

## International Journal of Public Health

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS**

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## 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

The International Journal of Public Health (IJPH) is an independent society journal of the Swiss School of Public Health (SSPH+). It publishes Open Access with Frontiers since January 2021.

### 1.1 Contacts

For inquiries related to the submission platform and process, the progress of peer review, Calls for papers and article production, please contact the publisher office: [IJPH@ssph-journal.org](mailto:IJPH@ssph-journal.org)

For all other queries, and if you would like to feature your accepted article in the IJPH blog or social media channels, please contact the IJPH Editorial Office: [ijph@swisstph.ch](mailto:ijph@swisstph.ch).

Due to the large interest, the IJPH editors cannot advise interested authors on the suitability of a manuscript before submission. In section 4 you can find helpful information.

### 1.2 Article Processing Charges (APC)

APC comprise of the production costs of the publisher and the editorial costs of the owner, the Swiss School of Public Health (SSPH+). The SSPH+ discounts the editorial costs for first authors from low and middle income countries according to the [research4life](#) country classification (group A and B countries). APC must be confirmed during submission and are due after acceptance for publication:

Article type	APC (CHF)		
	regular	group A	group B
Original Article	2'300	1'400	1'800
Review	2'300	1'400	1'800
Hints&Kinks	1'700	1'100	1'400
Editorial*	1'000	900	900
Commentary*	1'000	900	900
Young Researcher Editorial	free	free	free

\*free for invited authors

The above fees and discounts are valid for articles submitted on or after February 1, 2021. APCs may be subject to periodic revision. The invoiced APC is the one valid at the time of manuscript submission.

### 1.3 Licensing

All articles are published under a [CC-BY 4.0 license](#). Authors hold the copyright of the published article. Authors who are not allowed to hold the copyright (for example, authors affiliated with the US government or Commonwealth governments, or WHO), should contact the IJPH Publishers Office ([ijph@ssph-journal.org](mailto:ijph@ssph-journal.org)) for adaptations to copyright during or immediately after submission of the article. No changes to the copyright are possible after the publication of an article.

If you are not sure if you or your employer owns the copyright, you should check that you have the legal right to grant the CC-BY license.

### 1.4 Open data policy

IJPH encourages authors to make their datasets on which the conclusions of the paper rely available to readers as Supplementary Material or in publicly available repositories. The publisher Frontiers' provides general information, please see the links below:

- [List of Repositories](#)
- [Research Data Policy](#)

General repositories - for all types of research data - such as Figshare and Dryad may also be used.

During submission, authors will be requested to reply to a series of questions on the availability of the data used for the research. Based on your answers, a data availability statement will be generated and added to your manuscript. How data sets with DOI are cited in the reference list is explained in section 5.7.

## 2 ARTICLE TYPES

Manuscripts should be written in view of the submission to a specific article type. All IJPH format requirements detailed in this section and in section 4.3 should be fully adopted. We encourage authors to refer to the reporting guidelines for health research hosted by the EQUATOR network when preparing their manuscript. Checklists are available for a number of study designs here: <http://www.equator-network.org/>.

### 2.1 Peer reviewed

- **Original Articles** (4'000 words max. without reference list, tables and figures; structured Abstract of 180 words max., about 40 references, up to 6 figures and tables max). Original Articles report on original quantitative or qualitative research. The structure is Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion. The structure of the Abstract is Objectives, Methods, Results, Conclusion
- **Research Reviews** should concentrate on the most recent developments in the field. Authors should confirm during submission in the "Contribution to the Field" section (appearing during the online submission) that the topic was not covered recently by a Review in IJPH or in another journal. Literature searches for all Reviews should be systematic and comprehensive. Reviews may or may not include a meta - analysis or statistical summary of the individual study results. Please provide the registration site and number of the Review protocol.

The text body of Reviews should be structured in Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion and should be in the length range of 4000-4500 words (plain text, without reference list), referencing all included studies, and up to 6 figures and tables. The Introduction should put the area into context and define the aim. The Method section should explicitly describe how the studies were identified and selected for inclusion in the review. Search terms, Prisma flow-chart and eligibility criteria should be provided.

The structure of the Abstract is Objectives, Methods, Results, Conclusion

- **Hints and Kinks** are short methodological reports (1'000 words max. without reference list, tables and figures; no abstract required). They report on experience with techniques in a variety of areas and topics, such as writing questions, questionnaire design, survey implementation, or new and original ways to analyse data and show results. Authors are free to structure the text as they like.

### 2.2 Not peer reviewed

- **Editorials** express the author's viewpoint, or explain journal policies (800 words max. (reference list excluded), up to 10 references). Editorials are usually invited by the editors.
- **Commentaries** are short and focused opinion pieces (1'000 words max (reference list excluded), up to 10 references) covering a recent IJPH article or a relevant timely public health issue. Commentaries are usually invited by the editors.
- **Letters to the Editors** are reactions relating to recently published articles in IJPH. Letters should be submitted no later than 3 months after publication of the article. Usually, we invite the authors of the addressed article to write a response to the Letter.
- **Young Researcher Editorial (YRE)** is a capacity-building project for PhD students, offered by the Swiss School of Public Health+. YREs are unsolicited editorials (800 words max, up to 10 references) on topical discussions in public health written by advanced PhD students and first year post-docs from across the world. YREs convey one single, clear message and have a short and catchy title. The YRE editorial team - doctoral students of the Swiss School of Public Health+ - review all YREs. In addition, YREs receive thorough professional content editing after acceptance. The content editing is funded by the Swiss School of Public Health.

