DESCRIPTION

The International Journal of Nursing Studies (IJNS) provides a forum for original research and scholarship about health care delivery, organisation, management, workforce, policy and research methods relevant to nursing, midwifery and other health related professions. The IJNS aims to support evidence informed policy and practice by publishing research, systematic and other scholarly reviews, critical discussion, and commentary of the highest standard.

The journal particularly welcomes studies that aim to evaluate and understand complex health care interventions and health policies and which employ the most rigorous designs and methods appropriate for the research question of interest. The journal also seeks to advance the quality of research by publishing methodological papers introducing or elaborating on analytic techniques, measures, and research methods.

The journal has been publishing original peer-reviewed articles of interest to the international health care community since 1963, making it one of the longest standing repositories of scholarship in this field. The IJNS offers authors the benefits of:

- A highly respected journal in its field with consistently high impact
- Indexed in major databases: PubMed, Medline, Thomson Reuters - Science Citation Index, Scopus, Thomson Reuters - Social Science Citation Index, CINAHL and the BNI (British Nursing Index).
- A truly global readership
- Highly efficient editorial processes: average time from submission to first decision of 4 weeks
- Rapid initial screening for suitability and editorial interest
- Excellent peer reviewers drawn from a range of health service research disciplines
- Final online publication as soon as 2 weeks post-acceptance.

The IJNS endorses the Equator Network (http://www.equator-network.org/) an international initiative that seeks to improve reliability and value of research literature in health care by promoting transparent and accurate reporting of studies. We ask our authors to make use of appropriate
reporting guidelines to ensure excellence in scientific reporting. Guidelines for authors can be accessed at http://ees.elsevier.com/ijns.

AUDIENCE

Nurses, midwives, educators, administrators and researchers in all areas of nursing and caring sciences.

IMPACT FACTOR

2017: 3.656 © Clarivate Analytics Journal Citation Reports 2018

ABSTRACTING AND INDEXING

Social Sciences Citation Index
Science Citation Index Expanded
EMCARE
Current Contents(Life Sciences/Social and Behavioral Sciences)
Psychology Abstracts
MEDLINE®
CINAHL
ASSIA
Scopus
British Nursing Index
CISTI
CIRRIE

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief
Ian Norman, PhD, RN, BABCP, FRNC, FEANS, FAAN, Professor & Executive Dean, Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, 57 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8WA, UK (Senior Editorial Assistant: Stephanie Waller; Editorial Assistant Isabell Mayr)

Executive Editor
Peter Griffiths, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK

Honorary Editors
Rosemary Crow, Guildford, UK
Jenifer Wilson-Barnett, London, UK

Statistical Editors
Jason Beckstead, Tampa, FL, USA
Trevor Murrells, BSc, MSc, London, UK

Associate Editors
Chiara Dall’ora, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK
Patricia Davidson, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA
Christine Duffield, University of Technology, Sydney, Broadway, NSW, Australia
Donna Haiduven, University of South Florida, Tampa, USA
Ruth Harris, PhD, RGN, FEANS, King’s College London, London, UK
Jan Kottner, Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Berlin, Germany
Sharon McKinley, PhD, BAppSci, RN, Sydney, NSW, Australia
Christopher McLean, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK
Nancy Nivison Menzel, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, CPH, CNE, University of Nevada at Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV, USA
Chizu Mimura, PhD, RN, Himorogi Psychiatric Institute, Tokyo, Japan
Micah David James Peters, University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia
Lusine Poghosyan, Columbia University, USA
Roberta Sammut, PhD, RN, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Malta, Malta
Lisette Schoonhoven, University Medical Center Utrecht (UMC Utrecht), Utrecht, Netherlands
Michael Simon, PhD, RN, Faculty of Medicine, University of Basel & Inselspital Bern University Hospital, Bern, Switzerland
Rhayun Song, Chungnam National University, Daejeon, The Republic of Korea
Allison Squires, PhD, RN, FAAN, College of Nursing, New York University, USA
Jason Wasiak, University of Melbourne and Monash University, Melbourne, Australia
Alison While, King’s College London, London, UK
Lisa Whitehead, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, Australia
Franziska Zuniga, Universität Basel, Basel, Switzerland

