



Guide

for Authors



MATURITAS

An international journal of midlife health and beyond
Official Journal of the European Menopause & Andropause Society

www.maturitas.org

www.maturitas.org

Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief:

Margaret Rees

Editors for Supplements:

Serge Rozenberg
Göran Samsioe

Editor for EMAS News:

Serge Rozenberg

Statistical Editor

Susan Dutton

Editorial Board

G.A. Bachmann	S. Hope
D.H. Barlow	N. Houssami
P. Bouchard	A.L. Huntley
G. Braunstein	S.R. Jackson
J. Brockie	J.G. Kral
J.T. Bromberger	K. Kublickiene
P. Chedraui	D. Kuh
S. Davis	I. Lambrinouadaki
C.T. Erel	E. Løkkegaard
E. Ertüngealp	M. Melby
L. Flicker	K. Melham
A.E. Gebbie	A.O. Mueck
T. van Geel	M.K. Oehler
A. Gompel	O. Ortmann
A. Graziottin	S.K. Pal
F. Grodstein	S. Palacios
A. Hextall	D. Panagiotakos

Senior Advisors

M.H. Birkhäuser, Basel, Switzerland
P.G. Crosignani, Milan, Italy
A.R. Genazzani, Pisa, Italy

Emeritus Editor-in-Chief:

P. Kenemans

Editors:

Martina Dören
Martha Hickey
Lubna Pal
Yvonne van der Schouw
Tommaso Simoncini
John C. Stevenson

A. Pines
P. Polo
W.A. Rocca
I. Rudkowska
K. Schenck-Gustafsson
B. Schurch
C. Shufelt
N. Siseles
S.O. Skouby
D. Sturdee
A. Thomas
F. Trémollières
C. La Vecchia
L. Wergeland Sørbye

M. Notelovitz, Gainesville, FL, USA
F.R. Pérez-López, Zaragoza, Spain
H.P.G. Schneider, Münster, Germany

Correspondence Address

mat@elsevier.com

How to write a scientific paper for **MATURITAS** — A GENERAL GUIDE

Introduction

The task of writing a research paper can be daunting. You may have completed ground breaking research, but unless the paper is correctly written, at best publication will be delayed, at worse never published.

The purpose of this document is to try and give the reader an overview of how to write a well-structured research paper for publication. It is principally aimed at new authors and is generic enough to encompass all disciplines, but where necessary we have added commentary pertaining to MATURITAS and publishing in MATURITAS.

Do I need to write a research paper?

This might seem like an obvious question, but it is one worth asking yourself. Editors and reviewers are looking for original and innovative research that will add to the field of study. MATURITAS rejects a large portion of submitted papers upfront without review. The most important argument for upfront rejection without review is lack of originality. You may need to discuss the work with others before you and your colleagues decide that it is worthy of submission to MATURITAS. Ensure that you have enough numbers to justify sound statistical conclusions. Reviewers very frequently reject papers when the numbers are just insufficient for consideration. If the research you are going to report upon³ relates to a larger study, perhaps it is better to produce one important research paper, rather than a number of average incremental papers. The system of quantifying an academic career by numerically assessing an authors published papers is only correct if impact factor is addressed as well. It is better to have one high impact factor manuscript, than many marginally rated publications.

In deciding where to send your paper, consider the reader. Also, check out the instructions to authors of journals. In the case of MATURITAS, it is an international multidisciplinary peer reviewed scientific journal of midlife health and beyond publishing original research, reviews, consensus statements and guidelines. The scope encompasses all aspects of post-reproductive health in both genders ranging from basic science to health and social care.

Does your paper address a question of international or mainly local interest? If the latter is true, it may be better placed in a national journal than in an international one like MATURITAS.

The structure of a paper

Scientific writing follows a rigid structure; a format developed over hundreds of years and considered to be the most efficient means for communicating scientific findings to the broader research community. Moreover, the format has the advantage that it allows the paper to be read at several levels, some people will refer to just the title, others may read only the title and abstract, while those who want a deeper understanding will read the majority, if not all, of the paper.

Most disciplines use the format: title, authors, abstract, key words, introduction, methods, results, discussion, acknowledgements, references and appendices. Certainly MATURITAS uses this format, although it still treats appendices carefully as the journal sometimes advocates for separate web and printed versions. Though the headings are standard for most journals, there is some variation, so it is worth checking the guide for authors of the journal you intend to submit your paper to prior to writing. MATURITAS author's instructions are elaborate and provided online at <http://www.maturitas.org/authorinfo>

Before you write the paper you must consider what type of manuscript to submit. MATURITAS has different formats explained in depth to the authors.

Original articles: a full-length report of original basic or clinical investigation. This is the format you likely will submit, but first make sure your manuscript should not follow any of the other formats listed below. The original article should have abstract in a single paragraph with no subheadings, 250 words maximum is required. This should be comprehensible to readers before they read the article. Avoid abbreviations and reference citations. The rest of the paper should be structured as follows: Introduction, Materials and methods, Results, Discussion, Acknowledgements, References. MATURITAS gives priority to reports of original research that are likely to change clinical practice or thinking about a disease. Submission of randomized controlled trials requires inclusion of a checklist and flowchart in accordance with the CONSORT guidelines and the registration number of the trial and the name of the trial registry.