YREs are eligible for peer review if they comply with one or more of the following criteria:

- Raise novel issues in public health
- Discuss recent publications or themes addressed in IJPH or elsewhere
- Debate public health science and related policies
- Promote discussions about science careers in public health and related challenges
- Place public health challenges in a broader context
- Address matters of global or multi-regional relevance

Please study the YRE [guidelines](#) before writing a Young Researcher Editorial. Find more information about the YRE project [here](#).

### 3 SECTIONS

#### 3.1 Knowledge Synthesis, Translation and Exchange

This section welcomes all article types. Di Ruggiero (2018) specifies the contents for narrative reviews within this section. Reporting and format requirements for IJPH Reviews and other article types apply (please see above under Article Types).

#### 3.2 Central and Eastern Europe

IJPH encourages authors from Central and Eastern Europe to submit their work. IJPH is dedicated since 2006 to making the increasing Public Health knowledge from Central and Eastern Europe available to the scientific community and promoting the transfer of knowledge in survey, surveillance and health promotion research between East and West. The journal adopts the WHO definition of Eastern Europe comprising the 13 countries that formerly belonged to the USSR and the countries of Central and Oriental Europe that used to belong to the influence zone of the USSR without being part of it and/or had planned economies.

### 4 SUBMISSION – GENERAL INFORMATION

Due to the large interest, the IJPH editors cannot advise interested authors on the suitability of a manuscript before submission.

When considering submission to IJPH, make sure your article fits the [Scope of the journal](#) and the available article types (please see above section 2 “Article Types”).

You may also look into the IJPH archive for related articles to find out more about the suitability of your article for IJPH. The IJPH archive will be made open access with our current publisher in spring 2021. Articles published until December 2020 are available on the [IJPH website](#) of Springer Nature, the previous publisher of IJPH.

Please pay special attention to the title and Abstract of your manuscript (please see 5.2. and 5.3.). The Editors-in-Chief may base their prescreen decisions mainly on the title and Abstract of a submission.

#### 4.1 Implications of manuscript submission

Submission of a manuscript implies that the work or parts of it have not been published before, it is not under peer review or consideration for publication anywhere else and its publication has been approved by all co-authors (if any), as well as by the responsible authorities – tacitly or explicitly – at the institute where the work has been carried out. The publisher, IJPH or SSPH+ will not be held legally responsible should there be any claims for compensation.

**We check all new submissions and revised versions for plagiarism.** For details on ethical author behavior please see section 6.4.

#### 4.2 Permissions

Authors wishing to include figures, tables, or text passages that have already been published elsewhere, are required to obtain permission from the copyright owner(s) for both the print and online format and to include evidence that such permission has been granted when submitting their papers. Any material received without such evidence will be assumed to originate from the authors. Please be aware that some publishers do not grant electronic rights for free and that Frontiers or IJPH will not be able to refund any costs that may have occurred to receive these permissions. In such cases, material from other sources should be used.

#### 4.3 Authors and affiliations

Authorship should be clarified thoroughly before submission. The authors and co-authors and the order of authors should not be altered once the manuscript was submitted. Please follow the guidelines of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (<http://www.icmje.org/>) and include all authors qualifying for authorship, and acknowledge other contributors provided they have agreed.

Provide exact and correct author names separated by commas, as these will be indexed in official archives. Affiliations should be keyed to the author's name with superscript numbers and be listed as follows: Laboratory, Institute, Department, Organization, City, State abbreviation (only for United States, Canada, and Australia), and Country (without detailed address information such as city zip codes or street names).

**Example:**

Maxine Meyer<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Excellence, International University of Science, New York, NY, United States.

#### 4.3.1 Correspondence

The Corresponding Author(s) should be marked with an asterisk in the author list. Provide the exact contact email address of the corresponding author(s) in a separate section.

Example: Max Maximus  
maximus@iustscience.edu

If any authors wish to include a change of address, list the present address(es) below the correspondence details using a unique superscript symbol keyed to the author(s) in the author list.

#### 4.3.2 Equal contributions

The authors who have contributed equally should be marked with a symbol (†) in the author list of the doc/latex and pdf files of the manuscript uploaded at submission.

Standard statements to include in the author list:

Equal contribution	These authors have contributed equally to this work
First authorship	These authors share first authorship
Senior authorship	These authors share senior authorship
Last authorship	These authors share last authorship
Equal contribution & First authorship	These authors have contributed equally to this work and share first authorship
Equal contribution & Senior authorship	These authors have contributed equally to this work and share senior authorship
Equal contribution & Last authorship	These authors have contributed equally to this work and share last authorship

#### 4.3.3 Consortium/Group and Collaborative Authors

Consortium/group authorship should be listed in the manuscript with the other author(s).

