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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.

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

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GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

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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.

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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

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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.

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- **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](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) - Consortium 2010 statement: extension to cluster randomised trials, [http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/consort-cluster/](http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/consort-cluster/)
- **Observational studies using routine data** - RECORD - The Reporting of studies Conducted using Observational Routinely-collected health Data, [http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/record](http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/record)

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/](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.

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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.

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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.


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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.

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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

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Divide the article into clearly defined sections.

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ALL SUBMISSIONS
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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.

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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.

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

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