Short communications: these must not exceed 1,000 words with no more than one table or illustration and five references. An abstract of no more than 100 words is required, presented in a single paragraph with no subheadings. The text should be structured in four parts: Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion.

Review articles: a comprehensive review of prior publications relating to an important clinical subject. An abstract of no more than 250 words is required, presented in a single paragraph with no subheadings. The Introduction should indicate why the topic is important and should state the specific objective(s) of the review. The Conclusion should include the clinical implications and observations regarding the need for additional research. Systematic reviews should follow the PRISMA guidelines. Meta-analysis of observational studies should follow the MOOSE guidelines.

Further information can be obtained from the EQUATOR web site: <http://www.equator-network.org/resource-centre/library-of-health-research-reporting/reporting-guidelines>

Guest editorials must not exceed 1,000 words and five references.

Letters to the Editor: a question or challenge to an article published recently in Maturitas. Letters must be received within 6 weeks of publication of the article to which they refer and should be no longer than 250 words.

General Section Purpose

- **Title** Clearly describes contents
- **Authors** Ensures recognition for the writer/s
- **Abstract** Describes what was done
- **Key Words (some journals)** Ensures the article is correctly identified in abstracting and indexing services
- **Introduction** Explains the problem
- **Methods** Explains how the data were collected
- **Results** Describes what was discovered
- **Discussion** Discusses the implications of the findings
- **Acknowledgements** Ensures those who helped in the research are recognized
- **References** Ensures previously published work is recognized
- **Appendices (some journals)** Provides supplemental data for the expert reader

How to write a scientific paper

Style and language

It is important to refer to the journal's author guide for notes on style. Some authors write their paper with a specific journal in mind, while others write the paper and then adapt it to fit the style of a journal they subsequently choose. Regardless of your preference, there are some fundamentals that remain true throughout the process of writing a scientific paper. The objective is to report your findings and conclusions clearly, and concisely as possible, try to avoid embellishment with unnecessary words or phrases.

The use of the active voice will shorten sentence length. For example, "glucose was consumed by the mouse embryo.." is in the passive voice, by changing to the active voice it can be shortened to "the embryo consumed glucose..". It is preferable to avoid using abbreviations in the text except for units of measure. The following shows how tenses are most often used in science writing: For known facts and hypotheses the present tense should be used e.g. "The average duration of pregnancy in the mouse is 20 days ..."

When you refer to experiments you have conducted, the past tense should be used. e.g. "All the mouse embryos were maintained in an environment with a consistent temperature of 37°C...."

When you describe the results of an experiment, the past tense should be used. e.g. "The average duration of culture of mouse embryos in our contained environment was five days...."

If English is not your first language it is recommended that a native English speaker review the paper before you submit it for publication. However, not every native English speaker is fluent in written scientific English. Consult a professional editing service if you can. There are many now available online at reasonable rates. Submitting a well written text is a good step on the way of a fair and fast review.

Authors

The listing of authors should only include those who have made an intellectual contribution to the research, who will publicly defend the data and conclusions, and who have approved the final version. The order in which the names of the authors appear can vary from discipline to discipline, in some fields the corresponding author's name appears first. This is also the case in MATURITAS.

Submission of an article to MATURITAS implies that the work described has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis), that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere including electronically in the same form, in English or in any other language, without the written consent of the copyright-holder. It is mandatory for the submitting person to include an Author Declaration to this effect as part of the submission. The Author Declaration can be downloaded from the MATURITAS website at the time of submission.

Submission of multi-authored manuscripts to MATURITAS requires the consent of each author as stated in the Author Declaration. All authors and all contributors (including medical writers and editors) must specify their individual contributions at the end of the text. It is important to understand 'conflicts of interest'. This will be discussed at the course.

Title

A title should describe the paper's content clearly and precisely, and allow the reader to decide whether it would be appropriate to consult the paper further or not. The title is the advertisement for the article - a poorly titled paper may never reach its target audience, so be specific. It is advisable to omit unnecessary words such as "A study of ...", "Investigations of ...", "Observations on ...", etc. Do not use abbreviations and jargon. It is also worth noting that indexing and abstracting services depend on the accuracy of the title, extracting keywords from it that are used in cross-referencing. We advise to first draft several potential titles. Do not select a final title until the paper is written and has been revised a few times. The most obvious title is the one which is clear, short and reflects the content.

Keyword List

Some journals like MATURITAS request a keyword list; this provides the opportunity to add important words, in addition to those already present in the title. Appropriate choice of keywords will increase the likelihood of your paper being located by other researchers, these words are utilised by the indexing and abstracting services.

Abstract

The abstract should briefly summarise, in one paragraph (which may vary from 50-300 words), the problem, the method, the results, and the conclusions.