In cases where authorship is retained by the consortium/group, the consortium/group should be listed as an author separated by “,” or “and,”. The consortium/group name will appear in the author list, in the citation, and in the copyright. If provided, the consortium/group members will be listed in a separate section at the end of the article.

For the collaborators of the consortium/group to be indexed in PubMed, they do not have to be inserted in the submission system individually. However, in the manuscript itself, provide a section with the name of the consortium/group as the heading followed by the list of collaborators, so they can be tagged accordingly and indexed properly.

**Example:** John Smith, Barbara Smith and The Collaborative Working Group.

In cases where work is presented by the author(s) on behalf of a consortium/group, it should be included in the author list separated with the wording “for” or “on behalf of.” The consortium/group will not retain authorship and will only appear in the author list.

**Example:** John Smith and Barbara Smith on behalf of The Collaborative Working Group.

## 5 SUBMISSION FILES

### 5.1 Text body

The blinded manuscript version should be free from any information that allows the reviewers to identify the authors. Such information may include funding information, self-references and conflict of interest statements.

The manuscript text file should include the article type and the title of the article. For the text body of Original articles and Reviews please use the following main headings: Introduction / Methods / Results/ Discussion / References. Please do not modify the names of these headings, and emphasize them by using large bold fonts. All other headings should be formatted as subheadings of these main headings. For example, Limitations or Conclusions should appear as sub-headings of the Discussion. Please do not use more than three levels of displayed headings and do not number headings.

After the References, provide the tables in consecutive number, along with their captions. After the tables, insert captions of the figures (if any).

Authors of Hints&Kinks articles, Editorials, Commentaries and Letters to the Editor can structure the text freely, except for the mandatory heading References.

### 5.2 Article title

The manuscript title should be concise (20 words max, no abbreviations) avoiding redundant use of terms and, where possible, should be a statement of the main result or conclusion presented in the manuscript. Please consider the [reporting guidelines](#) for manuscript titles.

Creative titles are welcome, but carefully consider if a title might be misinterpreted.

Authors should try to avoid, if possible:

- titles that are a mere question without giving the answer;
- unambitious titles, for example starting with "Towards," "A description of," "A characterization of," "Preliminary study on;"
- vague titles, for example starting with "Role of...," "Link between...," "Effect of..." that do not specify the role, link, or effect;
- include terms that are out of place, for example the taxonomic affiliation apart from species name.

The running title should be a maximum of 5 words in length.

### 5.3 Abstract

In the manuscript file, after the title, and in the online submission field, please provide an Abstract for Original articles and Reviews (180 words max.). Abstracts should be structured into:

- Objectives (stating the context and the purpose of the study- why was it done?)
- Methods (describing how the study was performed and the statistical tests used, sample size, data source, etc.)
- Results (main findings)
- Conclusions (potential implications, international relevance –what do the results mean?)
- Key words (5 to 8 keywords which can be used for indexing purposes. The same keywords have to also be provided during the online submission.

Abbreviations should be explained at first appearance in the Abstract.

Hints&Kinks, Editorials and Commentaries do not require an Abstract.

### 5.4 Text format details

- Use a regular plain font (e.g., 10-point Arial) for text.
- Use the automatic line numbering functions to include continuous line numbers.
- Use the automatic page numbering function to number pages.
- Do not use field functions.
- Use tab stops or other commands for indents, not the space bar.



- Use the table function, not spreadsheets, to make tables.
- Use the equation editor or MathType for equations.
- Apart from the first word of the article title, headings, captions of figures and tables and text sentences, all words begin with lower case letters. Exceptions are names and fixed expressions.
- No bold or underlined characters may be used throughout the text (except bold type for headings).
- Do not use footnotes and endnotes throughout the text. Footnotes are permitted only for tables.
- Please do not add any appendices to the text body but submit additional material Supplementary Material.

## 5.5 Abbreviations

Abbreviations should be defined at first mention in the text body and used consistently thereafter. Abbreviations should not be used in the title and in captions of figures and tables.

## 5.6 Footnotes

Footnotes and endnotes are not allowed in the text body. However, footnotes (not endnotes) can be used for tables and figures. Footnotes to tables and figures should be indicated by superscript lower-case letters (or asterisks for significance values and other statistical data).

## 5.7 References

- Please use Vancouver format
- All citations in the text, figures or tables must be in the reference list and vice-versa.
- The names of the first six authors followed by et al. and the DOI (when available) should be provided.
- The reference list should only include articles that are published or accepted.
- For accepted but unpublished works use "in press" instead of page numbers.
- Data sets that have been deposited to an online repository should be included in the reference list. Include the version and unique identifier when available.
- Website URLs should be included in the reference list
- Any inclusion of verbatim text must be contained in quotation marks and clearly reference the original source.
- Preprints can be cited as long as a DOI or archive URL is available, and the citation clearly mentions that the contribution is a preprint. If a peer-reviewed journal publication for the same preprint exists, the official journal publication is the preferred source.
- Datasets that are assigned digital object identifiers (DOIs) by a data repository may be cited in the reference list. Data citations should include the minimum information recommended by DataCite: authors, title, publisher (repository name), identifier.
  - [DataCite](#)

### 5.7.1 In-text Citations

- Please apply the Vancouver style also for in-text citations.
- In-text citations should be numbered consecutively in order of appearance in the text—identified by Arabic numerals in the parenthesis.

