**BEST PRACTICE & RESEARCH: CLINICAL OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGY**

**DESCRIPTION**

*Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology* provides a comprehensive review of current clinical practice and thinking within the specialties of obstetrics and gynaecology.

All chapters are commissioned and written by an international team of practising clinicians with the Guest Editors for each thematical issue drawn from a pool of renowned experts and opinion leaders. Reference is made to:

- The latest original research
- Cochrane and systematic Reviews
- Audits and confidential enquiries
- National and international conferences
- National and international guidelines
- Personal communications
- Scientific impact papers
- Consensus statements

All chapters take the form of practical, evidence-based reviews that seek to address key clinical issues of diagnosis, treatment, and patient management.

Each issue follows a problem-orientated approach that focuses on the key questions to be addressed, clearly defining what is known and not known. Management will be described in practical terms so that it can be applied to the individual patient.

Boxed and bulleted Learning Objectives and Practice Points are features within each chapter and will highlight the core and essential knowledge that will help the physician to provide the best care to their patients.

The series' objective is to provide a continuous update for the busy clinician and researcher.
ABSTRACTING AND INDEXING

Embase
Current Contents - Clinical Medicine
Web of Science
Research Alert
Scopus
Science Citation Index Expanded
PubMed/Medline
Science Citation Index

EDITORIAL BOARD

Co Editors-in-Chief
Asma Khalil, St George's Hospital, London, United Kingdom
Ernest H. Y. Ng, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Reproductive medicine

Editor Emeritus
Sabaratnam Arulkumaran, St George's University of London, London, United Kingdom
Women's Health

MCQ Editor
Kevin Hayes, St George's University of London, London, United Kingdom

Social Media Editors
Nashwa Eltaweel, University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust, Coventry, United Kingdom
Fetal, maternal medicine & labour ward
Pilar Palmrich, Medical University of Vienna, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Wien, Austria
Obstetrics, Ultrasound, Prenatal diagnostics, Fetal Medicine, Preeclampsia, Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy
Theresa Reischer, Medical University of Vienna, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Wien, Austria

Editorial Board
Siladitya Bhattacharya, University of Aberdeen School of Medicine Medical Sciences and Nutrition, Aberdeen, United Kingdom
Infertility, Abnormal uterine bleeding, randomised trials, evidence
Jennifer Blake, Canada
Sara Brucker, University Hospital Tübingen, Department of Women's Health, Tubingen, Germany
Genital Malformations, Cervical Ca, Endometrium Ca, Breast Cancer
Joanna Cain, Brown University Warren Alpert Medical School, Providence, Rhode Island, United States of America
Justin Clark, Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust, Birmingham, United Kingdom
Natalie Cooper, Queen Mary University of London, London, United Kingdom
Heavy menstrual bleeding, hysteroscopy, core outcomes, systematic review, benign gynaecology
Hilary Critchley, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Rudy Leon De Wilde, Pius Hospital, Oldenburg, Germany
obstetrics, gynaecology
Gian Carlo Di Renzo, University of Perugia, Perugia, Italy
Antonio Dispiezo Sardo, University of Naples Federico II, Department of Public Health, Napoli, Italy
Ellis Downes, Ultrasound Diagnostic Services, London, United Kingdom
Kiran Guleria, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Hong Kong
High risk Obstetrics, Preterm Birth, Environment (pesticides and air-pollution) and adverse reproductive effects
Keith B. Isaacson, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America
Swati Jha, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Sheffield, United Kingdom
Urogynaecology, Paediatric Adolescent Gynaecology
Sean Kehoe, John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, United Kingdom
Justin C. Konje, University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom
Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Recurrent pregnancy loss and Endometriosis
Ricardo Lasmar, Federal Fluminense University, NITEROI, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Endometriosis, Myomas, Submucous Myoma, Pelvic Pain, Hysteroscopy, Laparoscopy, Robotic
Tinchiu Li, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Reproductive medicine and surgery, Recurrent miscarriage