Editorial Board
Linda Aiken, PhD, RN, FAAN, FRCN, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Philadelphia, PA, USA
Wendy Chaboyer, Griffith University, Queensland, Australia
Sean Clarke, PhD, RN, FAAN, Connell School of Nursing, Boston College, MA, USA
John Cutcliffe, PhD, B.Sc.(Hon.), RMN, RGN, RPN, RN, University of Maine, Orono, ME, USA
Linda Franck, University of California, San Francisco, CA, USA
Ingagiill Rahm Hallberg, PhD, RN, FENAS, FAAN, Lund University, Lund, Sweden
Hongsoo Kim, PhD, MPH, RN, Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea
Elizabeth Manias, PhD, RN, BPharm, MPharm, CertCritCare, MNursStud, Deakin University, Burwood, VIC, Australia
Carl May, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK
Martin McKee, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, UK
Hugh McKenna, CBE, Hon Col, PhD, B.Sc(Hons), RMN, RGN, RNT, DipN(Lond), University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, UK
Eui Geum Oh, PhD, RN, Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea
Anne Marie Rafferty, King’s College London, London, UK
Nick Sevdalis, Imperial College London, London, UK
Maritta Välimäki, Dept. of Nursing Science, University of Turku, Finland
GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

Your Paper Your Way
We now differentiate between the requirements for new and revised submissions. You may choose to submit your manuscript as a single Word or PDF file to be used in the refereeing process. Only when your paper is at the revision stage, will you be requested to put your paper in to a 'correct format' for acceptance and provide the items required for the publication of your article.
To find out more, please visit the Preparation section below.

INTRODUCTION
The International Journal of Nursing Studies (IJNS) provides a forum for publication of scholarly papers that report research findings, research-based reviews, discussion papers and commentaries which are of interest to an international readership of practitioners, educators, administrators and researchers in all areas of nursing, midwifery and the caring sciences.

Papers should address issues of international interest and concern and present the study in the context of the existing international research base on the topic. Those which focus on a single country should identify how the material presented might be relevant to a wider audience and how it contributes to the international knowledge base. Selection of papers for publication is based on their scientific excellence, distinctive contribution to knowledge (including methodological development) and their importance to contemporary nursing, midwifery or related professions.

Submission to this journal proceeds totally online and you will be guided stepwise through the creation and uploading of your files. The system automatically converts your files to a single PDF file, which is used in the peer-review process.

Amongst the many submissions received we recognise that some will have been previously formatted for another journal. The Your Paper Your Way service (described later) means that authors can submit these papers to the IJNS without worrying about formatting the manuscript again to exacting specifications.

The IJNS also offers a rapid review service for newsworthy papers under our 4* submission service.

Types of papers
The IJNS publishes original research, reviews, and discussion papers. In addition we publish editorials and letters. Where a case is made we will also publish protocols of trials which meet our general criteria for interest and significance.

Editorials — 1,000–2,000 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 current/forthcoming content in the journal, should contact the Editor in Chief (ijns@kcl.ac.uk).

Research Papers — 2,000–7,000 words
Full papers reporting original research can be a maximum of 7000 words in length, although shorter papers are preferred. Research papers should adhere to recognised standards for reporting (see guidance below and the Author Checklist).

Reviews and Discussion Papers — 2,000–7,000 words
• Reviews, including:
  - systematic reviews, which address focused practice questions;
  - literature reviews (scoping reviews, narrative 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 nursing practice, the organisation of nursing services, or the education and preparation of nurses and/or midwives).
• Discussion Papers, i.e. scholarly articles of a debating or discursive nature.

Letters to the editor — up to 800 words and 10 references, from up to 5 authors
Designed to stimulate academic debate and discussion, the Editor invites readers to submit letters which should refer to and comment on recent content in the journal, introduce new comment and discussion of clear and direct relevance to the journal's aim and scope or briefly report data or research findings that may not warrant a full paper. Contributions that are of general interest, stimulating and meet the standards of scholarship associated with the Journal may be selected for publication. Contributions should be submitted as in the usual way.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Reporting guidelines

The editors require that manuscripts adhere to recognized reporting guidelines relevant to the research design used and require authors to submit a checklist verifying that essential elements have been reported for all primary research and systematic reviews.

Reporting guidelines endorsed by the journal are listed below:

- **Observational cohort, case control and cross sectional studies** - STROBE
- **Qualitative studies** - COREQ - Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research, http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/coreq

Where relevant, more specific extensions to the generic guide should be used, for example:

- **Cluster Randomised Controlled Trials** (where participants are randomised in groups, rather than as individuals) - Consort 2010 statement: extension to cluster randomised trials http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/consort-cluster/

You are required to adhere to these guidelines (or a suitable recognized alternative) and to submit a completed checklist from the reporting guideline to assist the editors and reviewers of your paper. You can search for the correct guideline for your study using the tools provided by the EQUATOR network: http://www.equator-network.org/ The guideline used must be indicated in the Author Checklist.