### 5.7.2 References— format examples

- ARTICLE IN A PRINT JOURNAL  
Sondheimer N, Lindquist S. Rnq1: an epigenetic modifier of protein function in yeast. *Mol Cell* (2000) 5:163-72.
- ARTICLE IN AN ONLINE JOURNAL  
Tahimic CGT, Wang Y, Bikle DD. Anabolic effects of IGF-1 signaling on the skeleton. *Front Endocrinol* (2013) 4:6. doi: 10.3389/fendo.2013.00006
- ARTICLE OR CHAPTER IN A BOOK  
Sorenson PW, Caprio JC. "Chemoreception,". In: Evans DH, editor. *The Physiology of Fishes*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press (1998). p. 375-405.

- **BOOK**  
Cowan WM, Jessell TM, Zipursky SL. *Molecular and Cellular Approaches to Neural Development*. New York: Oxford University Press (1997). 345 p.
- **ABSTRACT**  
Christensen S, Oppacher F. An analysis of Koza's computational effort statistic for genetic programming. In: Foster JA, editor. *Genetic Programming. EuroGP 2002: Proceedings of the 5th European Conference on Genetic Programming; 2002 Apr 3– 5; Kinsdale, Ireland*. Berlin: Springer (2002). p. 182–91.
- **WEBSITE**  
World Health Organization. *E. coli* (2018). <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/e-coli> [Accessed March 15, 2018].
- **PATENT**  
Pagedas AC, inventor; Ancel Surgical R&D Inc., assignee. *Flexible Endoscopic Grasping and Cutting Device and Positioning Tool Assembly*. United States patent US 20020103498 (2002).
- **DATA**  
Perdiguero P, Venturas M, Cervera MT, Gil L, Collada C. Data from: Massive sequencing of Ulms minor's transcriptome provides new molecular tools for a genus under the constant threat of Dutch elm disease. *Dryad Digital Repository*. (2015) <http://dx.doi.org/10.5061/dryad.ps837>
- **THESES AND DISSERTATIONS**  
Smith, J. (2008) *Post-structuralist discourse relative to phenomenological pursuits in the deconstructivist arena*. [dissertation/master's thesis]. [Chicago (IL)]: University of Chicago
- **PREPRINT**  
Smith, J. Title of the document. Preprint repository name [Preprint] (2008). Available at: <https://persistent-url> (Accessed March 15, 2018).

## 5.8 Figures

Publication of color illustrations is free of charge.

- Figures should be cited in the text consecutively in numerical order. Figures should not be part of the manuscript file. Instead, a placeholder should be added to the text body in an appropriate location, e.g. "insert figure 1 here". The figure captions should be presented in editable format at the very end of the manuscript file (after the tables if any)
- Figures should be submitted without captions as individual files as directed in the submission platform, in the same order as they are referred to in the manuscript; the figures will then be automatically embedded at the end of the submitted manuscript. Please do not provide author names to make sure the material is blinded for reviewers.
- For figures with more than one panel, panels should be clearly indicated using labels (A), (B), (C), (D), etc. However, do not embed the part labels over any part of the image, these labels will be replaced during typesetting according to IJPH's journal style. For graphs, there must be a self-explanatory label (including units) along each axis.
- For LaTeX files, figures should be included in the provided PDF. In case of acceptance, the production team might require high-resolution files of the figures included in the manuscript JPEG or TIF/TIFF format.
- In order to be able to upload more than one figure at a time, save the figures (labeled in order of appearance in the manuscript) in a zip file and upload them as 'Supplementary Material Presentation.'
- Levels of significance should be provided with all digits (e.g.  $p < 0.001$ , not  $p < .001$ )
- All abbreviations in figures should be explained in a legend or footnote to the figure.
- Please note that figures not in accordance with the guidelines will cause substantial delay during the production process.
- Figures should be prepared with the PDF layout in mind. Individual figures should not be longer than one page and with a width that corresponds to 1 column (85 mm) or 2 columns (180 mm).
- All images must have a resolution of 300 dpi at final size. Check the resolution of your figure by enlarging it to 150%. If the image appears blurry, jagged or has a stair-stepped effect, the resolution



is too low.

- The text should be legible and of high quality. The smallest visible text should be no less than 8 points in height when viewed at actual size.
- Solid lines should not be broken up. Any lines in the graphic should be no smaller than 2 points wide.
- Please note that saving a figure directly as an image file (JPEG, TIF) can greatly affect the resolution of your image. To avoid this, one option is to export the file as PDF, then convert into TIFF or EPS using a graphics software.
- Format and Color Image Mode: The following formats are accepted: TIF/TIFF (.tif/.tiff), JPEG (.jpg), and EPS (.eps) (upon acceptance).
- Images must be submitted in the color mode RGB.
- Figures in the Supplementary Material should be numbered separately, e.g. Figure S1, and should be provided consecutively in numerical order with captions in the same way like in the main text
- **Figure Captions** should make the figures fully self-explanatory. They should not contain any abbreviations. At the end of each caption, **the name of the study (if any, not abbreviated), the country or region, and the years of the study should be presented.**
- Figure panels are referred to by bold capital letters in brackets: (A), (B), (C), (D), etc.
- All figure captions should be placed at the end of the manuscript file (after the tables).