The Title is the simplest statement about the content of your article, in contrast the Abstract allows you to elaborate on each major section of the paper. The abstract should give sufficient detail so that the professional reader can decide whether or not to read the whole article. Together, the title and the abstract should stand on their own, as they are published in abstracting services. For this

reason it is advisable not to include references to figures or tables in the abstract. Many authors write the abstract last so that it accurately reflects the content of the paper. It is essential to understand the importance of the abstract. It is estimated that the majority of professional readers will only read the title and the abstract of the average article. Summary - MATURITAS requires a summary for lay readers of 250 words maximum. This must be understandable to a wider lay public and to patients. This summary is available in a special section on the journal homepage. It can be based on the Abstract, but all complex terms must be described simply. The summary must be included at submission in a separate file.

Introduction

The introduction should be brief, ideally one to two paragraphs long. It should clearly state the problem being investigated, the background that explains the problem, and the reasons for conducting the research. Summarize relevant research to provide context, state how your work differs from published work, importantly what questions you are answering. Explain what findings of others, if any, you are challenging or extending. Briefly describe your experiment, hypothesis (es), research question(s); general experimental design or method. Lengthy interpretations should be left until the Discussion.

Methods

("Materials and Methods" or "Experimental Methods") The key purpose of this section is to provide the reader enough details so they can replicate your research. Explain how you studied the problem, identify the procedures you followed, and order these chronologically where possible. If your methods are new, they will need to be explained in detail, otherwise name the method and cite the previously published work, unless you have modified the method, in which case reference the original work and include the amendments. Identify the equipment and describe materials used, specify the source if there is variation in quality of materials. Include the frequency of observations, what type of data were recorded, be precise in describing measurements and include errors of measurement. Name any statistical tests used so that your numerical results can be validated. It is advisable to use the past tense, and avoid using the first person, though this will vary from journal to journal. When not using the first person, it may be necessary to use the passive voice, for example, "The solution was heated to 100oC" instead of, "We heated the solution to 100oC".

Results

In this section you objectively present your findings, and explain in words what was found. This is where you show that your new results are contributing to the body of scientific knowledge, so it is important to be clear and lay them out in a logical sequence. Raw data are rarely included in a scientific paper; instead the data are analyzed and presented in the form of figures (graphs), tables, and/or descriptions of observations. It is important to clearly identify to the reader any important trends. The Results section should follow a logical sequence based on the Table and Figures that best presents the findings that answer the question or hypothesis being investigated. Tables and Figures are assigned numbers separately, and should be in the sequence that you will refer to them from the text. Figures should have a brief description (a legend), providing the reader sufficient information to know how the data were produced. It is important not to interpret your results - this should be done in the "Discussion" section.

Discussion

In this section you describe what your results mean, specifically in context of what was already known about the subject of the investigation. You should link back to the introduction by way of the question(s) or hypotheses posed. You should indicate how the results relate to expectations and to the literature previously cited, whether they support or contradict previous theories. Most significantly the Discussion should explain how the research has moved the body of scientific knowledge forward. It is important not to extend your conclusions beyond what is directly supported by your results, so avoid undue speculation. It is advisable to suggest practical applications of your results, and outline what would be the next steps in your study.

Acknowledgements

This section should be brief and include individuals who have assisted with your study, including, financial supporters, proofreaders, typists, suppliers who may have provided materials free of charge, etc.

References

Whenever you draw upon previously published work, you must acknowledge the source. Any information not from your experiment and not "common knowledge" should be recognised by a citation. How citations are presented varies considerably from discipline to discipline and you should refer to notes for authors for the specific journal. Quotes that appear in the article, if long, should have their own indented paragraph, otherwise if they are in the natural flow of the article should be within speech marks, and in both cases they should include a reference. Avoid references that are difficult to find, and/or refer to papers not written in the language of the journal to which you are submitting your paper. The References section that appears at the end of the paper includes all references cited in your paper. This is in contrast to a bibliography, common in books, where works read but not necessarily cited in the text are listed. The order in which references are presented also varies from journal to journal and you should consult the journal's notes for authors.

Appendices

Typically raw data are not included in a scientific paper, however if you believe the data would be useful they can be included in an appendix. Increasingly this is becoming more common as journals move to an online environment and the cost of including supplemental information is lowered. At this moment MATURITAS line has no clear policies about appendices. We encourage long manuscripts only if the findings warrant extensive support. The web-version can be longer than the printed version of MATURITAS if the editorial team supports this.

Appendices can include raw data tables, video footage, photographs, or complex 3D models. If you have more than one set of materials to include, give each a separate number e.g. Appendix 1, Appendix 2, etc.

Further Reading

Davis, Martha (2005) "Scientific Papers and Presentations", 2nd Edition. Academic Press (ISBN 0-12-088424-0)
 Grossman, Michael (2004) "Writing and Presenting Scientific Papers", 2nd edition, Nottingham University Press, (ISBN 1-897676-12-3).
 Clare, J & Hamilton, H (2003) "Writing research transforming Data into Text", Churchill Livingstone (ISBN 0443071829).

