DESCRIPTION

The Spine Journal, the official journal of the North American Spine Society, is an international and multidisciplinary journal that publishes original, peer-reviewed articles on research and treatment related to the spine and spine care, including basic science and clinical investigations. It is a condition of publication that manuscripts submitted to The Spine Journal have not been published, and will not be simultaneously submitted or published elsewhere. The Spine Journal also publishes major reviews of specific topics by acknowledged authorities, technical notes, teaching editorials, and other special features, Letters to the Editor-in-Chief are encouraged.

The Spine Journal is ranked 4th of 63 journals in Orthopaedics category on the 2012 Journal Citation Reports®, published by Thomson Reuters, and has an Impact Factor of 3.220.

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GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

Introduction

The Spine Journal, the official journal of the North American Spine Society, is an international and multidisciplinary journal that publishes original, peer-reviewed articles on research and treatment related to the spine and high-quality, ethical, evidence-based spine care, including basic science and clinical investigations. The Spine Journal (TSJ) also publishes major reviews of specific topics, technical notes, editorials and special features.

TSJ publishes full-length articles (in the form of Clinical Studies and Basic Science papers), Technical Reports, Review Articles, Letters to the Editor and a number of other special features.

All submissions are accepted with the understanding that they have not been, and will not be, published elsewhere substantially in any format. Also, there should be no ethical concerns with the content or data collection. TSJ reserves the right to request any research materials on which the paper is based.

Submission Fees

Beginning in January 2017 the journal will charge a submission fee for all unsolicited manuscripts.

Submission Fees:
$50 for members of the North American Spine Society $125 for non-members

After online submission and check-in of your submission by the Journal staff, authors will be sent an email referring them to a payment page at the Elsevier Webshop. Manuscripts will be reviewed only after we have received confirmation of your payment.

Article Types

Clinical Studies (See sub-categories below)

Clinical studies are previously unpublished manuscripts that include clinical investigations, clinical observations and clinically relevant trials. Abstracts for Clinical Studies are required to have all eight (8) structured subheadings: background context, purpose, design, patient sample, outcome measures, methods, results and conclusions.

TSJ has adopted guidelines designed to improve the reporting of clinical studies. By following these guidelines, many of which include checklists and flow charts, authors ensure that readers can assess the validity of their findings. Submissions to TSJ must adhere to the guideline that applies to their study, as specified below.

Clinical studies should be between 1500 and 4500 words (approx. 6 to 12 double-spaced pages).

1. Controlled Trials

a) Randomized controlled trials (RCTs): Complete CONSORT checklist and include flow diagram in article.


Website: http://www.consort-statement.org/

CONSORT extensions may apply to specific study types:

i. Non-inferiority and Equivalence RCTs:

**ii. Cluster RCTs:**

**iii. Non-pharmacological treatment interventions:**

**iv. Health-Related Quality of Life Studies:**

**v. RCTs with Patient-Reported Outcomes:**

**b) Non-randomized controlled trials:** Complete TREND checklist and include flow diagram in article.


Website: [http://www.cdc.gov/trendstatement/](http://www.cdc.gov/trendstatement/)

A controlled trial is defined by the ICMJE as any research project that prospectively assigns human subjects to intervention and comparison groups to study the cause-and-effect relationship between a medical intervention and a health outcome. A controlled trial, whether randomized or not, must be registered in a public registry meeting ICMJE requirements prior to submission to TSJ.

### 2. Observational Studies

**Cohort, case-control, and cross-sectional studies:** Complete the STROBE checklist and include flow diagram (if applicable) in article.


Website: [http://www.strobe-statement.org/](http://www.strobe-statement.org/)

### 3. Diagnostic Test Studies

Complete STARD checklist and include flow diagram in article.


Website: http://www.stard-statement.org/

4. Reliability and agreement Studies

Authors should read the following report and include the recommended elements in the article.


5. Cost-Effectiveness Studies

Authors should read the following report and include the recommended elements in the article.


6. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses

a) Reviews of RCTs: Complete PRISMA checklist and include flow diagram in article.


Website: http://prisma-statement.org/

b) Reviews of observational studies:


7. Uncontrolled Case Series

Authors should read the following report and include the recommended elements in the article.


All clinical studies published in The Spine Journal will include a text box, compiled by the Journal editors, that provides an evidence-based critique of the study. The one-column breakout box is meant to facilitate inquiry and spark discussion on the most important topics of a given paper.

Basic Science Papers

Basic science papers are previously unpublished manuscripts that include laboratory work in areas ranging from basic lab work, cadaver studies, cellular mechanisms, molecular biology, growth factor work, preclinical animal studies and novel imaging (as related to the basic sciences rather than clinical imaging). Structured abstract is required.