## 5.9 Tables

- Tables should be inserted at the end of the manuscript file (after references) in an editable format. If you use a Word processor, build your table in Word. If you use a LaTeX processor, build your table in LaTeX. An empty line should be left before and after the table.
- The submission system does not accept tables as separate files.
- Kindly ensure that each table is mentioned in the text in Arabic numerical order.
- Please ensure that the number of tables match with the captions in the text body.
- A placeholder should be added to the text body in an appropriate location, e.g. "insert table 1 here".
- Use a regular font with size 8.5-10 pt.
- Limit the number of columns to 10-12 max., depending on their width. Please do not submit lengthy tables as part of the text body. Long tables and raw data tables can be submitted as Supplementary Material
- Do not use shading and colors in tables.
- Abbreviations in tables should be explained in footnotes to the table. Footnotes to tables should be indicated by superscript lower-case letters (or asterisks for significance values and other statistical data) and included beneath the table body.
- Levels of significance should be provided with all digits (e.g.  $p < 0.001$ , not  $p < .001$ ), and the same number of digits should be used for all p-values
- Tables in the Supplementary Material should be numbered separately, e.g. Table S1, and should be provided consecutively in numerical order with captions in the same way like in the main text
- Please note that tables which are not according to the guidelines will cause substantial delay during the production process.
- **Table captions** must be placed immediately before the table. Captions should be preceded by the appropriate label, for example "Table 1." Please use only a single paragraph for the caption.
- Table captions should make the tables fully self-explanatory. **The name of the study (if any, not abbreviated), the country and years of the study should be mentioned at the end of each caption (e.g. Health Behaviour of School Aged Children, Slovakia, 2018-2020)**
- In captions, please do not use any abbreviations, even if they have already been explained in the manuscript text body or elsewhere
- All words of the caption apart from the first one in a sentence should begin with lower case letters. Exceptions are names and fixed expressions.
- For previously published material provide the original source in the form of a reference at the end of the table caption.

## 5.10 Accessibility

IJPH encourages authors to make the figures and visual elements of their articles accessible for the visually impaired. An effective use of color can help people with low visual acuity, or color blindness, understand all the content of an article.

These guidelines are easy to implement and are in accordance with the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1), the standard for web accessibility best practices:

### A. Ensure sufficient contrast between text and its background

People who have low visual acuity or color blindness could find it difficult to read text with low contrast background color. Try using colors that provide maximum contrast.

WC3 recommends the following contrast ratio levels:

Level AA, contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1

Level AAA, contrast ratio of at least 7:1

You can verify the contrast ratio of your palette with these online ratio checkers: [WebAIM](#)

[Color Safe](#)

### B. Avoid using red or green indicators

More than 99% of color-blind people have a red-green color vision deficiency.

### C. Avoid using only color to communicate information

Elements with complex information like charts and graphs can be hard to read when only color is used to distinguish the data. Try to use other visual aspects to communicate information, such as shape, labels, and size. Incorporating patterns into the shape fills also make differences clearer.

## 5.11 Supplementary material

Data that are not of primary importance to the text, or which cannot be included in the article because they are too large or the current format does not permit it (such as videos, raw data traces, PowerPoint presentations, etc.), can be uploaded as Supplementary Material during the submission procedure and will be displayed along with the published article. All supplementary files are deposited to Figshare for permanent storage and receive a DOI. **Please ensure all supplementary files are author blinded.**

Supplementary Material is not peer reviewed and not typeset, the material will be published as received without any correction, conversion, editing or reformatting, so please ensure that all information is correct and clearly presented without tracked changes/highlighted text/line numbers, and the appropriate caption is included in the file. Please make sure that figures and tables and their captions are in IJPH style, and please check **each time when submitting a revised version, that the journal name and correct article title is provided on top of the Supplementary file.**

### 5.11.1 Format

- If possible, supply supplementary material in a single file (author blinded). In case it is necessary to submit multiple files, please name them consecutively, e.g. "SM\_3.mpg", "SM\_4.pdf".
- Please do not provide author names in additional files to make sure the material is blinded for reviewers.
- If supplying supplementary material, the main text of the article must make specific mention of the material as a citation, similar to that of figures and tables.
- Refer to the supplementary files as "Supplementary File", e.g. "Supplementary File 1".
- The Supplementary Material can be uploaded as Data Sheet (Word, Excel, CSV, CDX, FASTA, PDF or Zip files), Presentation (PowerPoint, PDF or Zip files), Image (CDX, EPS, JPEG, PDF, PNG or TIF/TIFF), Table (Word, Excel, CSV or PDF), Audio (MP3, WAV or WMA) or Video (AVI, DIVX, FLV, MOV, MP4, MPEG, MPG or WMV).
- Supplementary Text, figures, tables, and references are formatted in IJPH format style
- All tables and figures and other parts of the supplementary material have a concise caption describing the content and mentioning at the end the study name (if applicable, not abbreviated), the country or region, and year of the study.