Introduction

Maturitas is an international multidisciplinary peer reviewed scientific journal of midlife health and beyond publishing original research, reviews, consensus statements and guidelines. The scope encompasses all aspects of postreproductive health in both genders ranging from basic science to health and social care.

Maturitas will publish in the following areas:

- **predictors, effects and management of chronic diseases**
- **sex steroid deficiency in both genders**
- **epidemiology, health and social care**
- **therapeutic advances**
- **complementary and alternative medicines**

We offer *Fast Track* publication for clinical trials and research articles which present ground-breaking results that justify rapid dissemination. Articles accepted through this route can expect less than 8 weeks editorial time from submission to publication online. Articles submitted for this route will be checked by the Editor-in-Chief to determine if the criterion for fast publication has been met; if not, articles will be redirected to the normal route of category article.

New Investigators may also apply for the New Investigator Prize Paper Award. For more information please see <http://www.maturitas.org/webfiles/images/journals/MAT/prizepaper.pdf>

Types of Papers

Original articles: a full-length report of original basic or clinical investigation (2000-3000 words, up to 30 references). A structured abstract of no more than 250 words with the following sections (objectives, study design, main outcome measures, results, conclusions) is required. The rest of the paper should be structured as follows: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, References. Maturitas gives priority to reports of original research that are likely to change clinical practice or thinking about a disease. We offer fast-track peer review and publication of randomized controlled trials that we judge of importance to practice or research (see Fast-track publication). We invite submission of all clinical trials, whether Phase I, II, or III.

Submission of randomized controlled trials requires inclusion of a checklist and flowchart in accordance with the CONSORT guidelines and the registration number of the trial and the name of the trial registry. Studies of diagnostic accuracy must be reported according to STARD guidelines. Observational studies (cohort, case-control, or cross-sectional designs) must be reported according to the STROBE statement (see also www.strobe-statement.org)

Short communications: must not exceed 1,000 words with no more than one table or illustration and five references. An unstructured abstract of no more than 100 words is required. The text should be structured in four parts: Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion.

Review articles: a comprehensive review of prior publications relating to an important clinical subject (2000-3000 words and 30-50 references). An unstructured abstract of no more than 250

words is required. The Introduction should indicate why the topic is important and should state the specific objective(s) of the review. The Conclusion should include the clinical implications and observations regarding the need for additional research. Systematic reviews should follow the PRISMA guidelines. Meta-analysis of observational studies should follow the MOOSE guidelines.

Further information can be obtained from the EQUATOR web site: <http://www.equator-network.org/resource-centre/library-of-health-research-reporting/reporting-guidelines>

Guest editorials must not exceed 1,000 words and five references.

Letters to the Editor: a question or challenge to an article published recently in Maturitas. Letters must be received within 6 weeks of publication of the article to which they refer and should be no longer than 250 words.

Contact Details for Submission

Submission of manuscripts proceeds entirely online at <http://ees.elsevier.com/maturitas>
 Authors may send queries concerning the submission process, manuscript status, or journal procedures to the Maturitas Editorial Office at mat@elsevier.com.

Before You Begin

Ethics in Publishing

For information on Ethics in Publishing and Ethical guidelines for journal publication see <http://www.elsevier.com/authorethics> and <http://www.elsevier.com/ethicalguidelines>

Policy and Ethics

The work described in your article must have been carried out in accordance with

The Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association (Declaration of Helsinki) for experiments involving humans, <http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm>;

EC Directive 86/609/EEC for animal experiments, <http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/s23000.htm>;

Uniform Requirements for manuscripts submitted to Biomedical journals, <http://www.nejm.org/general/text/requirements/1.htm>

This must be stated at an appropriate point in the article.

Conflict of Interest

All authors are requested to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest including any financial, personal or other relationships with other people or organizations within three years of beginning the submitted work that could inappropriately influence, or be perceived to influence, their work. See also <http://www.elsevier.com/conflictsofinterest>.

Plagiarism

Submission of an article implies that the work described has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis), that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, without the written consent of the copyright-holder.

Contributors

Submission of multi-authored manuscripts to this journal requires the consent of each author and all have to sign the covering letter. All authors of, and all contributors (including medical writers and editors) must specify their individual contributions at the end of the text. The following format is suggested: 'I declare that I participated in the (here list contributions made to the study) and that I have seen and approved the final version. I have the following conflicts of interest' (list here all relevant conflicts and source of funding). This should be listed in the 'Comments' field in EES.

Changes to Authorship

This policy concerns the addition, deletion, or rearrangement of author names in the authorship of accepted manuscripts:

Before the accepted manuscript is published in an online issue: Requests to add or remove an author, or to rearrange the author names, must be sent to the Journal Manager from the corresponding author of the accepted manuscript and must include: (a) the reason the name should be added or removed, or the author names rearranged and (b) written confirmation (e-mail, fax, letter) from all authors that they agree with the addition, removal or rearrangement. In the case of addition or removal of authors, this includes confirmation from the author being added or removed. Requests that are not sent by the corresponding author will be forwarded by the Journal Manager to the corresponding author, who must follow the procedure as described above. Note that: (1) Journal Managers will inform the Journal Editors of any such requests and (2) publication of the accepted manuscript in an online issue is suspended until authorship has been agreed.