Tahir Mahmood, European Board and College of the Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Brussels, Scotland

Reproductive Medicine, Heavy menstrual bleeding, Obesity, quality improvement in Health

Paul McGurgan, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Medical education, simulation, intra-partum obstetrics, minimal access surgery, professionalism

Jagidesa Moodley, University of KwaZulu-Natal College of Health Sciences, Durban, South Africa

Deirdre Murphy, The Coombe Hospital, Dublin, Ireland

Olarik Musigavong, Chaophraya Abhaibhubejhr Hospital, Tha Ngam, Thailand

Infertility, endometriosis, uterine fibroid, reproductive surgery, contraception, health innovation

Hextan Ngan, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Michelle Nisolle, University of Liege, Liege, Belgium

Ertan Saridogan, University College Hospital, London, United Kingdom

Endometriosis, fibroids, laparoscopic surgery, hysteroscopic surgery

Gamal I. Serour, Al-Azhar University, Nasser City, Egypt

Jai Bhagwan Sharma, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, New Delhi, India

Dorothy Shaw, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Ian Symonds, The University of Newcastle, Callaghan, New South Wales, Australia

Vasilis Tanos, University of Nicosia, Lefkosia, Cyprus

Togas Tulandi, Université McGill, Montréal, Quebec, Canada

Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgery, Endometriosis, Reproductive Surgery
GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

All contributions for the series are commissioned and no unsolicited material is accepted. The Editors-in-Chief will, however, consider suggestions of topics and Guest Editors for forthcoming issues.

Contact details for submission
If you have questions concerning the editorial policy of the journal or queries about submission, please contact the Managing Editor, Beverly Burns, at ybeog@elsevier.com

IMPORTANT: Please read these guidelines carefully and observe all the directions given, paying particular attention to the instructions on REFERENCING STYLE and the requirements for ABSTRACT, KEY WORDS, PRACTICE POINTS, RESEARCH AGENDA and MCQ (Multiple Choice Questionnaire). Failure to do so may result in unnecessary delays to the publication of your and other authors' articles.

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.

Ensure that the following items are present:

One author has been designated as the corresponding author with contact details:
- E-mail address
- Full postal address

All necessary files have been uploaded:
Manuscript:
- Include keywords
- All figures (include relevant captions)
- All tables (including titles, description, footnotes)
- Ensure all figure and table citations in the text match the files provided
- Indicate clearly if color should be used for any figures in print
Highlights files
MCQs
Graphical Abstracts (where applicable)
Supplemental files (where applicable)

Further considerations
- Manuscript has been 'spell checked' and 'grammar checked'
- 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 Internet)
- A competing interests statement is provided, even if the authors have no competing interests to declare
- Journal policies detailed in this guide have been reviewed
- Referee suggestions and contact details provided, based on journal requirements

For further information, visit our Support Center.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Ethics in publishing
Please see our information on Ethics in publishing.

Studies in humans and animals
If the work involves the use of human subjects, the author should ensure that the work described has been carried out in accordance with The Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association (Declaration of Helsinki) for experiments involving humans. The manuscript should be in line with the Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals and aim for the inclusion of representative human populations (sex, age and ethnicity) as per those recommendations. The terms sex and gender should be used correctly.
Authors should include a statement in the manuscript that informed consent was obtained for experimentation with human subjects. The privacy rights of human subjects must always be observed.

All animal experiments should comply with the ARRIVE guidelines and should be carried out in accordance with the U.K. Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, 1986 and associated guidelines, EU Directive 2010/63/EU for animal experiments, or the National Research Council's Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and the authors should clearly indicate in the manuscript that such guidelines have been followed. The sex of animals must be indicated, and where appropriate, the influence (or association) of sex on the results of the study.