- **Spreadsheets** should be converted to PDF if no interaction with the data is intended.
- If the readers should be encouraged to make their own calculations, spreadsheets should be submitted as .xls files (MS Excel).
- **Audio, video, and animations** should comply with
  - Aspect ratio: 16:9 or 4:3
  - Maximum file size: 25 GB
  - Minimum video duration: 1 sec
  - Supported file formats: avi, wmv, mp4, mov, m2p, mp2, mpg, mpeg, flv, mxf, mts, m4v, 3gp
- **Specialized formats** such as .pdb (chemical), .wrl (VRML), .nb (Mathematica notebook), and .tex can also be supplied.
- **Multiple files** can be collected in a .zip or .gz file.

### 5.11.2 Accessibility

In order to give people of all abilities and disabilities access to the content of your supplementary files, please make sure that:

- The manuscript contains a descriptive caption for each supplementary material.
- Video files do not contain anything that flashes more than three times per second (so that users prone to seizures caused by such effects are not put at risk).

## 6 ETHICAL STANDARDS

To ensure objectivity and transparency in research and to ensure that accepted principles of ethical and professional conduct have been followed, authors must provide information regarding sources of funding, potential conflicts of interest (financial or non- financial), informed consent if the research involved human participants.

During submission, the submitting author will be required to answer questions regarding the manuscript and research, as well as provide information and consent for all authors. Below is a checklist detailing the information that will be required (if applicable to the study):

- Conflict of interest (mandatory for all article types)
- Funding (if applicable)
- Ethical approval (including name of the ethics committee and record number)
- Informed consent
- Research involving Human Participants and/or Animals

The corresponding author should be prepared to collect documentation of compliance with ethical standards and send if requested during peer review or after publication.

The Editors reserve the right to reject manuscripts that do not comply with the above- mentioned guidelines. The author will be held responsible for false statements or failure to fulfil the above-mentioned guidelines.

### 6.1 Conflict of interest

Authors must disclose all relationships or interests that could influence or bias the work. Although an author may not feel there are conflicts, disclosure of relationships and interests affords a more transparent process, leading to an accurate and objective assessment of the work. Awareness of real or perceived conflicts of interests is a perspective to which the readers are entitled and is not meant to imply that a financial relationship with an organization that sponsored the research or compensation for consultancy work is inappropriate. Examples of potential conflicts of interests **that are directly or indirectly related to the research** may include but are not limited to the following:

- Research grants from funding agencies (please give the research funder and the grant number)
- Honoraria for speaking at symposia
- Financial support for attending symposia

- Financial support for educational programs
- Employment or consultation
- Support from a project sponsor
- Position on advisory board or board of directors or other type of management relationships
- Multiple affiliations
- Financial relationships, for example equity ownership or investment interest
- Intellectual property rights (e.g. patents, copyrights and royalties from such rights)
- Holdings of spouse and/or children that may have financial interest in the work

In addition, interests that go beyond financial interests and compensation (non-financial interests) that may be important to readers should be disclosed. These may include but are not limited to personal relationships or competing interests directly or indirectly tied to this research, or professional interests or personal beliefs that may influence your research.

The corresponding author has to include a statement **in the submission system** that discloses any potential conflict of interest and specify funding information. **Please do not add such information to the manuscript files** as this may disclose your identity to the reviewers.

### 6.1.1 Examples for funding and conflict of interest statements

#### **Funding:**

“This study was funded by X (grant number X).”

For **commercial funding**, the role of the funder must be declared. We recommend the following statements for any **commercially-funded manuscript**:

“The authors declare that this study received funding from X (grant number). The funder had the following involvement with the study: Y.”

“The authors declare that this study received funding from X (grant number) The funder was not involved in the study design, collection, analysis, interpretation of data, the writing of this article or the decision to submit it for publication”.

#### **Conflict of interest:**

“Author A has received research grants from Company W. Author B has received a speaker honorarium from Company X and owns stock in Company Y. Author C is a member of committee Z.

If no conflict exists, the authors should will be able to select online the following: “The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.”

## 6.2 Research involving human participants

### 6.2.1 Statement of human rights

When reporting studies that involve human participants, authors should include a statement that the studies have been approved by the appropriate institutional and/or national research ethics committee and have been performed in accordance with the ethical standards as laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

If doubt exists whether the research was conducted in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration or comparable standards, the authors must explain the reasons for their approach, and demonstrate that the independent ethics committee or institutional review board explicitly approved the doubtful aspects of the study.

If a study was granted exemption from requiring ethics approval, this should also be detailed in the manuscript (including the name of the ethics committee that granted the exemption and the reasons for the exemption).

Authors must - in all situations as described above - include the name of the ethics committee and the reference number where appropriate.

See below examples:

**Ethical approval:** “All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee (include name of committee + reference number) and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.”