Technical Reports
The manuscript should deal with newer material of interest. The text length may vary from 10-25 double-spaced pages and should include a minimum of 15 references. Ample illustrations (radiographs, photographs and original art) should be used to clearly show the devices/ equipment, technique and pictorial evidence. Structured Abstract is required.

**Review Articles**

The manuscript should cover an established but controversial area of multidisciplinary spine care with the goal of updating and consolidating knowledge and the conceptual framework. It should include a minimum of 50 references with 20-30 pages of double spaced text, 3-5 explanatory tables, and appropriate artwork. A structured abstract is required.

**Case Reports**

Case reports submissions are no longer accepted.

**Special Features**

Authors are encouraged to submit material for publication in any of the following special features sections of The Spine Journal. All should follow the general format of instructions to authors provided above.

**Letters to the Editor (correspondence)** - These are strongly encouraged to foster open dialogue between our readers, authors and editors. These should be addressed "To the Editor" and submitted with the understanding that the material may be shortened or otherwise edited. Letters should be kept to 500 words. Letters that address material previously published in The Spine Journal may be followed by responses from the author of the work being discussed and/or the Editor. All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the original manuscript authors are given an opportunity to reply to any comments expressed about their work. Replies to letters to the editor must also be less than 500 words.

**Commentaries** - These are solicited pieces, the material for which would reference current topics in spine care, or a concurrently published article. Unlike Letters to the Editor, these pieces will typically be about 1500 words (excluding tables, figures and references) and provide more in-depth discussion on the research in the accompanied manuscript or a topic suggested by the Executive Editorial Board. These manuscripts are composed as stand-alone articles, with appropriate tables, figures and references (limited to 30).

**Perspectives** - These are solicited and unsolicited editorial pieces about a topic in spine care, extending beyond a letter to the editor - which usually discuss a previously published TSJ article - but that don't quite meet the criteria for a Review Article. Unlike an Editorial, an article type that is generally reserved for members of the TSJ Editorial Board, Perspectives give a voice to anyone who wishes to express an opinion on a wide range of discussion topics.

**Journal Reports** - A review of one to three articles selected from a monthly survey of medical journals that contain content relevant to TSJ readers. Articles will be chosen by the Special Features Editor and Editor-in-Chief. The Spine Journal would like to encourage readers to submit their recommendations for this feature. You can do so by contacting the editorial office at (630) 230-3646, or by email at spinejournal@spine.org.

**Topics in Clinical Practice** - These recurring topic articles will serve as an updated curriculum of evidence-based reviews of topics relevant to practicing clinicians in spinal disorders (both primary care providers and specialists). Articles in this series should include the following sections: the clinical problem, new evidence, areas of uncertainty, critique of current established guidelines, and the authors' conclusions and recommendations. The text is limited to 2500 words plus references, figures, and tables. These articles do not include an abstract, but will include a section box of key advances.

**Images of Spine Care** - The Journal is no longer accepting submissions for Images of Spine Care.
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Detailed instructions on the use of the online submission system are available on the [EES site](http://www.elsevier.com/journals/the-spine-journal/1529-9430/guide-for-authors), under "Guide for Authors." Please read the helpful "Hints" for information on how to register, and review the "Tutorial for Authors" for an overview of the submission process. If you need further help, please visit our Support Center.

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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:
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- Include keywords
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• Affirmation of Authorship Form (completed and uploaded)
• FDA Device/Drug Approval Status Form (completed and uploaded)
• Level of Evidence Form for Clinical Studies (completed and uploaded)
• Checklists and flow diagrams as specified above in ARTICLE TYPES.
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• One copy of the manuscript, blinded, and formatted according to the instructions.
• Title page including:
  Title;
  Each author’s complete name and academic or scientific affiliation.
  Corresponding Author’s complete and correct address, phone number, and e-mail address.
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• References (properly formatted)
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• Tables (optional).
• Figures (optional) properly formatted and labeled according to the instructions
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Financial associations relevant to the specific article being submitted should be included in the "Methods" section of the article abstract, and presented in the "Discussion" section of the article. Both should include the magnitude of the financial association (ie, specific dollar amounts within ranges).

Authors of controlled and randomized trials are expected to comply with Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) guidelines. Reports of noncontrolled trials and other clinical studies submitted to TSJ must follow the CONSORT guidelines for reporting harms (adverse events and complications).