Declaration of interest
All authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organizations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work. Examples of potential competing interests include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other funding. Authors must disclose any interests in two places: 1. A summary declaration of interest statement in the title page file (if double anonymized) or the manuscript file (if single anonymized). If there are no interests to declare then please state this: 'Declarations of interest: none'. 2. Detailed disclosures as part of a separate Declaration of Interest form, which forms part of the journal's official records. It is important for potential interests to be declared in both places and that the information matches. More information.

Declaration of generative AI in scientific writing
The below guidance only refers to the writing process, and not to the use of AI tools to analyse and draw insights from data as part of the research process.

Where authors use generative artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process, authors should only use these technologies to improve readability and language. Applying the technology should be done with human oversight and control, and authors should carefully review and edit the result, as AI can generate authoritative-sounding output that can be incorrect, incomplete or biased. AI and AI-assisted technologies should not be listed as an author or co-author, or be cited as an author. Authorship implies responsibilities and tasks that can only be attributed to and performed by humans, as outlined in Elsevier's AI policy for authors.

Authors should disclose in their manuscript the use of AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process by following the instructions below. A statement will appear in the published work. Please note that authors are ultimately responsible and accountable for the contents of the work.

Disclosure instructions
Authors must disclose the use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process by adding a statement at the end of their manuscript in the core manuscript file, before the References list. The statement should be placed in a new section entitled 'Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process’.

Statement: During the preparation of this work the author(s) used [NAME TOOL / SERVICE] in order to [REASON]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

This declaration does not apply to the use of basic tools for checking grammar, spelling, references etc. If there is nothing to disclose, there is no need to add a statement.

Submission declaration and verification
Submission of an article implies that the work described has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract, a published lecture or academic thesis, see 'Multiple, redundant or concurrent publication' for more information), 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, including electronically without the written consent of the copyright-holder. To verify compliance, your article may be checked by Crossref Similarity Check and other originality or duplicate checking software.
Preprints
Please note that preprints can be shared anywhere at any time, in line with Elsevier's sharing policy. Sharing your preprints e.g. on a preprint server will not count as prior publication (see 'Multiple, redundant or concurrent publication' for more information).

Use of inclusive language
Inclusive language acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities. Content should make no assumptions about the beliefs or commitments of any reader; contain nothing which might imply that one individual is superior to another on the grounds of age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, disability or health condition; and use inclusive language throughout. Authors should ensure that writing is free from bias, stereotypes, slang, reference to dominant culture and/or cultural assumptions. We advise to seek gender neutrality by using plural nouns ("clinicians, patients/clients") as default/wherever possible to avoid using "he, she," or "he/she." We recommend avoiding the use of descriptors that refer to personal attributes such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, disability or health condition unless they are relevant and valid. When coding terminology is used, we recommend to avoid offensive or exclusionary terms such as "master", "slave", "blacklist" and "whitelist". We suggest using alternatives that are more appropriate and (self-) explanatory such as "primary", "secondary", "blocklist" and "allowlist". These guidelines are meant as a point of reference to help identify appropriate language but are by no means exhaustive or definitive.

Reporting sex- and gender-based analyses
Reporting guidance
For research involving or pertaining to humans, animals or eukaryotic cells, investigators should integrate sex and gender-based analyses (SGBA) into their research design according to funder/sponsor requirements and best practices within a field. Authors should address the sex and/or gender dimensions of their research in their article. In cases where they cannot, they should discuss this as a limitation to their research's generalizability. Importantly, authors should explicitly state what definitions of sex and/or gender they are applying to enhance the precision, rigor and reproducibility of their research and to avoid ambiguity or conflation of terms and the constructs to which they refer (see Definitions section below). Authors can refer to the Sex and Gender Equity in Research (SAGER) guidelines and the SAGER guidelines checklist. These offer systematic approaches to the use and editorial review of sex and gender information in study design, data analysis, outcome reporting and research interpretation - however, please note there is no single, universally agreed-upon set of guidelines for defining sex and gender.

