit a Commentary, please contact the Editor-in-Chief.

### **Supplements**

The Journal publishes supplements on topics of interest to its readers. Authors interested in supplements to the Journal should contact the Editor-in-Chief to discuss interest and procedures. Supplements should have a guest editor, who helps with the initial review of manuscripts and organization of the supplement, as well as suggesting reviewers for the manuscripts. All manuscripts proposed for a supplement have external review (as with other submissions to the Journal), and final decisions on publication remain with the Journal's editors, in consultation with the guest editor for the supplement.

## **Preparing a Manuscript**

### **Formatting**

All manuscripts should be prepared with standard word processing software. Text should be double-spaced in 12-point font, and pages numbered. Tables should be placed together at the end of the manuscript. Black and white figures will be printed without charge. Authors bear the costs for printing colored tables or figures. Do not mail original artwork or printed forms. Figures should be saved separately as ppt, tif, eps, or jpg files. The online submission system is unable to process multi-worksheet or multi-slide files. To submit such documents, save each worksheet table or slide in a separate file. Symbols and special characters should not be created graphically; instead, use the character set provided in your word processor. Use a legend as part of the figure when symbols are used. Do not use any automated word-processing features, such as track changes or citation links.

### **Submission Letter**

All manuscripts begin with a submission letter. This letter should be included with the online submission but the original copy signed by all authors should be sent to the editorial office at the above address. The authors should affirm that:

- They are responsible for the reported research.
- They have participated in the concept and design, analysis and interpretation of data, and drafting or revising of the manuscript; and that they have approved the manuscript as submitted.
- They are disclosing any affiliation, financial agreement, or other involvement of any author with any company or other organization with a financial interest in the subject matter in the submitted manuscript. The Journal generally prints information on potential conflict of interest.
- The manuscript is being submitted only to *Academic Pediatrics*, that it will not be submitted elsewhere while under consideration, that it has not been published elsewhere, and, should it be published in *Academic Pediatrics*, that it will not be published elsewhere—either in similar form or verbatim—without permission of the editors. These restrictions do not apply to

abstracts or to press reports of presentations at scientific meetings. If the submitted paper contains data that have been previously published, are in press or currently under review by another publication in any format, the authors are required to submit a reprint or a copy of the manuscript to the Editor-in-Chief with a clarification of the overlap and justification for consideration of the current submitted manuscript. This requirement includes manuscripts with the same or similar authors and using the same data source. Final decisions on the appropriateness of additional publication remain with the Editor-in-Chief.

- An institutional review board reviewed and approved the research.

### Title Page

The title page is the first page of all manuscripts. It includes:

- The manuscript's title;
- Names, degrees, department, affiliation, city and state of all authors;
- Name, mailing address, email address, phone and fax number of the corresponding author;
- 3-5 keywords;
- Running title or header of no more than 60 characters including spaces;
- Separate word counts for the abstract and the main text;
- Acknowledgement of research or project support with the relevant agency, grant or project number, and the principal investigator;
- Description of potential conflicts of interest and corporate sponsors.

### Abstracts

The abstract is the second page of all manuscripts with the exception of "Commentaries" and "In the Moment – Personal Narratives" for which an abstract is not required. Abstracts should be prepared with a structured format with a maximum of 250 words. Four elements should be addressed: objective, methods, results, and conclusions. Please label each section clearly with the appropriate subheading.

### What's New

What's New, required for research manuscripts, provides authors an opportunity to summarize, in 40 words or fewer, how this research contributes to the knowledge base of the field.

### Manuscript Text

The manuscript's text varies with the type of article submitted. Please consult the "Article Types" section for guidelines, and direct specific questions to the Editorial Office or section editor.

All manuscripts, including title page, tables, figures, and references, should be prepared according to "Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals."<sup>4</sup> Grammar, punctuation, scientific writing style and abbreviations should follow the American Medical Association Manual of Style, 9th edition.<sup>5</sup> Please use conventional system measurements followed in parentheses by equivalent Systeme International (SI) values.<sup>6,7</sup> Any uncommon abbreviations should be listed at the beginning of the article. Confidence intervals usually provide more helpful information than *P* values.

### References

All authors should have read all cited references. Please number references in the order they appear in the text. Unpublished references or meeting abstracts should not be included although articles accepted for publication or in press are permissible. Include the names of up to four authors; for references with more than four authors, provide the names of the first three and then et al. References should be double-spaced and generally not exceed 35. Spell out journal titles or use

standard AMA abbreviations. References should follow AMA style.

### Submitting a Manuscript

Authors should submit all manuscripts through the Journal's editorial website, <http://ees.elsevier.com/academicped/>. The manuscript submission process is broken into a series of screens that gather detailed information about the manuscript, including title, article type, author listings, abstract, keywords, topical classifications, and that allow authors to upload all pertinent files including the submission letter, manuscript, figures, and tables. A detailed tutorial with a step-by-step walk-through is available for download on the EES homepage.

One author must be specified as the correspondent with the Journal. He or she will receive all communications from the Editor. Provide full mailing address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address for the corresponding author on the title page. The Journal limits authors to a maximum of eight. Exceptions to this rule will require justification and approval by the Editor-in-Chief.

After submitting the manuscript files, authors select the order in which the files will appear in a merged PDF file that the system creates. When the system finishes generating the PDF file, authors are directed to a page that allows review of the pdf-formatted manuscript. If the conversion is not correct, authors can replace or delete manuscript files as necessary. The final screen includes an "Ethics in Publishing" statement that authors should read and accept if in agreement. After reviewing the converted files, authors need to click on "Approve Submission." This completes the manuscript submission process.