After the accepted manuscript is published in an online issue: Any requests to add, delete, or rearrange author names in an article published in an online issue will follow the same policies as noted above and result in a corrigendum.

Copyright

Upon acceptance of an article, authors will be asked to sign a 'Journal Publishing Agreement' (for more information on this and copyright see <http://www.elsevier.com/copyright>). Acceptance of the agreement will ensure the widest possible dissemination of information. An e-mail (or letter) will be sent to the corresponding author confirming receipt of the manuscript together with a 'Journal Publishing Agreement' form or a link to the online version of this agreement.

Subscribers may reproduce tables of contents or prepare lists of articles including abstracts for internal circulation within their institutions. Permission of the Publisher is required for resale or distribution outside the institution and for all other derivative works, including compilations and translations (please consult <http://www.elsevier.com/permissions>). If excerpts from other copyrighted works are included, the author(s) must obtain written permission from the copyright owners and credit the source(s) in the article. Elsevier has preprinted forms for use by authors in these cases: please consult <http://www.elsevier.com/permissions>.

Retained Author Rights

As an author you (or your employer or institution) retain certain rights; for details you are referred to: <http://www.elsevier.com/authorsrights>

Role of the Funding Source

You are requested to identify who provided financial support for the conduct of the research and/or preparation of the article and to briefly describe the role of the sponsor(s), if any, in study design; in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data; in the writing of the report; and in the decision to

submit the paper for publication. If the funding source(s) had no such involvement then this should be stated. Please see <http://www.elsevier.com/funding>

Funding Body Agreements and Policies

Elsevier has established agreements and developed policies to allow authors whose articles appear in journals published by Elsevier, to comply with potential manuscript archiving requirements as specified as conditions of their grant awards. To learn more about existing agreements and policies please visit <http://www.elsevier.com/fundingbodies>

Language Services

Authors who require information about language editing and copyediting services pre- and post-submission please visit <http://www.elsevier.com/languagepolishing> or contact authorsupport@elsevier.com for more information. Please note Elsevier neither endorses nor takes responsibility for any products, goods or services offered by outside vendors through our services or in any advertising. For more information please refer to our Terms & Conditions: <http://www.elsevier.com/termsandconditions>

Patient Details

Unless you have written permission from the patient (or, where applicable, the next of kin), personal details of patient included in any part of the article and in any supplementary materials (including all illustrations and videos) must be removed before submission. For further information see <http://www.elsevier.com/patientphotographs>

Submission

Submission to this journal proceeds totally online. Use the following guidelines to prepare your article. Via the homepage of this journal (<http://www.elsevier.com/maturitas>) you will be guided stepwise through the creation and uploading of the various files. The system automatically converts source files to a single Adobe Acrobat PDF version of the article, which is used in the peer-review process. Please note that even though manuscript source files are converted to PDF at submission for the review process, these source files are needed for further processing after acceptance. All correspondence, including notification of the Editor's decision and requests for revision, takes place by e-mail and via the Author's homepage, removing the need for a hard-copy paper trail.

Referees

To expedite the review process Authors are required to provide the editorial office with the names and email addresses of 4 potential referees that are able to competently review the article submitted for possible publication. The referees are not to be associated with or involved with the article in any way or be from the same institution as the author(s) involved with the article.

Preparation

Language

Please write your text in good English (American or British usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these). Italics are not to be used for expressions of Latin origin, for example, *in vivo*, *et al.*, *per se*. Use decimal points (not commas); use a space for thousands (10 000 and above).

It is important that the file be saved in the native format of the wordprocessor used. The text should be in single-column format. Keep the layout of the text as simple as possible. Most formatting codes will be removed and replaced on processing the article. In particular, do not use the wordprocessor's options to justify text or to hyphenate words. However, do use bold face,

italics, subscripts, superscripts etc. Do not embed 'graphically designed' equations or tables, but prepare these using the wordprocessor's facility. When preparing tables, if you are using a table grid, use only one grid for each individual table and not a grid for each row. If no grid is used, use tabs, not spaces, to align columns. The electronic text should be prepared in a way very similar to that of conventional manuscripts (see also the Guide to Publishing with Elsevier:

<http://www.elsevier.com/guidepublication>). Do not import the figures into the text file but, instead, indicate their approximate locations directly in the electronic text and on the manuscript. See also the section on Electronic Artwork.

To avoid unnecessary errors you are strongly advised to use the 'spell-check' and 'grammar-check' functions of your wordprocessor.

If the LaTeX file is suitable, proofs will be produced without rekeying the text. The article should preferably be written using Elsevier's document class 'elsart', or alternatively the standard document class 'article'.