Definitions
Sex generally refers to a set of biological attributes that are associated with physical and physiological features (e.g., chromosomal genotype, hormonal levels, internal and external anatomy). A binary sex categorization (male/female) is usually designated at birth ("sex assigned at birth"), most often based solely on the visible external anatomy of a newborn. Gender generally refers to socially constructed roles, behaviors, and identities of women, men and gender-diverse people that occur in a historical and cultural context and may vary across societies and over time. Gender influences how people view themselves and each other, how they behave and interact and how power is distributed in society. Sex and gender are often incorrectly portrayed as binary (female/male or woman/man) and unchanging whereas these constructs actually exist along a spectrum and include additional sex categorizations and gender identities such as people who are intersex/have differences of sex development (DSD) or identify as non-binary. Moreover, the terms "sex" and "gender" can be ambiguous—thus it is important for authors to define the manner in which they are used. In addition to this definition guidance and the SAGER guidelines, the resources on this page offer further insight around sex and gender in research studies.

Changes to authorship
Authors are expected to consider carefully the list and order of authors before submitting their manuscript and provide the definitive list of authors at the time of the original submission. Any addition, deletion or rearrangement of author names in the authorship list should be made only before the manuscript has been accepted and only if approved by the journal Editor. To request such a change, the Editor must receive the following from the corresponding author: (a) the reason for the change in author list and (b) written confirmation (e-mail, 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.
Only in exceptional circumstances will the Editor consider the addition, deletion or rearrangement of authors after the manuscript has been accepted. While the Editor considers the request, publication of the manuscript will be suspended. If the manuscript has already been published in an online issue, any requests approved by the Editor will result in a corrigendum.

**Article transfer service**
This journal uses the Elsevier Article Transfer Service to find the best home for your manuscript. This means that if an editor feels your manuscript is more suitable for an alternative journal, you might be asked to consider transferring the manuscript to such a journal. The recommendation might be provided by a Journal Editor, a dedicated Scientific Managing Editor, a tool assisted recommendation, or a combination. If you agree, your manuscript will be transferred, though you will have the opportunity to make changes to the manuscript before the submission is complete. Please note that your manuscript will be independently reviewed by the new journal. More information.

**Copyright**
Upon acceptance of an article, authors will be asked to complete a 'Journal Publishing Agreement' (see more information on this). An e-mail 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. 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.

For gold open access articles: Upon acceptance of an article, authors will be asked to complete a 'License Agreement' (more information). Permitted third party reuse of gold open access articles is determined by the author's choice of user license.

**Author rights**
As an author you (or your employer or institution) have certain rights to reuse your work. More information. Elsevier supports responsible sharing
Find out how you can share your research published in Elsevier journals.

**Open access**
Please visit our Open Access page for more information.

**Elsevier Researcher Academy**
Researcher Academy is a free e-learning platform designed to support early and mid-career researchers throughout their research journey. The "Learn" environment at Researcher Academy offers several interactive modules, webinars, downloadable guides and resources to guide you through the process of writing for research and going through peer review. Feel free to use these free resources to improve your submission and navigate the publication process with ease.

**Submission**
Our online submission system guides you stepwise through the process of entering your article details and uploading your files. The system converts your article files to a single PDF file used in the peer-review process. Editable files (e.g., Word, LaTeX) are required to typeset your article for final publication. All correspondence, including notification of the Editor's decision and requests for revision, is sent by e-mail.

Submit your article
Please submit your article via https://www.editorialmanager.com/YBEOG/default.aspx.

**PREPARATION**

**Peer review**
All contributions will be initially assessed by the Guest Editor for suitability for the journal. The Editors in Chief are responsible for the final decision regarding acceptance or rejection of articles. The Editor's decision is final. Editors are not involved in decisions about papers which they have written themselves
or have been written by family members or colleagues or which relate to products or services in which the editor has an interest. Any such submission is subject to all of the journal's usual procedures, with peer review handled independently of the relevant editor and their research groups. More information on types of peer review.