Studies reporting on the development of scales, measures or questionnaires

All research papers whose primary purpose is reporting the development or testing of scales / measures / questionnaires must include a copy of the full instrument as a supplementary file at submission stage so it can be published as an appendix online. The IJNS does not accept instrument development papers which are not accompanied by a copy. We are unlikely to consider papers where there is no validation against a robust criterion, where findings indicate that the version published requires further development or where the underlying constructs are not well established.

Authors are required to obtain written permission from the copyright owner of the instrument to reproduce it, and ensure that it is credited appropriately and the correct copyright line qualifying the permission to use/translate the instrument is supplied underneath the submitted scale. If authors want to retain copyright of their own scale they can do so and indicate that it is reproduced with their permission.
If the instrument is in a language other than English, then it must be accompanied by an English translation in addition to the original version. If the newly developed scale is a translation of an existing scale then the IJNS requires author(s) to obtain written permission from the copyright owner of the original scale to publish the translated version with full credit given also to the original scale (an English translation is still also required). We are unlikely to publish instrument translations from one language to another unless the scale is useful for directly guiding clinical practice (e.g. diagnostic/ screening instruments) related to important and defined outcomes or there is some other clear contribution to the wider international literature from the publication.

Where questionnaires or existing scales are used as measures to address a substantive question in the paper authors are strongly encouraged to submit the instrument for publication as an online appendix.

**Ethics in publishing**

The IJNS is a signatory journal to the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals, issued by the International Committee for Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), and to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) code of conduct for editors. Our guidelines should be read in conjunction with this broader guidance. The ICMJE requirements can be found at [http://www.icmje.org/](http://www.icmje.org/) and the COPE's guidelines at [http://publicationethics.org/files/u2/New_Code.pdf](http://publicationethics.org/files/u2/New_Code.pdf).

All studies must be conducted to a high ethical standard and must adhere to local regulations and standards for gaining scrutiny and approval. The work described in your article must have been carried out in accordance with The Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association (Declaration of Helsinki) for experiments involving humans [http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/](http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/); EC Directive 86/609/EEC for animal experiments [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/legislation_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/legislation_en.htm). This must be stated at an appropriate point in the article. The approving body and (if relevant) approval number should be identified in the Author Checklist.

For information on Ethics in Publishing and Ethical guidelines for journal publication see [https://www.elsevier.com/authorethics](https://www.elsevier.com/authorethics) and [https://www.elsevier.com/ethicalguidelines](https://www.elsevier.com/ethicalguidelines).

**Informed consent and patient details**

Studies on patients or volunteers require ethics committee approval and informed consent, which should be documented in the paper. Appropriate consents, permissions and releases must be obtained where an author wishes to include case details or other personal information or images of patients and any other individuals in an Elsevier publication. Written consents must be retained by the author but copies should not be provided to the journal. Only if specifically requested by the journal in exceptional circumstances (for example if a legal issue arises) the author must provide copies of the consents or evidence that such consents have been obtained. For more information, please review the Elsevier Policy on the Use of Images or Personal Information of Patients or other Individuals. Unless you have written permission from the patient (or, where applicable, the next of kin), the personal details of any patient included in any part of the article and in any supplementary materials (including all illustrations and videos) must be removed before submission.

**Conflict of interest**

All authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organizations that could influence their work. 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 [https://www.elsevier.com/conflictsinterest](https://www.elsevier.com/conflictsinterest). Further information and an example of a Conflict of Interest form can be found at: [http://service.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/286/supporthub/publishing](http://service.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/286/supporthub/publishing).

Potential conflicts of interest do not necessarily preclude publication and authors are advised to err on the side of transparency and openness in declaring any relevant relationships.

**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 originality, your article may be checked by the originality detection service Crossref Similarity Check.

