

Suggested Structure for a Clinical Manuscript

Following is a sample outline of the content for a clinical manuscript. Topics included here are suggested, not mandatory. The format and order of a clinical manuscript may vary. Clinical articles may be written in first person or third person as appropriate. Bulleted items below are suggested, not mandatory:

- Abstract
- Description of disease or condition associated with the procedure
- Presenting symptoms and incidence
- Normal and abnormal anatomy and pathophysiology
- Overview of surgical procedure, other options, risks, complications, and outcomes
- Preoperative phase
 - Diagnostic procedures (eg, MRI, CT scan, chest x-ray)
 - Patient needs and issues (eg, physical, psychosocial)
 - Patient preparation immediately before hospitalization or after admission (eg, enema, preoperative shower, NPO status, preoperative medications)
 - Patient admission (what happens and when)
 - Preoperative care
 - Preoperative nurse assessment, chart review for lab work
 - Patient teaching (eg, pain management, IVs, surgical drains, incision, catheterization, types of dressings, postoperative routines)
 - Signing of consent
 - Verification of correct site
 - Preoperative orders (eg, prophylactic antibiotics, use of sequential compression stockings, hair removal)
- Intraoperative phase
 - Supplies and equipment (what, special set-up procedures)
 - OR preparation
 - Check of equipment function (eg, lights, suction, electrosurgical unit, laser, microscope, video equipment)
 - Patient assessment and chart review
 - Surgical site marking (if appropriate)
 - Nursing diagnosis
 - Care plan (organized information related to diagnosis, planning, interventions, and outcomes [refer to the Perioperative Nursing Data Set for wording and format])
 - Transfer of patient to OR, induction, positioning, prepping
 - Description of surgical procedure
 - Transfer of patient from OR
- Postoperative phase
 - PACU and postoperative care
 - Discharge planning, teaching, special instructions, expected outcomes, home care needs
 - Adjunct treatment, rehabilitation, follow-up, outcomes
- Case study. You may want to include a brief case study that provides an informative summary that emphasizes the roles and responsibilities of a perioperative nurse, illustrates application of the nursing process, and presents unusual or unexpected patient care opportunities and nursing actions by describing the patient's condition, nursing interventions, and surgical procedure. Do not make it a perfect situation; instead, add complicating factors to demonstrate critical thinking.
- Conclusion

Please consider submitting your clinical manuscript as a continuing education article. Clinical continuing education articles provide detailed information that helps readers understand patient care and processes and to plan for expected and unexpected outcomes. Articles should be comprehensive for the reader and comply with regulations, standards, and AORN Recommended Practices. While the final exams for continuing education articles are finalized by our editors, we would greatly appreciate your suggestions for exam objectives and questions. Submitting draft objectives and questions will be your opportunity to convey to us what you consider to be your article's central themes and important details.