### 6.2.2 Ethical approval of studies using pre-existing data

Data should be anonymized and irreversibly de-identified to protect patient, health care professional and/or hospital privacy. For studies using pre-existing and de-identified data, formal approval from the ethics committee is not required.

### 6.3 Informed consent

All individuals have individual rights that are not to be infringed. Individual participants in studies have, for example, the right to decide what happens to the (identifiable) personal data gathered, to what they have said during a study or an interview, as well as to any photograph that was taken. Hence it is important that all participants gave their informed consent in writing prior to inclusion in the study. Identifying details (names, dates of birth, identity numbers and other information) of the participants that were studied should not be published in written descriptions, photographs, and genetic profiles unless the information is essential for scientific purposes and the participant (or parent or guardian if the participant is incapable) gave written informed consent for publication. Complete anonymity is difficult to achieve in some cases, and informed consent should be obtained if there is any doubt. For example, masking the eye region in photographs of participants is inadequate protection of anonymity. If identifying characteristics are altered to protect anonymity, such as in genetic profiles, authors should provide assurance that alterations do not distort scientific meaning. The following statement should be included:

**Informed consent:** “Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.”

If identifying information about participants is available in the article, the following statement should be included: “Additional informed consent was obtained from all individual participants for whom identifying information is included in this article.”

**An ethics questionnaire is a mandatory feature of the submission system.** Please ensure that the relevant ethical approval and consent details were received and are available on request by the editor or editorial office. You will be requested to declare involvement of any human or animal subjects, and inclusion of identifiable human data for the research during the submission process; declaration statements will be generated and automatically added to your manuscript.

### 6.4 Ethical responsibilities of authors

Please read carefully the following sections about ethical responsibilities of authors. Submissions that do not meet all of the ethical requirements are returned to the author shortly after submission or rejected immediately. Co-authorship should fully comply with the four criteria defined by the [ICMJE guidelines](#).

This journal is committed to upholding the integrity of the scientific record. The journal will follow the guidelines of the Committee of Publication Ethics ([COPE](#)) on how to deal with potential acts of misconduct.

Authors should refrain from misrepresenting research results which could damage the trust in the journal, the professionalism of scientific authorship, and ultimately the entire scientific endeavor. Maintaining integrity of the research and its presentation is helped by following the rules of good scientific practice, which include:

- The manuscript should not be submitted to more than one journal for simultaneous consideration.
- The submitted work should be original and should not have been published elsewhere in any form or language (partially or in full), unless the new work concerns an expansion of previous work. (Please provide transparency on the re-use of material to avoid the concerns about text-recycling ('self-plagiarism').)
- A single study should not be split up into several parts to increase the quantity of submissions and submitted to various journals or to one journal over time.

- Concurrent or secondary publication is sometimes justifiable, provided certain conditions are met. Examples include translations or a manuscript that is intended for a different group of readers.
- Results should be presented clearly, honestly, and without fabrication, falsification or inappropriate data manipulation (including image based manipulation). Authors should adhere to rules for acquiring, selecting and processing public health data
- No data, text, or theories by others are presented as if they were the author's own ('plagiarism'). Proper acknowledgements to other works must be given (this includes material that is closely copied (near verbatim), summarized and/or paraphrased), quotation marks (to indicate words taken from another source) are used for verbatim copying of material, and permissions secured for material that is copyrighted.

**The journal uses software to screen all submissions and revised versions for plagiarism.**

- Authors should make sure they have permissions for the use of software, questionnaires/(web) surveys and scales in their studies (if appropriate).
- Authors should avoid untrue statements about an entity (who can be an individual person or a company) or descriptions of their behavior or actions that could potentially be seen as personal attacks or allegations about that person.
- Research that may be misapplied to pose a threat to public health or national security should be clearly identified in the manuscript (e.g. dual use of research). Examples include the creation of harmful consequences of biological agents or toxins, disruption of immunity of vaccines, unusual hazards in the use of chemicals, weaponization of research/technology (amongst others).
- Authors are strongly advised to ensure the author group, the Corresponding Author, and the order of authors are all correct at submission. Adding and/or deleting authors during the revision stages is generally not permitted, but in some cases may be warranted. Reasons for changes in authorship should be explained in detail. Please note that changes to authorship cannot be made after acceptance of a manuscript.
- Upon request, authors should be prepared to send relevant documentation or data in order to verify the validity of the results presented. This could be in the form of raw data, samples, records, etc. Sensitive information in the form of confidential or proprietary data is excluded.

If there is suspicion of misbehavior or alleged fraud the Journal and/or Publisher will carry out an investigation following COPE guidelines. If, after investigation, there are valid concerns, the author(s) concerned will be contacted under their given e-mail address and given an opportunity to address the issue. Depending on the situation, this may result in the Journal's and/or Publisher's implementation of the following measures, including, but not limited to:

- If the manuscript is still under consideration, it may be rejected and returned to the author.
- If the article has already been published online, depending on the nature and severity of the infraction:
  - a Correction may be placed with the article
  - an expression of concern may be placed with the article
  - in severe cases retraction of the article may occur. The reason will be given in the published erratum, expression of concern or retraction note, which will accompany the original article. Please note that retraction means that the article is maintained on the platform, watermarked "retracted" and the explanation for the retraction is provided in a note linked to the watermarked article.
- The author's institution may be informed
- A notice of suspected transgression of ethical standards in the peer review system may be included as part of the author's and article's bibliographic record.