Other/multiple and parallel publications
The journal seeks to publish original papers that make a substantial novel contribution. Generally the generous word limits of the IJNS permit authors to publish all aspects of a study within a single paper. However we recognize that this is not always possible. Please see our editorial on multiple papers from single studies and duplicate publication, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2008.07.003 To aid editorial decisions about distinctiveness and to avoid inadvertent duplication please upload copies of all previous, current and under review publications from this study and / or give full detail in the Author Checklist. See https://www.elsevier.com/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/163719/ETHICS_SS01a.pdf

All published and in press accounts of the study from which data in this paper must be referred to in the paper and the relationship between this and other publications from the same study must be made clear. It is not sufficient to simply cite a prior publication - the text must state that results are from the same study. Citation of publications 'in press' is acceptable, provided that full detail is given.

If other publications are under review or in preparation this should be mentioned in your letter to the editor and you should give an undertaking that you will take all possible steps to ensure subsequent publications contain a reference to your IJNS publication if you are successful. The study should be referred to by a distinctive name in the title of the published paper which will be used in the title of future publications to identify that the data reported in different papers are from the same study.

If your article is based on previously published work (for example Cochrane reviews, substantive project reports) please give full detail on the Author Checklist, detail the relationship between the pieces of work in your letter to the editor and ensure that the link is explicit within the paper.

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. Articles should make no assumptions about the beliefs or commitments of any reader, should contain nothing which might imply that one individual is superior to another on the grounds of race, sex, culture or any other characteristic, and should use inclusive language throughout. Authors should ensure that writing is free from bias, for instance by using 'he or she', 'his/her' instead of 'he' or 'his', and by making use of job titles that are free of stereotyping (e.g. 'chairperson' instead of 'chairman' and 'flight attendant' instead of 'stewardess').

Contributors & Acknowledgements
All authors should have made substantial contributions to all of the following: (1) the conception and design of the study, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data, (2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content, (3) final approval of the version to be submitted.

In the covering letter to the editorial office, we ask you make a true statement that all authors meet the criteria for authorship, have approved the final article and that all those entitled to authorship are listed as authors. We ask that roles for each and every author be individually described, with reference to the criteria for authorship. Those who meet some but not all of the criteria for authors can be identified as ‘contributors' at the end of the manuscript with their contribution specified. All those individuals who provided help during the research (e.g., collecting data, providing language help, writing assistance or proofreading the article, etc.) but who do not meet criteria for authorship should be acknowledged in the paper.

For papers with many authors we may ask that you give a corporate name for the research group (e.g. ATLAS Research Group) to appear at the front of the article and list all authors [as defined above] at the end of the paper. Any contributors and acknowledgements should be listed additionally, as described above.
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.

Copyright
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.

Upon acceptance of an article, authors will be asked to complete a ‘Journal Publishing Agreement’ (for more information on this and copyright, see https://www.elsevier.com/copyright). 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.

For open access articles: Upon acceptance of an article, authors will be asked to complete an 'Exclusive License Agreement' (for more information see https://www.elsevier.com/OAauthoragreement). Permitted third party reuse of open access articles is determined by the author's choice of user license (see https://www.elsevier.com/openaccesslicenses).

Author rights
As an author you (or your employer or institution) have certain rights to reuse your work. For more information see https://www.elsevier.com/copyright.

Elsevier supports responsible sharing
Find out how you can share your research published in Elsevier journals.

Role of the funding source
You are requested to identify who provided financial support for the conduct of the research and/or preparation of the article and to briefly describe the role of the sponsor(s), if any, in study design; in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data; in the writing of the report; and in the decision to submit the article for publication. If the funding source(s) had no such involvement then this should be stated.

If you received no external funding (i.e. other than your main employer) please state 'no external funding'. Please see https://www.elsevier.com/funding.

Funding body agreements and policies
Elsevier has established a number of agreements with funding bodies which allow authors to comply with their funder's open access policies. Some funding bodies will reimburse the author for the gold open access publication fee. Details of existing agreements are available online. After acceptance, open access papers will be published under a noncommercial license. For authors requiring a commercial CC BY license, you can apply after your manuscript is accepted for publication.

Open access
This journal offers authors a choice in publishing their research:

Subscription
- Articles are made available to subscribers as well as developing countries and patient groups through our universal access programs.
- No open access publication fee payable by authors.
- The Author is entitled to post the accepted manuscript in their institution’s repository and make this public after an embargo period (known as green Open Access). The published journal article cannot be shared publicly, for example on ResearchGate or Academia.edu, to ensure the sustainability of peer-reviewed research in journal publications. The embargo period for this journal can be found below.
**Gold open access**
- Articles are freely available to both subscribers and the wider public with permitted reuse.
- A gold open access publication fee is payable by authors or on their behalf, e.g. by their research funder or institution.