**Manuscript preparation**

Length should be 7,000 words maximum, unless otherwise stated in your contract letter (check). Please include a total of words used. The length given is inclusive of references and equivalent illustrative or tabular space. As a guide for conversion, a half-page illustration or table is equivalent to 250 words of text.

**The journal publishes only review articles (comprehensive reviews and systematic reviews).** The presentation of articles will be standardized to make the information easily accessible and of practical value. Please follow these guidelines carefully.

Articles should focus on practical problems and issues. In your review, where possible, please consider reporting results for outcomes that are Core and offer conclusions based on these rather than on non-core or surrogate outcomes. Where Core Outcomes have not been reported in existing literature, please report this deficiency and the implications, if any. This is certainly not mandatory but we encourage it.

Management should be described in practical terms, so that it can be translated to the individual patient. Use appropriate examples to illustrate management problems, so that the reader actually knows what to do, when to do it, how to do it and why. Recommendations should be evidence-based. The quality of the information available and what remains unknown should be highlighted. Meta-analysis data and systematic reviews should be used where available. Emphasis should be given to randomized controlled trials, translating data from such trials to clinical practice wherever possible. If recommendations are not evidence-based, this should be clearly stated.

Make clear what we know, what we think we know and what we do not know. Use **Practice Points** and **Research Agenda** to emphasise these.

As one of the primary functions of this publication is educational, please ensure that your review is well structured and clearly laid out, with level of headings clearly indicated and figures, diagrams, tables and flow-charts used to explain points and reduce explanatory text.

The abstract should include the key issues which will be addressed in your chapter, emphasising what we know, what we think we know and what we do not know.

The summary should focus on the conclusions reached in the chapter, indicating unanswered and unanswerable questions.

**Permissions**

Authors who plan to reproduce (unaltered) illustrations, charts, tables or other material from previously published sources must obtain written permission from the copyright holder (usually the Publisher) and send the letter granting this permission to the Managing Editor at ybeog@elsevier.com. Further information about permissions can be found under the Copyright section.

**Article structure**

Length should be 7,000 words maximum, unless otherwise stated. Please include a total of words used. The length given is inclusive of references and equivalent illustrative or tabular space. As a guide for conversion, a half-page illustration or table is equivalent to 250 words of text.

Manuscripts must be submitted in English and should be typed on one side of A4 paper only. All sections should be typed double-spaced (i.e. a full line of space after every typed line). Margins of at least 25 mm should be left on all sides.

**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.** Please clearly indicate the given name(s) and family name(s) of each author and check that all names are accurately spelled. You can add your name between parentheses in your own script behind the English transliteration. 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 will handle correspondence at all stages of refereeing and publication, also post-publication. This responsibility includes answering any future queries about Methodology and Materials. **Ensure that the e-mail address is given and that contact details are kept up to date by the corresponding author.**

• **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.

**Highlights**

Highlights are mandatory for this journal as they help increase the discoverability of your article via search engines. They consist of a short collection of bullet points that capture the novel results of your research as well as new methods that were used during the study (if any). Please have a look at the example Highlights.

Highlights should be submitted in a separate editable file in the online submission system. Please use 'Highlights' in the file name and include 3 to 5 bullet points (maximum 85 characters, including spaces, per bullet point).

**Abstract**

The second page should contain the abstract (which should not exceed 150 words) and the key words. The abstract should be comprehensible to readers before they have read the paper. References or illustrations should not be mentioned and abbreviations should be avoided. Ensure that the abstract focuses the reader on the key issues that will be addressed.

**Graphical abstract**

Although a graphical abstract is optional, its use is encouraged as it draws more attention to the online article. The graphical abstract should summarize the contents of the article in a concise, pictorial form designed to capture the attention of a wide readership. Graphical abstracts should be submitted as a separate file in the online submission system. Image size: Please provide an image with a minimum of 531 × 1328 pixels (h × w) or proportionally more. The image should be readable at a size of 5 × 13 cm using a regular screen resolution of 96 dpi. Preferred file types: TIFF, EPS, PDF or MS Office files. You can view Example Graphical Abstracts on our information site.