### Manuscript Review Process

Three outside peer reviewers review most manuscripts. The Journal makes every effort to expedite this process. The average time from submission to initial decision is 39 days. As part of the submission process, you will be able to suggest possible peer reviewers. Suggested individuals should have no conflicts of interest and should not have any knowledge of the submitted manuscript. Please indicate names of reviewers who may have a conflict of interest.

### Manuscript Status

You can check the status of your manuscript at any time by:

1. Logging into the system with your password;
2. Clicking on the link "Submissions Being Processed."

This procedure will display the status of your manuscript during the submission/peer-review process.

### Acceptance Criteria

Relevance to readers is of major importance in manuscript selection. Reports of original research will be judged on the importance and originality of the research; the scientific strength; the relevance to clinical care, programs, education, or policy; the clarity with which it is presented; and the novelty of the new knowledge it adds.

The Journal will generally accept manuscripts in the following categories: reports of original research, particularly clinical, health services, and health policy research; systematic reviews of primary care and general pediatric topics; studies and descriptions of educational interventions; educational symposia; and papers regarding methodology. In general, commentaries and topic reviews will be limited to careful systematic reviews of the literature or to research agenda setting papers indicating important next steps in a field. The Journal does not publish clinical case reports.

Education interventions must include an evaluation component, preferably one that goes beyond increasing

knowledge to assessing and demonstrating whether the intervention changes learners' behavior, skills, or potentially health care quality or outcomes. Multi-site education innovations are generally reviewed more favorably than single site experiments.

### **Journal Editorial Policies**

#### **Conflict of Interest**

Conflicts of interest can arise for authors, reviewers and editors. The Journal makes every effort to avoid such conflicts within its control by blinding editors for whom conflicts may exist and by selecting reviewers without obvious conflicts. We rely on authors to make similar efforts and to reveal potential conflicts of interest in areas of financial relationships, sources of research support, and writing or other assistance.

Effective January 2012, the Journal now requires all authors to complete the ICMJE conflict of interest form (available at [http://www.icmje.org/coi\\_disclosure.pdf](http://www.icmje.org/coi_disclosure.pdf)) and to upload these forms on the editorial website at the end of all new manuscript submissions. For more information about conflicts of interest, please refer to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication at <http://www.icmje.org/#conflicts>. Please direct specific questions regarding potential conflicts of interest to the Journal office at: [journal@academicpediatrics.org](mailto:journal@academicpediatrics.org).

Disclosures should appear on the acknowledgement section of the manuscript and should describe specifically all sources of funding for the study as well as the nature of the financial arrangements. Authors should indicate the role of the study sponsor in terms of study design, fieldwork, writing of the manuscript, and decision to submit for publication. If the manuscript is accepted for publication, the disclosure will be published.

Authors should also specifically indicate in the acknowledgements if no conflicts of interest exist.

#### **Authorship Criteria**

In order to meet authorship criteria, each author must have participated sufficiently in the work of the study and manuscript to acknowledge publicly responsibility for the manuscript. At least one author must be able to take public responsibility for the entire work, from idea to complete manuscript. *Academic Pediatrics* follows published uniform recommendations for criteria for authorship (see references). All three of the following criteria must be met for authorship:

1. Substantial involvement and contribution to the idea or the study question, or to the study design, or to the fieldwork component, or to the analysis, or to the interpretation of study findings;
2. Writing drafts of the manuscript, or reviewing drafts or revisions critically with substantial input; and
3. Approval of the final version of the manuscript.

#### **Group Authorship**

The Journal limits authors to a maximum of eight. Exceptions to this rule will require justification and approval by the Editor-in-Chief. One person should be designated as the corresponding author. If authorship is attributed to a group of individuals, each individual must achieve the criteria for authorship described above.

#### **Duplicate Publication or Previous Publication**

Manuscripts submitted to *Academic Pediatrics* should not have been published previously and should not be under consideration by any other journal. If portions of the manuscript have been published or have been submitted to another journal, or if the submitted manuscript uses the same dataset as the

dataset that was used for another submission or publication, authors must provide copies of the published or submitted manuscript to the editors of *Academic Pediatrics*. Detection of duplicate publication may result in action by the editors according to ICMJE guidelines.

#### **Embargo Policy**

Articles that the Journal accepts for publication are embargoed until posted on the Journal's website. This date varies by article. The embargo date is the date that information about the article may be released to the general public.

#### **Copyright**

Upon acceptance of a manuscript, Elsevier, the publisher, will email the corresponding author a copy of the standard copyright agreement for his/her signature. The signed form should be returned to Elsevier as instructed on the form.

All accepted manuscripts become the permanent property of the Academic Pediatric Association and may not be published elsewhere, in whole or in part, without written permission from the APA. Authors who were employees of the United States Government at the time the work was done should so state on the Copyright Agreement.

#### **Inquiries Regarding Decisions**

Corresponding authors with questions regarding manuscript decisions should send inquiries to [journal@academicpediatrics.org](mailto:journal@academicpediatrics.org). Messages will be forwarded to the appropriate editor for response.

#### **Articles in Press**

The *Academic Pediatrics* website posts articles in press, accepted, peer-reviewed papers that will soon be published in this Journal. Articles in press are corrected proof versions of papers and are posted after corrections from the Journal office and the author are made, generally 2-4 weeks before publication. Although "Articles in Press" do not have all bibliographic details available yet, they can be cited using the year of online availability and the Document Object Identifiers (DOI) as follows: Author(s), Article Title, Journal (year), DOI.

#### **Media Releases**

We urge authors to work with their public relations offices to seek exposure for their research, and we will appreciate receiving copies of these materials.

#### **References**

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4. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted. Available at: <http://www.icmje.org/index.html#top>. Accessed November 19, 2008.
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