Regardless of how you choose to publish your article, the journal will apply the same peer review criteria and acceptance standards.

For gold open access articles, permitted third party (re)use is defined by the following Creative Commons user licenses:

**Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND)**
For non-commercial purposes, lets others distribute and copy the article, and to include in a collective work (such as an anthology), as long as they credit the author(s) and provided they do not alter or modify the article.

The gold open access publication fee for this journal is **USD 3150**, excluding taxes. Learn more about Elsevier's pricing policy: [https://www.elsevier.com/openaccesspricing](https://www.elsevier.com/openaccesspricing).

**Green open access**
Authors can share their research in a variety of different ways and Elsevier has a number of green open access options available. We recommend authors see our open access page for further information. Authors can also self-archive their manuscripts immediately and enable public access from their institution's repository after an embargo period. This is the version that has been accepted for publication and which typically includes author-incorporated changes suggested during submission, peer review and in editor-author communications. Embargo period: For subscription articles, an appropriate amount of time is needed for journals to deliver value to subscribing customers before an article becomes freely available to the public. This is the embargo period and it begins from the date the article is formally published online in its final and fully citable form. [Find out more.](https://www.elsevier.com/openaccess/rights/embargo)

This journal has an embargo period of 12 months.

*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.

*Language (usage and editing services)*
Please write your text in good English (American or British usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these). Authors who feel their English language manuscript may require editing to eliminate possible grammatical or spelling errors and to conform to correct scientific English may wish to use the English Language Editing service available from Elsevier's WebShop.

*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 [http://ees.elsevier.com/ijns](http://ees.elsevier.com/ijns).

*Referees*
Authors may choose to submit the names and institutional e-mail addresses of three potential referees. For more details, visit our Support site. Note that the editor retains the sole right to decide whether or not the suggested reviewers are used.

*Trial or other study registration*
We encourage the prospective registration of studies. Where a study has been registered please give the number in your Author Checklist (e.g. ISRCTN) and include the registration number within the title, abstract or body of the paper as appropriate.
**Review process**

The decision to publish a paper is based on an editorial assessment and peer review.

Initially all papers are assessed by an editorial committee consisting of 2 or more members of the editorial team. The prime purpose is to decide whether to send a paper for peer review and to give a rapid decision on those that are not.

Editorials and Letters may be accepted at this stage but in all other cases the decision is to reject the paper or to send it for peer review. Papers which do not meet basic standards or are unlikely to be published irrespective of a positive peer review, for example because their novel contribution is insufficient or the relevance to the discipline is unclear, may be rejected at this point in order to avoid delays to authors who may wish to seek publication elsewhere. Occasionally a paper will be returned to the author with requests for revisions in order to assist the editors in deciding whether or not send it out for review. Authors can expect a decision from this stage of the review process within 2–3 weeks of submission.

Manuscripts going forward to the review process are reviewed by members of an international expert panel. All such papers will undergo a double blind peer review by two or more reviewers, plus an Associate Editor. We take every reasonable step to ensure author identity is concealed during the review process but it is up to authors to ensure that their details of prior publications etc. do not reveal their identity. Authors who reveal their identity in the manuscript will be deemed to have declined anonymity and the review will be single blind (i.e. authors do not know reviewers’ identities).

We aim to complete the review process within 8 weeks of the decision to review although occasionally delays do happen and authors should allow at least 12 weeks from submissions before contacting the journal. The Editor-in-Chief reserves the right to the final decision regarding acceptance.

**PREPARATION**

**NEW SUBMISSIONS**

Submission to this journal proceeds totally online and you will be guided stepwise through the creation and uploading of your files. The system automatically converts your files to a single PDF file, which is used in the peer-review process.

As part of the Your Paper Your Way service, you may choose to submit your manuscript as a single file to be used in the refereeing process. This can be a PDF file or a Word document, in any format or lay-out that can be used by referees to evaluate your manuscript. It should contain high enough quality figures for refereeing. If you prefer to do so, you may still provide all or some of the source files at the initial submission. Please note that individual figure files larger than 10 MB must be uploaded separately.

**References**

There are no strict requirements on reference formatting at submission. References can be in any style or format as long as the style is consistent. Where applicable, author(s) name(s), journal title/book title, chapter title/article title, year of publication, volume number/book chapter and the article number or pagination must be present. Use of DOI is highly encouraged. The reference style used by the journal will be applied to the accepted article by Elsevier at the proof stage. Note that missing data will be highlighted at proof stage for the author to correct.

