TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Description p.1
- Impact Factor p.1
- Editorial Board p.1
- Guide for Authors p.3

DESCRIPTION

Australian Critical Care is the official journal of the Australian College of Critical Care Nurses (ACCCN). It is a bi-monthly peer-reviewed journal, providing clinically relevant research, reviews and articles of interest to the critical care community. Australian Critical Care publishes peer-reviewed scholarly papers that report research findings, research-based reviews, discussion papers and commentaries which are of interest to an international readership of critical care practitioners, educators, administrators and researchers. Interprofessional articles are welcomed.

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GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

INTRODUCTION

Australian Critical Care is the official journal of The Australian College of Critical Care Nurses and publishes peer-reviewed scholarly papers that report research findings, research-based reviews, discussion papers and commentaries which are of interest to an international readership of critical care practitioners, educators, administrators and researchers.

Papers should address issues of interest to critical care nurses and present the paper in the context of the existing international research base on the topic. Selection of papers for publication is based on their scientific excellence, distinctive contribution to knowledge (including methodological development) and their importance to contemporary critical care practice.

The journal does not accept manuscripts containing animal experimentation.

Submission checklist

You can use this list to carry out a final check of your submission before you send it to the journal for review. Please check the relevant section in this Guide for Authors for more details.

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• Include the keywords
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Submitted material will be handled in confidence except for the purposes of review and in order to investigate possible misconduct, including but not limited to concurrent submissions to multiple journals, high percentage of text matching and concerns around research validity, conduct and reporting.
Submitted papers should be relevant to critical care practice and authors should place their paper within the international context. Details of national practices, policies, law, etc. should be provided in the paper to provide information for all readers of *Australian Critical Care*. If possible, authors should consult a recent issue of the journal to assess style and presentation of manuscripts published. The journal is widely distributed internationally, and for many readers English is a second language, therefore authors are requested to write in plain English and use terminology which is internationally acceptable.

**CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO TYPES OF RESEARCH DESIGNS**

The editors require that manuscripts adhere to recognised reporting guidelines relevant to the research design used. These identify matters that should be addressed in your paper. These are not quality assessment frameworks and your study need not meet all the criteria implied in the reporting guideline to be worthy of publication in the journal. The checklists do identify essential matters that should be considered and reported. For example, a controlled trial may or may not be blinded but it is important that the paper identifies whether or not participants, clinicians and outcome assessors were aware of treatment assignments.

You are encouraged to submit a checklist from the appropriate reporting guideline together with your paper as a guide to the editors and reviewers of your paper

**Common reporting guidelines are listed below:**

Authors are encouraged to consult the EQUATOR Network website for updated and new reporting guidelines (see [http://www.equator-network.org/](http://www.equator-network.org/)). Examples of common reporting guidelines include:

- Synthesis of Qualitative Research - ENTREQ - *Enhancing transparency in reporting the synthesis of qualitative research* [http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/entreq](http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/entreq)
Types of article

Australian Critical Care publishes original research, reviews, case studies and discussion papers. In addition we publish editorials and commentaries on existing content with the journal. Where a case is made we will also publish protocols of studies.

Word limits - Our experience suggests that all things being equal, readers find shorter papers more useful than longer ones. Given this, and competition for space in the Journal, papers of between 2,000 and 3,500 words are preferred. Word limits are exclusive of figures, table and references. Ordinarily there should be no appendices although in the case of papers reporting tool development or the use of novel questionnaires it is usual to include a copy of the tool as an appendix.

Exceptions - Authors of any manuscripts that do not comply with these restrictions should make preliminary enquiry to the Editor-in-Chief before submitting the manuscript.

Editorials - 1,000–1,500 words
Authors who have ideas for editorials which address issues of substantive concern to the discipline, particularly those of a controversial nature or linked directly to forthcoming content in the journal, should contact the Editor-in-Chief (editor.acc@acccn.com.au).