**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.

Key words should preferably be taken from the MESH index of Index Medicus.

**Main text**

**Spelling.** The publisher will ensure that this is consistent with the Concise Oxford Dictionary (eg, haemoglobin, oesophagus, organized).

**Headings.** Information should be carefully organized under headings that allow the reader to find practical information readily. Please indicate the level of headings (A, B, C or D) in your manuscript. Try to avoid using more than four levels of heading.

**Units.** The International System of Units (SI) should be applied (e.g. mm, kg etc.).

**Abbreviations.** For abbreviations, capitals without full stops are preferred. If uncommon abbreviations are used they should be defined at first mention.
Drugs. Generic names should be used; proprietary names may follow in parentheses (include both English and American names if different). Great care should be taken in describing the use of drugs and details of the regimen should be thoroughly checked.

Footnotes. These should be avoided where possible.

Genetics. All genes should be underlined to indicate italicization. Proteins should be left as Roman.

Text. Underline only the words or letters which are to appear in italics. Clearly identify unusual handwritten symbols and Greek letters. Differentiate between the letter O and zero and the letters I and L and the number 1.

Do not indent paragraphs in the text - use 2 hard returns to signify the end of paragraphs and headings.

Contributors must also provide four MCQs with answers and full explanations based on the content of their chapter.

Summary
A summary of approximately 250 words emphasising the key points in the chapter should be included at the end of the main text.

Acknowledgements
Only the help of those who have made substantial contributions to the study and/or preparation of the paper should be mentioned. The source of grant support, equipment and drugs may be included.

Role of the funding source
All sources of funding should be declared as an acknowledgement at the end of the text. Authors should declare the role of study sponsors, if any, in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data and in the writing of the manuscript. If the study sponsors had no such involvement, the authors should so state.

Formatting of funding sources
List funding sources in this standard way to facilitate compliance to funder's requirements:

Funding: This work was supported by the National Institutes of Health [grant numbers xxxx, yyyy]; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Seattle, WA [grant number zzzz]; and the United States Institutes of Peace [grant number aaaa].

It is not necessary to include detailed descriptions on the program or type of grants and awards. When funding is from a block grant or other resources available to a university, college, or other research institution, submit the name of the institute or organization that provided the funding.

If no funding has been provided for the research, it is recommended to include the following sentence:

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of interest
At the end of the text, under a subheading "Conflict of interest statement" all authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organisations that could inappropriately influence (bias) the content of this article. Examples of potential conflicts of interest include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other funding. If there are no conflicts of interest then please state this: 'Conflicts of interest: none'. See also http://www.elsevier.com/conflictsofinterest. Further information and an example of a Conflict of Interest form can be found at: http://help.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/286/p/7923.

Practice Points
Where appropriate, present the most important points to note in current clinical practice; these should be brief and set out as a bullet point list at the end of the main text.

Research Agenda

Please indicate points which you feel would repay further research, again presented as a bullet point list at the end of the text.

Artwork

Electronic artwork

General points

- Make sure you use uniform lettering and sizing of your original artwork.
- Embed the used fonts if the application provides that option.
- Aim to use the following fonts in your illustrations: Arial, Courier, Times New Roman, Symbol, or use fonts that look similar.
- Number the illustrations according to their sequence in the text.
- Use a logical naming convention for your artwork files.
- Provide captions to illustrations separately.
- Size the illustrations close to the desired dimensions of the published version.
- Submit each illustration as a separate file.
- Ensure that color images are accessible to all, including those with impaired color vision.

A detailed guide on electronic artwork is available.

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

Formats

If your electronic artwork is created in a Microsoft Office application (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) then please supply 'as is' in the native document format.