The Elsevier LaTeX package (including detailed instructions for LaTeX preparation) can be obtained from the Quickguide: <http://www.elsevier.com/latex>. It consists of the files: elsart.cls, guidelines for users of elsart, a template file for quick start, and the instruction booklet 'Preparing articles with LaTeX'.

Subdivision - numbered sections

Divide your article into clearly defined and numbered sections. Subsections should be numbered 1.1 (then 1.1.1, 1.1.2, ...), 1.2, etc. (the abstract is not included in section numbering). Use this numbering also for internal cross-referencing: do not just refer to 'the text'. Any subsection may be given a brief heading. Each heading should appear on its own separate line.

Introduction

The Introduction should describe the question addressed by the report and must state the objective of the research. The literature review should be relevant but not detailed.

Materials and Methods

The Methods section should describe the research methodology in sufficient detail that others could reasonably be expected to be able to duplicate the work. However, if the methodology has been previously published, the appropriate reference should be cited, and a full description is not required. Methods of statistical analysis should be identified and, when appropriate, the basis for their selection stated. Statistical software programs used should be cited in the text. P values should be expressed to no more than three decimal places. Reports in which statistical difference is lacking must provide some indication of the study's power to detect such differences, and this information must be included in the abstract.

Results

The Results section should present the findings in appropriate detail. Tables and figures may be used, but duplication between text and tables or figures is to be avoided.

Discussion

The Discussion section should be used to critically appraise the implications of the findings and to compare them with those of other studies. Repetition of the results section should be avoided.

Conclusion

The main conclusions of the study may be presented in a short Conclusion section, which may stand alone or form a subsection of a Discussion or Results and Discussion section.

Essential Title Page Information

Title. Concise and informative. Titles are often used in information-retrieval systems. Avoid abbreviations and formulae where possible.

Author names and affiliations. Where the family name may be ambiguous (e.g., a double name), please indicate this clearly. Present the authors' affiliation addresses (where the actual work was done) below the names. Indicate all affiliations with a lower-case superscript letter immediately after the author's name and in front of the appropriate address. Provide the full postal address of each affiliation, including the country name, and, if available, the e-mail address of each author.

Corresponding author. Clearly indicate who is willing to handle correspondence at all stages of refereeing and publication, also post-publication. **Ensure that telephone and fax numbers (with country and area code) are provided in addition to the e-mail address and the complete postal address.**

Present/permanent address. If an author has moved since the work described in the article was done, or was visiting at the time, a 'Present address' (or 'Permanent address') may be indicated as a footnote to that author's name. The address at which the author actually did the work must be retained as the main, affiliation address. Superscript Arabic numerals are used for such footnotes.

Abstract

A concise and factual abstract is required. The abstract should state briefly the purpose of the research, the principal results and major conclusions. An abstract is often presented separate from the article, so it must be able to stand alone. For this reason, References should be avoided, but if essential, they must be cited in full, without reference to the reference list. Also, non-standard or uncommon abbreviations should be avoided, but if essential they must be defined at their first mention in the abstract itself.

Keywords

Immediately after the abstract, provide a maximum of 6 keywords, using American spelling and avoiding general and plural terms and multiple concepts (avoid, for example, 'and', 'of'). Be sparing with abbreviations: only abbreviations firmly established in the field may be eligible. These keywords will be used for indexing purposes.

Abbreviations

Define abbreviations that are not standard in this field in a footnote to be placed on the first page of the article. Such abbreviations that are unavoidable in the abstract must be defined at their first mention there, as well as in the footnote. Ensure consistency of abbreviations throughout the article.

Acknowledgements

Collate acknowledgements in a separate section at the end of the article before the references and do not, therefore, include them on the title page, as a footnote to the title or otherwise. List here those individuals who provided help during the research (e.g., providing language help, writing assistance or proofreading the article, etc.). Persons who have contributed intellectually to the paper but whose contributions do not justify authorship may be named and their function or contribution described, e.g. 'scientific adviser', 'data collections', or 'participation in clinical trial'. Such persons must have given their permission to be named. Authors are responsible for obtaining written permission from the persons acknowledged by name, because readers may infer their endorsement of the data and conclusions.

Nomenclature and Units

Follow internationally accepted rules and conventions: use the international system of units (SI). If other quantities are mentioned, give their equivalent in SI. You are urged to consult IUB: Biochemical Nomenclature and Related Documents: <http://www.chem.qmw.ac.uk/iubmb/> for further information.

GenBank

DNA sequences and GenBank Accession numbers: Many Elsevier journals cite 'gene accession numbers' in their running text and footnotes. Gene accession numbers refer to genes or DNA sequences about which further information can be found in the databases at the National Center for Biotechnical Information (NCBI) at the National Library of Medicine. Authors are encouraged to check accession numbers used very carefully. **An error in a letter or number can result in a dead link.** Note that in the final version of the **electronic copy**, the accession number text will be linked to the appropriate source in the NCBI databases enabling readers to go directly to that source from the article.