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The following separate components are required (except as noted when optional):
1. Abstract (structured as outlined below. Methods section must include detailed relevant disclosure)
2. Keywords (6-10)
3. Classifications
4. Title Page (separate from manuscript) with all authors, affiliations and corresponding author's full contact information
5. Revision notes (revision stage only)
6. Manuscript document (blinded - no author names, headers, acknowledgements)
7. Tables (optional)
8. Figures (optional)
9. CMJE-TSJ Author Disclosure form
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11. FDA drug/device approval status form
12. Level of Evidence form (Clinical Studies only)
13. Appropriate checklists and flow diagrams as specified below in ARTICLE TYPES.

Cover Letter

Manuscripts may be accompanied by a cover letter, to include information on the manuscript's prior publication or previous rejection by another journal. It is also meant to give the author(s) the chance to speak to the originality of the work being presented, as well as any other information the author(s) wish to convey to the editorial office staff and Editor-in-Chief. If the paper has been rejected previously by another journal, the author(s) should describe specifically how it has been improved since being rejected.

The Cover letter should be pasted into the box at the "Enter Comments" step, just prior to the "Attach files" section.

The First or Corresponding author of a manuscript should confirm that he/she "had full access to all the data in the study and takes responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis as well as the decision to submit for publication."

A separate cover letter, called a "Revision Notes" file, is required for revised manuscripts, and must respond to all comments made by the reviewers and editors. Even if the authors decide not to alter a part of the manuscript based on a particular revision request, a response should be included for said comment.

Style
Keep to the guidelines of style, terminology, measurement and quantization as prescribed in the *American Medical Association Manual of Style* (10th ed. Oxford University Press, NY, 2007). *TSJ* can accept text files in most standard word processing formats but Microsoft Word is preferred. Manuscripts must be blind (no author names, headers, acknowledgements, imbedded comments) keyed.

**Manuscript pages and text lines should be numbered. When numbering your text, begin the first line on each page with 1.**

Distinguish between capital letter O and number 0, as well as capital letter I, lowercase letter l and number 1. However, authors should not attempt to determine the visual presentation of the article. All design considerations regarding typeface, page layout, artwork, etc. will be handled by the publisher; do not use any special formatting. All text should be flush left. Do not indent paragraphs. Double hard return between paragraphs and between list items. Do not use hard returns within a paragraph or list item. Tabs should not be used, except in Tables, where they should be used to align columns. Do not use your word processor’s hyphenation capabilities.

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Full length articles, Technical Reports, Review Articles and Case Studies are peer-reviewed. The managing editor is the first-look editor for all manuscripts, evaluating text and general submission format. The managing editor makes sure all manuscripts meet *TSJ*’s guidelines as prescribed in these author instructions. Once a manuscript has been initially evaluated, the managing editor will assign a set of appropriately chosen peer reviewers to evaluate and make comments on the manuscript. The invited reviewers are knowledgeable about the field of study being discussed, and as such are able to comment on the research and any subsequent conclusions made.

For most manuscripts *TSJ* is a double-blind journal. Great care is taken not to reveal the identity of the reviewers or the author(s).

In most cases a deputy editor will evaluate the reviewers' comments and make a recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief regarding publication. **THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF HAS FINAL SAY ABOUT THE FATE OF ALL MANUSCRIPTS.** If the editors feel the manuscript could be eligible for publication following author revision - be it minor or major - the submission will be sent back to the corresponding author. The corresponding author should consider making any changes suggested by the reviewers and editors and return the research back to the editorial office. The managing editor will again send the manuscript out for a second round of reviews. Whenever possible, the reviewers from the first round will be invited again, so as to encourage continuity of review.

**Use of word processing software**

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

**Article Structure**

The following separate components are required (except as noted when optional):

1. Abstract (structured as outlined below. Methods section must include detailed relevant disclosure)
2. Keywords (6-10)
3. Classifications
4. Title Page (separate from manuscript) with all authors, affiliations and corresponding author's full contact information
5. Revision notes (revision stage only)
6. Manuscript document (blinded - no author names, headers, acknowledgements)
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8. Figures (optional)
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11. FDA drug/device approval status form
12. Level of Evidence form (Clinical Studies only)
13. Appropriate checklists and flow diagrams as specified below in ARTICLE TYPES.

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Manuscripts may be accompanied by a cover letter, to include information on the manuscript's prior publication or previous rejection by another journal. It is also meant to give the author(s) the chance to speak to the originality of the work being presented, as well as any other information the author(s) wish to convey to the editorial office staff and Editor-in-Chief. If the paper has been rejected previously by another journal, the author(s) should describe specifically how it has been improved since being rejected.

The Cover letter should be pasted into the box at the "Enter Comments" step, just prior to the "Attach files" section.

The First or Corresponding author of a manuscript should confirm that he/she "had full access to all the data in the study and takes responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis as well as the decision to submit for publication."

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