**Formatting requirements**

There are no strict formatting requirements but all manuscripts must contain the essential elements needed to convey your manuscript, for example Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Conclusions, Artwork and Tables with Captions and "Contribution of Paper" (where applicable).

If your article includes any Videos and/or other Supplementary material, this should be included in your initial submission for peer review purposes.

Divide the article into clearly defined sections.
Figures and tables embedded in text
Please ensure the figures and the tables included in the single file are placed next to the relevant text in the manuscript, rather than at the bottom or the top of the file. The corresponding caption should be placed directly below the figure or table.

Double-blind review
This journal uses double-blind review, which means that both the reviewer and author name(s) are not allowed to be revealed to one another for a manuscript under review. The identities of the authors are concealed from the reviewers, and vice versa. For more information please refer to https://www.elsevier.com/reviewers/peer-review. To facilitate this, please include the following separately:

ALL SUBMISSIONS
The following documents are needed for all submissions (please refer to the Author Checklist for further guidance on preparing your manuscript).

Title page (with author details) – This should include the title, authors' names and affiliations, and a complete address for the corresponding author including telephone and e-mail address. Twitter handles for one, or all, authors may also be included on the Title Page if they wish for these to be published.

Blinded manuscript (no author details) – The main body of the paper (including the references, figures, tables and any Acknowledgements) should not include any identifying information, such as the authors' names or affiliations. Please ensure that the manuscript includes page numbers for ease of reference during the review process.

Author Checklist – completed reporting guidelines for the relevant research design.

Covering letter – to the editor in which you detail authorship contributions and other matters you wish the editors to consider.

Contribution of the Paper
All submissions (with the exception of Letters and Editorials) should include "Contribution of the Paper" statements. This should take the form of a clear summary of 'What is already known about the topic?' and 'What this paper adds', identifying existing research knowledge relating to the specific research question / topic and a summary of the new knowledge added by this study. Under each of these headings, please provide clear statements in the form of two or three short bullet points for each. The statements should be placed in the manuscript file between the Abstract and the main body of text, as well as supplied as a separate standalone file at submission.

Do not give general statements in what is known, instead focus on the results of research addressing the same question(s). Do NOT give process statements of what the paper does. eg. "This review demonstrates that nurse-led intermediate care reduces hospital stay but increases total inpatient stay" (outcome) NOT "This review considers the impact of nurse-led intermediate care on acute stay and total inpatient stay" (process).

Contribution of the Paper statements ('What is already known about the topic?' and 'What this paper adds') should be uploaded as a separate file at submission; and included as bullet points, under the correct heading, between the Abstract and the main body of text in the manuscript file (authors are asked to refer to a recent copy of the journal for guidance) The statements in the separate file and in the manuscript should be identical.

REVISED SUBMISSIONS
At revision stage the following documentation is required:

• a separate "Response to Reviewers" file – Responses to the reviewers' and editors' comments.
• a revised blinded manuscript with changes clearly highlighted.

Revised submissions should be accompanied by a letter which responds point by point to the reviewers' and editors' comments, and changes to the revised paper should be highlighted so they can be spotted easily by the reviewers to whom the paper is normally returned for further review/comment.
Use of word processing software
Regardless of the file format of the original submission, at revision you must provide us with an editable file of the entire article. Keep the layout of the text as simple as possible. Most formatting codes will be removed and replaced on processing the article. The electronic text should be prepared in a way very similar to that of conventional manuscripts (see also the Guide to Publishing with Elsevier). See also the section on Electronic artwork.
To avoid unnecessary errors you are strongly advised to use the 'spell-check' and 'grammar-check' functions of your word processor.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

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.

**Title**
The title should be in the format 'Topic / question: design/type of paper' and identify the population / care setting studied. (e.g. The effectiveness of telephone support for adolescents with insulin dependent diabetes: controlled before and after study). The country in which the study was conducted should not normally be named in the title.

**Abstract**
Abstracts should be less than 400 words, and should not include references or abbreviations. Abstracts of research papers must be structured and should adopt the headings suggested by the relevant reporting guidelines (see below). In general they should include the following: **Background; Objectives; Design; Settings** (do not specify actual centres, but give the number and types of centre and geographical location if important); **Participants** (details of how selected, inclusion and exclusion criteria, numbers entering and leaving the study, relevant clinical and demographic characteristics); **Methods; Results**, report main outcome(s)/findings including (where relevant) levels of statistical significance and confidence intervals; and **Conclusions**, which should relate to study aims and hypotheses. Abstracts for reviews should provide a summary under the following headings, where possible: Objectives, Design, Data sources, Review methods, Results, Conclusions. Abstracts for Discussion Papers should provide a concise summary of the line of argument pursued and conclusions.