Footnotes

Footnotes should be used sparingly. Number them consecutively throughout the article, using superscript Arabic numbers. Many wordprocessors build footnotes into the text, and this feature may be used. Should this not be the case, indicate the position of footnotes in the text and present the footnotes themselves separately at the end of the article. Do not include footnotes in the Reference list. Table footnotes: indicate each footnote in a table with a superscript lowercase letter.

Electronic Artwork

General points:

- **Make sure you use uniform lettering and sizing of your original artwork.**
- **Save text in illustrations as "graphics" or enclose the font.**
- **Only use the following fonts in your illustrations: Arial, Courier, Helvetica, Times, Symbol.**
- **Number the illustrations according to their sequence in the text.**
- **Use a logical naming convention for your artwork files.**
- **Use a logical naming convention for your artwork files, and supply a separate listing of the files and the software used.**
- **Provide captions to illustrations separately.**
- **Produce images near to the desired size of the printed version.**

A detailed guide on electronic artwork is available on our website: <http://www.elsevier.com/artworkinstructions>.

You are urged to visit this site; some excerpts from the detailed information are given here.

Formats. Regardless of the application used, when your electronic artwork is finalised, please 'save as' or convert the images to one of the following formats. (Note the resolution requirements for line drawings, halftones, and line/halftone combinations given below.):

EPS: Vector drawings. Embed the font or save the text as 'graphics'.

TIFF: Colour or greyscale photographs (halftones): always use a minimum of 300 dpi.

TIFF: Bitmapped line drawings: use a minimum of 1000 dpi.

TIFF: Combinations bitmapped line/half-tone (colour or greyscale): a minimum of 500 dpi is required.

DOC, XLS or PPT: If your electronic artwork is created in any of these Microsoft Office applications please supply 'as is'.

Please do not:

- **Supply embedded graphics in your wordprocessor (spreadsheet, presentation) document;**
- **Supply files that are optimised for screen use (like GIF, BMP, PICT, WPG); the resolution is too low;**
- **Supply files that are too low in resolution;**
- **Submit graphics that are disproportionately large for the content.**

Color Artwork

Please make sure that artwork files are in an acceptable format (TIFF, EPS or MS Office files) and with the correct resolution. If, together with your accepted article, you submit usable colour figures then Elsevier will ensure, at no additional charge, that these figures will appear in colour on the Web (e.g., ScienceDirect and other sites) regardless of whether or not these illustrations are reproduced in colour in the printed version. For colour reproduction in print, you will receive information regarding the costs from Elsevier after receipt of your accepted article. Please indicate your preference for colour in print or on the Web only. For further information on the preparation of electronic artwork, please see <http://www.elsevier.com/artworkinstructions>

Please note: Because of technical complications which can arise by converting colour figures to 'grey scale' (for the printed version should you not opt for colour in print) please submit in addition usable black and white versions of all the colour illustrations.

Figure Captions

Ensure that each illustration has a caption. Supply captions separately, not attached to the figure. A caption should comprise a brief title (**not** on the figure itself) and a description of the illustration. Keep text in the illustrations themselves to a minimum but explain all symbols and abbreviations used.

Tables

Number tables consecutively in accordance with their appearance in the text. Place footnotes to tables below the table body and indicate them with superscript lowercase letters. Avoid vertical rules. Be sparing in the use of tables and ensure that the data presented in tables do not duplicate results described elsewhere in the article.

References

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of references. The 'Vancouver' style is used. References appearing for the first time in a table or figure should be cited in the text where the table or figure is mentioned. References cited must have been published in peer-reviewed publications.

Citations in text

Please ensure that every reference cited in the text is also present in the reference list (and vice versa). Any references cited in the abstract must be given in full. Unpublished results and personal communications are not recommended in the reference list, but may be mentioned in the text. If these references are included in the reference list they should follow the standard reference style of the journal and should include a substitution of the publication date with either 'Unpublished results' or 'Personal communication'. Citation of a reference as 'in press' implies that the item has been accepted for publication.

Web References

As a minimum, the full URL should be given. Any further information, if known (DOI, author names, dates, reference to a source publication, etc.), should also be given. Web references can be listed separately (e.g., after the reference list) under a different heading if desired, or can be included in the reference list.

Reference Style

Text: Indicate references by number(s) in square brackets in line with the text. The actual authors can be referred to, but the reference number(s) must always be given.

List: Number the references (numbers in square brackets) in the list in the order in which they appear in the text.

Examples:

Reference to a journal publication:

[1] Van der Geer J, Hanraads JAJ, Lupton RA. The art of writing a scientific article. *J Sci Commun* 2000;163:51-9.

Reference to a book:

[2] Strunk Jr W, White EB. The elements of style. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan; 1979.

Reference to a chapter in an edited book:

[3] Mettam GR, Adams LB. How to prepare an electronic version of your article. In: Jones BS, Smith RZ, editors. Introduction to the electronic age, New York: E-Publishing Inc; 1999, p. 281-304.