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Full papers reporting original research can be a maximum of 3,500 words in length, although shorter papers are preferred. In some instances qualitative papers may be up to 5,000 words in length, where appropriate. Research papers should adhere to recognised standards for reporting (see above guidance and Author Checklist).

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Australian Critical Care accepts quantitative, qualitative and integrative reviews for publication. Authors are encouraged to clearly report the process by which literature was selected for inclusion in the review. Relevant reporting guidelines (eg PRISMA, ENTREQ) should be adhered to.
- Reviews, including:
- systematic reviews, which address focused practice questions;
- literature reviews, which provide a thorough analysis of the literature on a broad topic; - policy reviews, i.e. reviews of published literature and policy documents which inform critical care-practice, the organisation of critical care services, or the education and preparation of critical care clinicians will be considered.
• **Discussion papers and Commentaries 2,000-2,500 words** Discussion papers and commentaries are welcome, particularly where the subject of discussion is topical. Such papers are designed to stimulate academic debate and discussion the Editor invites readers to submit commentaries.

**Case Reports** - up to 2,500 words

Case reports are valuable to the journal, but due to their nature, patients featured in the reports may be highly identifiable. The journal requires that proper consent for publication has been obtained and that the individual(s) being reported on, or their proxy, is aware of the possible consequences of that reporting, including the possibility that the individual(s) could be identified.

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**Research Critiques** - up to 1,500 words + 15 references

Critiques of published research are included in each issue of *Australian Critical Care*. Authors wanting to contribute to this feature should contact a member of the editorial team editor.acc@acccn.com.au prior to undertaking work on submission. The research selected for critique should be of interest to the Australian and international critical care community, be referenced in an established database (for example, CINAHL, MEDLINE, or EMBASE) and have been previously published in English.

The title of the research review should be different from the title of the paper being reviewed. There is a strong preference for a declarative title to be used, for example *Early enteral feeding reduces septic complications in critically ill trauma patients*.

The paper should be formatted in two sections. The upper section should provide a summary of the published article and should be no more than 500 words in length. In the summary of the published article please provide detail on the objective, design and setting for the study. The research process used, including any interventions and outcomes measured, a brief summary of results and conclusion reached by the authors should also be presented. Participant details should also be provided. Reproduction of the article abstract is not permitted.

The second section of the submission, which is the critique of the article, should include the relevance of the article to Australian critical care practice, a critique of the methodological quality of the study, ethical considerations, and any limitations of the study. If the conclusions of this study are not congruent with other published work, this should be acknowledged. An assessment of the overall value of the article as a contribution to the literature and its usefulness to critical care practice should be included.

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**Commentaries** - 1500 words + 15 references

Contributions that are of general interest, stimulating and meet the standards of scholarship associated with the Journal may be selected for publication in a commentary section or as a standalone contribution. Contributions should be submitted online in the usual way.

**Study protocols** - up to 2,000 words
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**Human rights**
The journal does not accept manuscripts containing animal experimentation.

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All studies must be conducted to the highest ethical standard in accordance with local regulations and standards for gaining ethical approval/clearance.

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

**DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED AT SUBMISSION STAGE**

Manuscripts must be accompanied by the following files for submission:

**Covering letter** - to the editor in which you detail matters you wish the editors to consider.

**Reporting Guideline Checklist** - if applicable

**Author Agreement Statement** - You must make a true statement that all authors have approved the final article, agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work and acknowledge that all those entitled to authorship are listed as authors. Sample text of an Author Agreement Statement can be downloaded here.

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**Article structure**

**Title**

**Abstract**

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State the objectives of the work and provide an adequate background, avoiding a detailed literature survey or a summary of the results.

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Provide sufficient details to allow the work to be reproduced by an independent researcher. Methods that are already published should be summarised, and indicated by a reference. If quoting directly from a previously published method, use quotation marks and also cite the source. Any modifications to existing methods should also be described. (Note: for randomised control trials, the Trial Registration Number will need to be inserted into the Methods section - but only after the manuscript has been accepted for publication. This is to preserve the double-blind peer-review process.)

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