Regardless of the application used other than Microsoft Office, when your electronic artwork is finalized, 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 (or PDF): Vector drawings, embed all used fonts.
TIFF (or JPEG): Color or grayscale photographs (halftones), keep to a minimum of 300 dpi.
TIFF (or JPEG): Bitmapped (pure black & white pixels) line drawings, keep to a minimum of 1000 dpi.
TIFF (or JPEG): Combinations bitmapped line/half-tone (color or grayscale), keep to a minimum of 500 dpi.

Please do not:

- Supply files that are optimized for screen use (e.g., GIF, BMP, PICT, WPG); these typically have a low number of pixels and limited set of colors;
- 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 (or JPEG), EPS (or PDF) or MS Office files) and with the correct resolution. If, together with your accepted article, you submit usable color figures then Elsevier will ensure, at no additional charge, that these figures will appear in color online (e.g., ScienceDirect and other sites) in addition to color reproduction in print. Further information on the preparation of electronic artwork.

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

Please submit tables as editable text and not as images. Tables can be placed either next to the relevant text in the article, or on separate page(s) at the end. Number tables consecutively in accordance with their appearance in the text and place any table notes below the table body. Be sparing in the use of tables and ensure that the data presented in them do not duplicate results described elsewhere in the article. Please avoid using vertical rules and shading in table cells. The intended position of the Tables should be clearly indicated in the text. The tables should be typed in double lined spacing.
References
In order to avoid costly delays at the copyediting and proof stages, authors are requested to take special care in following the guidelines below. It is essential that the content of end references are thoroughly checked. Use of DOI is highly encouraged. A maximum of 100 references should be included.

Data references
This journal encourages you to cite underlying or relevant datasets in your manuscript by citing them in your text and including a data reference in your Reference List. Data references should include the following elements: author name(s), dataset title, data repository, version (where available), year, and global persistent identifier. Add [dataset] immediately before the reference so we can properly identify it as a data reference. The [dataset] identifier will not appear in your published article.

Preprint references
Where a preprint has subsequently become available as a peer-reviewed publication, the formal publication should be used as the reference. If there are preprints that are central to your work or that cover crucial developments in the topic, but are not yet formally published, these may be referenced. Preprints should be clearly marked as such, for example by including the word preprint, or the name of the preprint server, as part of the reference. The preprint DOI should also be provided.

References in a special issue
Please ensure that the words 'this issue' are added to any references in the list (and any citations in the text) to other articles in the same Special Issue.

Reference management software
Most Elsevier journals have their reference template available in many of the most popular reference management software products. These include all products that support Citation Style Language styles, such as Mendeley. Using citation plug-ins from these products, authors only need to select the appropriate journal template when preparing their article, after which citations and bibliographies will be automatically formatted in the journal's style. If no template is yet available for this journal, please follow the format of the sample references and citations as shown in this Guide. If you use reference management software, please ensure that you remove all field codes before submitting the electronic manuscript. More information on how to remove field codes from different reference management software.

Reference formatting
References should follow the Vancouver Numerical Style 3 as described below.

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:
Reference to a journal publication with an article number:
Reference to a book:
Reference to a chapter in an edited book:
Reference to a website:
Reference to a dataset:
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;277:927–34) (see also Samples of Formatted References).

Papers that have been accepted but not yet published should be included in the reference list followed by '(in press)'. Those in preparation including those already submitted for publication, personal communications and unpublished observations should be referred to in the text only.

**Please indicate up to a maximum of 10 of the most important references clearly (e.g. with an asterisk)**

*Journal abbreviations source*
Journal names should be abbreviated according to the List of Title Word Abbreviations.