## 6.5 Fundamental errors

Authors have an obligation to correct mistakes once they discover a significant error or inaccuracy in their published article. The author(s) is/are requested to contact the journal and explain in what sense the error is impacting the article. A decision on how to correct the literature will depend on the nature of the error.



This may be a correction or a retraction.

## 7 SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Please prepare your submission files following the advice. Please note that you have to upload all required submission items (author blinded) for the first submission and replace these with the revised files (also author blinded) from the first revision onward. Failing to submit the most recent and mandatory files and information will cause unnecessary delays in the peer review and production process.

Editors and reviewers are obliged to handle your manuscript confidentially.

Ensure that the manuscript title is the same in the online data and within the submission files.

**Due to the double blind peer review, author information should not be included in any submitted files but provided only in the online data during the submission process.**

### 7.1 Submission of a new manuscript

The following is required when submitting a new manuscript:

- **mandatory files** (all author blinded):
  - Manuscript file in Doc/DocX, or Latex format (mandatory)
  - Manuscript file in PDF format (mandatory)
  - Tables are an optional part of these files, to be placed after the reference list
  - Acknowledgements of people, grants, funds, etc. are an optional part of the manuscript file, to be placed before the reference list. Please omit author names and affiliations from the Acknowledgements. Names of the funding organizations should be written in full (not abbreviated).
- **optional files** (all author blinded)
  - Figures (if any) are submitted as individual files in Tif/TIFF or JPG format
  - Supplementary material: any additional files, e.g. data files, excess figures and tables. Please submit all additional material in one file if possible. Please add on top the journal name and article title.
- **online fields** to be completed in the platform (mandatory):
  - Uploading mandatory files (as described above)
  - Completing the manuscript information tiles:
    - Article title (20 words max.; shorter titles preferred)
    - Running title (max 5 words)
    - Keywords (at least 5, up to 10)
    - Structured Abstract for Original Articles and Reviews (see section 2 under Article Types)
    - All author names and affiliations
    - Author contribution statement
    - Manuscript contribution to the research field (200 words max). You should frame the research question(s) addressed in your work in the context of current knowledge, highlighting how the findings contribute to progress in your research discipline.
    - Further statements (note: these statements are provided in the submission system and the author is required to click on a checkbox or answer a few simple questions to generate a statement):
      - Payment agreement acknowledgement
      - Conflict of Interest statement
      - Ethics statements (answer to questions regarding the involvement of human or animal subjects, and the inclusion of potentially identifiable images or data on humans. The responses will be compiled to create the ethical statement for your manuscript)
      - Data Availability: you will be requested to reply to a series of questions on the availability of the data used for the research. Based on your answers, a data availability statement will be generated and added to your manuscript.
    - Suggesting / excluding reviewers:  
Authors are asked to suggest three suitable reviewers and/or request the exclusion of certain

individuals during the submission of their manuscripts. When suggesting reviewers, authors should make sure they are totally independent and not connected to the work or authors in any way. It is strongly recommended to suggest a mix of reviewers from different countries and institutions. The institutional email address for each suggested reviewer must be provided, or, if this is not possible to include, other means of verifying the identity such as a link to a personal homepage, a link to the publication record or a researcher or author ID. Please note that the Journal may not use the suggestions, but suggestions are appreciated and may help facilitate the peer review process.

## 7.2 Submission of a revised version

The following is required (mandatory):

- A document with point-by-point responses to all reviewer and editor comments; this file contains all comments of the reviewers and the editor (if any), the authors' replies to each comment and the corresponding altered text in the manuscript with line numbers.
- The revised manuscript file including line numbers in two versions: a) a WORD version with tracked changes and b) a PDF without tracked changes
- Updating any fields on the submission platform that have been changed with the revision
- All files must remain author blinded to ensure double blind peer review.

## 8 English language editing

For editors and reviewers to accurately assess the work presented in your manuscript you need to ensure the English language is of sufficient quality to be understood. If you need help with writing in English, you should consider:

- Asking a colleague who is a native English speaker to review your manuscript for clarity and grammar.
- Using a professional language editing service where editors will improve the English to ensure that your meaning is clear and identify problems that require your review.

Please note that the use of a language editing service is not a requirement for publication in this journal and does not imply or guarantee that the article will be selected for peer review or will be accepted for publication.

If your manuscript is accepted, it will be checked by copyeditors for spelling and formal style before publication.

## 9 Proof reading

The purpose of the proof is to check for typesetting or conversion errors and the completeness and accuracy of the text, tables and figures. Substantial changes in content, e.g., new results, corrected values, title and authorship, are not allowed without the approval of the Editor.

After online publication, further changes can only be made in the form of a Correction, which will be hyperlinked to the article.

**To avoid a Correction connected to your article, please correct the proofs very thoroughly.** Please take a look at all numbers and data in text, tables and figures. Double check the author names and affiliations, references. **Please note, not even small changes are possible after online publication.**