Note shortened form for last page number. e.g., 51-9, and that for more than 6 authors the first 6 should be listed followed by 'et al.' For further details you are referred to 'Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts submitted to Biomedical Journals' (*J Am Med Assoc* 1997;277:927-934) (see also http://www.nlm.nih.gov/tsd/serials/terms_cond.html)

Journal Abbreviations

Journal names should be abbreviated according to

Index Medicus journal abbreviations: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/tsd/serials/lji.html>;

List of serial title word abbreviations: <http://www.issn.org/en/node/344>;

CAS (Chemical Abstracts Service): <http://www.cas.org/sent.html>

Supplementary Materials

Elsevier accepts electronic supplementary material to support and enhance your scientific research. Supplementary files offer the author additional possibilities to publish supporting applications, movies, animation sequences, high-resolution images, background datasets, sound clips and more. Supplementary files supplied will be published online alongside the electronic version of your article in Elsevier Web products, including ScienceDirect: <http://www.sciencedirect.com>. In order to ensure that your submitted material is directly usable, please ensure that data is provided in one of our recommended file formats. Authors should submit the material in electronic format together with the article and supply a concise and descriptive caption for each file. For more detailed instructions please visit our artwork instruction pages at <http://www.elsevier.com/artworkinstructions>.

Submission Checklist

It is hoped that this list will be useful during the final checking of an article prior to sending it to the journal's Editor for review. Please consult this Guide for Authors for further details of any item.

Ensure that the following items are present:

One Author designated as corresponding Author:

- E-mail address
- Full postal address
- Telephone and fax numbers

All necessary files have been uploaded:

- Keywords
- All figure captions
- All tables (including title, description, footnotes)

Further considerations:

- Manuscript has been "spellchecked" and "grammar-checked"
- References are in the correct format for this journal
- All references mentioned in the Reference list are cited in the text, and vice versa
- Permission has been obtained for use of copyrighted material from other sources (including the Web)
- Colour figures are clearly marked as being intended for colour reproduction on the Web (free of charge) and in print or to be reproduced in colour on the Web (free of charge) and in black-and-white in print .
- If only colour on the Web is required, black and white versions of the figures are also supplied for printing purposes

For any further information please contact the Author Support Department at authorsupport@elsevier.com

After Acceptance

Use of the Digital Object Identifier (DOI)

The Digital Object Identifier (DOI) may be used to cite and link to electronic documents. The DOI consists of a unique alpha-numeric character string which is assigned to a document by the publisher upon the initial electronic publication. The assigned DOI never changes. Therefore, it is an ideal medium for citing a document, particularly 'Articles in press' because they have not yet received their full bibliographic information. The correct format for citing a DOI is shown as follows (example taken from a document in the journal Physics Letters B):

doi:10.1016/j.physletb.2003.10.071

When you use the DOI to create URL hyperlinks to documents on the web, they are guaranteed never to change.

Proofs

One set of page proofs in PDF format will be sent by e-mail to the corresponding author (if we do not have an e-mail address then paper proofs will be sent by post). Elsevier now sends PDF proofs which can be annotated; for this you will need to download Adobe Reader© version 7 (or higher) available free from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>. Instructions on how to annotate PDF files will accompany the proofs. The exact system requirements are given at the Adobe site:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/acrrsystemreqs.html#70win>.

If you do not wish to use the PDF annotations function, you may list the corrections (including replies to the Query Form) and return to Elsevier in an e-mail. Please list your corrections quoting line number. If, for any reason, this is not possible, then mark the corrections and any other comments (including replies to the Query Form) on a printout of your proof and return by fax, or scan the pages and e-mail, or by post. Please use this proof only for checking the typesetting, editing, completeness and correctness of the text, tables and figures. Significant changes to the article as accepted for publication will only be considered at this stage with permission from the Editor. We will do everything possible to get your article published quickly and accurately. Therefore, it is important to ensure that all of your corrections are sent back to us in one communication: please check carefully before replying, as inclusion of any subsequent corrections cannot be guaranteed. Proofreading is solely your responsibility. Note that Elsevier may proceed with the publication of your article if no response is received.

Offprints

The corresponding author, at no cost, will be provided with a PDF file of the article via e-mail. The PDF file is a watermarked version of the published article and includes a cover sheet with the journal cover image and a disclaimer outlining the terms and conditions of use. Additional paper offprints can be ordered by the authors. An order form with prices will be sent to the corresponding author.

Author Inquiries

For enquiries relating to the submission of articles (including electronic submission where available) please visit this journal's homepage. You can track accepted articles at

<http://www.elsevier.com/trackarticle> and set up e-mail alerts to inform you of when an article's status has changed. Also accessible from here is information on copyright, frequently asked questions and more. Contact details for questions arising after acceptance of an article, especially those relating to proofs, will be provided by the publisher.

Important websites for our authors

Maturitas Online Submission
ees.elsevier.com/mat

Elsevier Authors Homepage
www.elsevier.com/authors

Journal Homepage
www.maturitas.org