**Keywords**
Provide between four and ten key words in alphabetical order, which accurately identify the paper's subject, purpose, method and focus. Use the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH®) thesaurus or Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL) headings where possible (see http://www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/meshhome.html).

**Abbreviations, acronyms and initialisms**
As a rule the International Journal of Nursing Studies does not permit the use of abbreviations, acronyms and initialisms (abbreviations for brevity). We make a limited number of exceptions but we do not allow the use of any abbreviations that are not widely recognised. The limited exceptions include cases where the abbreviated form has near universal recognition (e.g. USA), statistical terms and tests (e.g. df, t, ANOVA) and instruments that are generally identified by their initials or an abbreviation (e.g. SF36)
As a rule, any abbreviations which the authors intend to use should be written out in full and followed by the letters in brackets the first time they appear, thereafter only the letters without brackets should be used. For additional guidance, see the editorial policy/style on abbreviations, initialisms and acronyms.

**Statistics**

Standard methods of presenting statistical material should be used. Where methods used are not widely recognised explanation and full reference to widely accessible sources must be given. Exact p values should be given to no more than three decimal places. Wherever possible give both point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for all population parameters estimated by the study (e.g. group differences, frequency of characteristics) Identify the statistical package used (please note that SPSS has not been "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" for many years).

**Tables and figures**

There should be no more than five tables and figures in total and these should be included in the manuscript at the appropriate point. All tables and figures should be clearly labelled. If your manuscript includes more than 5 tables in total, or for very large tables, these can be submitted as Supplementary Data and will be included as such in the online version of your article.

**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, please include the following sentence:

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

**Appendices**

Normally there should be no appendices although in the case of papers reporting tool development or the use of novel questionnaires authors must include a copy of the tool as an appendix unless all items appear in a table in the text.

**Informed consent**

Where applicable authors should confirm that informed consent was obtained from human subjects and that ethical clearance was obtained from the appropriate authority.

**Permissions**

Permission to reproduce previously published material must be obtained in writing from the copyright holder (usually the publisher) and acknowledged in the manuscript.

**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, shorter papers of between 2,000 and 3,500 words are preferred. However, full papers may be up to 7,000 words in length, plus tables, figures, 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.

**Artwork**

There should be no more than five tables and figures in total. All tables and figures should be clearly labelled. If your manuscript includes more than 5 tables in total, or for very large tables, these can be submitted as Supplementary Data and will be included as such in the online version of your article.

**Electronic artwork**

**General points**

- Make sure you use uniform lettering and sizing of your original artwork.
• Preferred fonts: Arial (or Helvetica), Times New Roman (or Times), Symbol, Courier.
• Number the illustrations according to their sequence in the text.
• Use a logical naming convention for your artwork files.
• Indicate per figure if it is a single, 1.5 or 2-column fitting image.
• For Word submissions only, you may still provide figures and their captions, and tables within a single file at the revision stage.
• Please note that individual figure files larger than 10 MB must be provided in separate source files. 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
Regardless of the application used, 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 the font or save the text as 'graphics'.
TIFF (or JPG): Color or grayscale photographs (halftones): always use a minimum of 300 dpi.
TIFF (or JPG): Bitmapped line drawings: use a minimum of 1000 dpi.
TIFF (or JPG): Combinations bitmapped line/half-tone (color or grayscale): a minimum of 500 dpi is required.

Please do not:
• Supply files that are optimized for screen use (e.g., GIF, BMP, PICT, WPG); the resolution is too low.
• Supply files that are too low in resolution.
• Submit graphics that are disproportionately large for the content.

Colour 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 colour figures then Elsevier will ensure, at no additional charge, that these figures will appear in colour online (e.g., ScienceDirect and other sites) regardless of whether or not these illustrations are reproduced in colour in the printed version. For colour reproduction in print, you will receive information regarding the costs from Elsevier after receipt of your accepted article. Please indicate your preference for colour: in print or online only. For further information on the preparation of electronic artwork, please see https://www.elsevier.com/artworkinstructions.