**Video**
Elsevier accepts video material and animation sequences to support and enhance your scientific research. Authors who have video or animation files that they wish to submit with their article are strongly encouraged to include links to these within the body of the article. This can be done in the same way as a figure or table by referring to the video or animation content and noting in the body text where it should be placed. All submitted files should be properly labeled so that they directly relate to the video file's content. In order to ensure that your video or animation material is directly usable, please provide the file in one of our recommended file formats with a preferred maximum size of 150 MB per file, 1 GB in total. Video and animation files supplied will be published online in the electronic version of your article in Elsevier Web products, including ScienceDirect. Please supply 'stills' with your files: you can choose any frame from the video or animation or make a separate image. These will be used instead of standard icons and will personalize the link to your video data. For more detailed instructions please visit our video instruction pages. Note: since video and animation cannot be embedded in the print version of the journal, please provide text for both the electronic and the print version for the portions of the article that refer to this content.

**Data visualization**
Include interactive data visualizations in your publication and let your readers interact and engage more closely with your research. Follow the instructions here to find out about available data visualization options and how to include them with your article.

**Research data**
This journal encourages and enables you to share data that supports your research publication where appropriate, and enables you to interlink the data with your published articles. Research data refers to the results of observations or experimentation that validate research findings, which may also include software, code, models, algorithms, protocols, methods and other useful materials related to the project.

Below are a number of ways in which you can associate data with your article or make a statement about the availability of your data when submitting your manuscript. If you are sharing data in one of these ways, you are encouraged to cite the data in your manuscript and reference list. Please refer to the "References" section for more information about data citation. For more information on depositing, sharing and using research data and other relevant research materials, visit the research data page.

**Data linking**
If you have made your research data available in a data repository, you can link your article directly to the dataset. Elsevier collaborates with a number of repositories to link articles on ScienceDirect with relevant repositories, giving readers access to underlying data that gives them a better understanding of the research described.

There are different ways to link your datasets to your article. When available, you can directly link your dataset to your article by providing the relevant information in the submission system. For more information, visit the database linking page.

For supported data repositories a repository banner will automatically appear next to your published article on ScienceDirect.
In addition, you can link to relevant data or entities through identifiers within the text of your manuscript, using the following format: Database: xxxx (e.g., TAIR: AT1G01020; CCDC: 734053; PDB: 1XFN).

Data statement
To foster transparency, we encourage you to state the availability of your data in your submission. This may be a requirement of your funding body or institution. If your data is unavailable to access or unsuitable to post, you will have the opportunity to indicate why during the submission process, for example by stating that the research data is confidential. The statement will appear with your published article on ScienceDirect. For more information, visit the Data Statement page.

AFTER ACCEPTANCE

Online proof correction
To ensure a fast publication process of the article, we kindly ask authors to provide us with their proof corrections within two days. Corresponding authors will receive an e-mail with a link to our online proofing system, allowing annotation and correction of proofs online. The environment is similar to MS Word: in addition to editing text, you can also comment on figures/tables and answer questions from the Copy Editor. Web-based proofing provides a faster and less error-prone process by allowing you to directly type your corrections, eliminating the potential introduction of errors.
If preferred, you can still choose to annotate and upload your edits on the PDF version. All instructions for proofing will be given in the e-mail we send to authors, including alternative methods to the online version and PDF.
We will do everything possible to get your article published quickly and accurately. 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. It is important to ensure that all 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.

Offprints
The corresponding author will, at no cost, receive a customized Share Link providing 50 days free access to the final published version of the article on ScienceDirect. The Share Link can be used for sharing the article via any communication channel, including email and social media. For an extra charge, paper offprints can be ordered via the offprint order form which is sent once the article is accepted for publication. Corresponding authors who have published their article gold open access do not receive a Share Link as their final published version of the article is available open access on ScienceDirect and can be shared through the article DOI link.

AUTHOR INQUIRIES
Visit the Elsevier Support Center to find the answers you need. Here you will find everything from Frequently Asked Questions to ways to get in touch.
You can also check the status of your submitted article or find out when your accepted article will be published.

© Copyright 2018 Elsevier | https://www.elsevier.com