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

Illustration services
Elsevier's WebShop offers Illustration Services to authors preparing to submit a manuscript but concerned about the quality of the images accompanying their article. Elsevier's expert illustrators can produce scientific, technical and medical-style images, as well as a full range of charts, tables and graphs. Image 'polishing' is also available, where our illustrators take your image(s) and improve them to a professional standard. Please visit the website to find out more.

Figure captions
Ensure that each illustration has a caption. 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 next to the relevant text in the article. 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.

References
Citation in text
Please ensure that every reference cited in the text is also present in the reference list (and vice versa). Unpublished results and personal communications are not recommended in the reference list, but may be mentioned in the text. If these references are included in the reference list they should follow the standard reference style of the journal and should include a substitution of the publication date with either 'Unpublished results' or 'Personal communication'. Citation of a reference as 'in press' implies that the item has been accepted for publication.
Reference links
Increased discoverability of research and high quality peer review are ensured by online links to the sources cited. In order to allow us to create links to abstracting and indexing services, such as Scopus, CrossRef and PubMed, please ensure that data provided in the references are correct. Please note that incorrect surnames, journal/book titles, publication year and pagination may prevent link creation. When copying references, please be careful as they may already contain errors. Use of the DOI is highly encouraged.

A DOI is guaranteed never to change, so you can use it as a permanent link to any electronic article. An example of a citation using DOI for an article not yet in an issue is: VanDecar J.C., Russo R.M., James D.E., Ambeh W.B., Franke M. (2003). Aseismic continuation of the Lesser Antilles slab beneath northeastern Venezuela. Journal of Geophysical Research, https://doi.org/10.1029/2001JB000884. Please note the format of such citations should be in the same style as all other references in the paper.

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

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.

Users of Mendeley Desktop can easily install the reference style for this journal by clicking the following link:
http://open.mendeley.com/use-citation-style/international-journal-of-nursing-studies
When preparing your manuscript, you will then be able to select this style using the Mendeley plug-ins for Microsoft Word or LibreOffice.

Reference style
Text: All citations in the text should refer to:
1. Single author: the author's name (without initials, unless there is ambiguity) and the year of publication;
2. Two authors: both authors' names and the year of publication;
3. Three or more authors: first author's name followed by 'et al.' and the year of publication.

Citations may be made directly (or parenthetically). Groups of references can be listed either first alphabetically, then chronologically, or vice versa.

Examples: 'as demonstrated (Allan, 2000a, 2000b, 1999; Allan and Jones, 1999).... Or, as demonstrated (Jones, 1999; Allan, 2000).... Kramer et al. (2010) have recently shown ....'

List: References should be arranged first alphabetically and then further sorted chronologically if necessary. More than one reference from the same author(s) in the same year must be identified by the letters 'a', 'b', 'c', etc., placed after the year of publication.

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:

**Reference management software**
This journal has standard templates available in key reference management packages EndNote (http://www.endnote.com/support/enstyles.asp) and Reference Manager (http://refman.com/support/rmstyles.asp). Using plug-ins to word processing packages, authors only need to select the appropriate journal template when preparing their article and the list of references and citations to these will be formatted according to the journal style which is described below.

**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.

**Supplementary material**
Supplementary material such as applications, images and sound clips, can be published with your article to enhance it. Submitted supplementary items are published exactly as they are received (Excel or PowerPoint files will appear as such online). Please submit your material together with the article and supply a concise, descriptive caption for each supplementary file. If you wish to make changes to supplementary material during any stage of the process, please make sure to provide an updated file. Do not annotate any corrections on a previous version. Please switch off the 'Track Changes' option in Microsoft Office files as these will appear in the published version.

**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. To facilitate reproducibility and data reuse, this journal also encourages you to share your 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).

**Mendeley Data**
This journal supports Mendeley Data, enabling you to deposit any research data (including raw and processed data, video, code, software, algorithms, protocols, and methods) associated with your manuscript in a free-to-use, open access repository. During the submission process, after uploading your manuscript, you will have the opportunity to upload your relevant datasets directly to Mendeley Data. The datasets will be listed and directly accessible to readers next to your published article online.

For more information, visit the Mendeley Data for journals page.
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.

Queries
For questions about the editorial process (including the status of manuscripts under review) please contact the editorial office ijns@kcl.ac.uk. For technical support on submissions please contact http://epsupport.elsevier.com.

AFTER ACCEPTANCE

Online proof correction
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. Both corresponding and co-authors may order offprints at any time via Elsevier's Webshop. 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.