

UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS FOR MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED TO «WEST KAZAKHSTAN MEDICAL JOURNAL»

«West Kazakhstan Medical Journal» is a peer-reviewed biomedical journal, which publishes original articles, literature reviews, conference reports and editorials covering various areas of public health and clinical medicine. The primary audience of the journal includes biomedical scientific community, practicing physicians, doctoral- and master-students in the fields of medicine and public health.

These New guidelines for authors were developed to follow international trends in evidence-based medicine and to comply with international quality standards of scientific literature. They are based on «the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals», developed by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). Following these requirements will help to improve the quality of the journal, broaden its national and international readership and increase the number of citations.

Manuscripts, which do not follow these Uniform Requirements, will not be considered.

All articles submitted to the will go through a double blind peer review procedure. Manuscripts containing results of statistical tests will be sent to a statistical reviewer. The Editorial Office has the right to request an original depersonalized database which was used for statistical analysis in questionable cases. The Editorial Office reserves the right to make editorial changes in the text of the articles without changing the context.

All manuscripts should be submitted to the Editorial Office in electronic form.

A manuscript should be accompanied by a cover letter which should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief and include the following information:

1. Full name, scientific title, affiliation and position of the corresponding author
2. Postal address, phone, fax, email address of the corresponding author
3. Full names, titles, affiliations and positions of all authors as well as phone numbers and email addresses of all authors
4. Title of the manuscript
5. Number of words in the manuscript excluding abstract, tables, figures and references, number of tables and figures
6. Statement about the fact that the data presented in the manuscript have not been published and are not under consideration elsewhere
7. The authors must inform the Editorial office about the fact that parts of the manuscript were published earlier and can be considered as double publication. Copies of these materials should be submitted so that the Editorial office can make an informed decision. Abstracts and conference proceedings are not considered as scientific publications. Thus, the data used in the abovementioned publications can be used in manuscripts submitted to the journal
8. Statement that the authors follow these Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to Medical Journal of West Kazakhstan
9. The authors take legal responsibility for violation of intellectual property and author rights according to the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan
10. Statement that publication of the article submitted to the journal will not violate anyone's author rights and transfer the rights to the journal to publish the article both on paper and online

11. Statement about potential conflicts of interest including financial source for the study. If no conflicts of interest are involved the authors can write “The authors do not have conflicts of interest”
12. Date of the submission
13. Signature of the corresponding author

Cover letter may contain any other information, which can be useful for the Editorial Office.

An electronic version of the manuscript should be submitted in the MS Word format. The text should be written using font Times New Roman, size 12 points, line spacing 1.5, portrait orientation and page numbering including the title page. Tables and figures (illustrations, graphs, photographs) as well as their legends should be submitted in the same file together with the main text, but on separate pages after the References section. The number of figures and tables should not exceed five, although this requirement can be relaxed in exceptional cases. Approximate placement of each table or figure should be indicated.

An original article should contain between 2000 and 3000 words excluding abstract, acknowledgements, references, tables and figures. A review article should be from 3000 to 4000 words long. The number of references should be between 20 and 30 for original articles and no more than 100 for review papers. Please, note that systematic reviews should comply with the PRISMA statement. Original articles should contain the following sections: Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, and References.

Guidelines for original articles

Titles of articles should be informative, but brief, not exceeding 300 symbols. Titles with questions and ambiguous meaning should be avoided. Only standard abbreviations can be used in the manuscripts. Please, do not to use abbreviations in the title. A full term instead of which an abbreviation is introduced should precede the first use of this abbreviation in the text. We welcome information about study design already in the title of the manuscript, for example “Prevalence and experience of dental caries among 12-years old children in Uralsk: a cross-sectional study”.

Title page

A title page should contain the following information:

- Title of the manuscript (in bold)
- Surnames and initials of all authors
- Affiliations of all authors indicated with uppercase numbers
- Full address of the corresponding author including phone and e-mail

Abstract in Kazakh, Russian and English

The abstract should provide brief, but informative content of the article. The abstract should be structured as follows: Introduction, Aims, Methods, Results and Conclusions. The abstract should be from 200 to 300 words. The abstract should state in brief the rationale for the study and its aims, type of research, sampling and data collection procedure, statistical methods, main results and conclusions. Novelty of the findings can also be underlined in the abstract. Given that the abstract is often the only section of an article which is accessible in electronic format for wide readership; the authors must ensure that the abstract is not only attractive, but it accurately reflects the content of the article. The results section in the abstract must contain numeric information and p-values if statistical hypotheses were tested.

Key words in Russian, Kazakh and English should be placed under the abstracts in the corresponding language and include 5-7 key words reflecting the content of the article. MeSH terms (www.pubmed.com) should be used in English.

Introduction

In this section, the authors present background and rationale for the study, describe in brief what is known in the field, present relevant papers of other authors and specify what remains unknown, i.e. convince the reader that the study described in the manuscript was warranted and can fill some gaps in the knowledge in the studied field of science. It is strongly recommended to cite not only regional or national, but also international publications in the field. At least 50% of the references should be to the international literature published in international peer-reviewed journals. At the end of this section, the authors state the aims of the study. The aims should be clearly formulated so that the readers have an understanding of what is planned. No methods, results or conclusions should be in this section.

Methods

This section should provide detailed description of the methods which were used in the study according to the original study protocol. This section should not be brief. Description of the methods should allow the reader to replicate the study in his or her setting. The following information should be presented in the Methods section: type of study, sampling procedure, data collection, data presentation, data analysis and ethical considerations.

1. Type of study

In this subsection, the type of study should be clearly specified (descriptive study, case report, ecological study, cross-sectional study, cohort study, case-control study, experimental study, etc). It is recommended to specify the year and month of data collection, particularly if conditions with seasonal variation were studied. In literature reviews, inclusion and exclusion criteria for publications should be clearly indicated.

2. Selection of study participants

In this subsection, the authors should specify how patients or laboratory animals were selected for observations or experiments. Inclusion and exclusion criteria should be presented. Sampling procedure (simple random sampling, stratified sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling, multistage sampling etc.) should be clearly specified. We recommend presenting sample size calculations, particularly if the samples are small. For experimental studies, it is necessary to indicate whether a randomization procedure was used. Besides, one should indicate whether the procedure of “blinding”.

3. Data collection

All aspects of data collection, measurements or implementation of medical or diagnostic interventions should be described in detail, so that it is possible to replicate the study in a different setting using the presented description. If necessary, make a reference to the detailed description of the method used. If a researcher uses his/her own modification of an earlier described method or proposes a new method, he/she needs to present a brief description of the this modification, as well as the reasons against use of generally accepted methods. Names of medicines, chemical substances, doses and ways of administration of medicines used in the study should be specified. All equipment used in the study should be mentioned with a reference to the producer.

1. Data presentation

This subsection contains information on all variables used in the study, their coding, selection of reference groups etc.

2. Data analysis

Inadequate presentation of this section is often among the main reasons for rejection of manuscripts submitted to international peer reviewed journals by authors from ex-Soviet republics. It is necessary to describe the methods used for data processing so thoroughly that the readers who have access to the original data file can analyze the data themselves and obtain the same results. In some cases, the Editorial Office can request the data file from the authors for re-analysis. In this subsection, definitions to all statistical terms, symbols and abbreviations used in the paper should be presented. For example, *M* – arithmetic mean, *SD* – standard deviation, *m* – standard error of the mean, *Md* – median, *Mo* – mode, etc. If statistical hypotheses were tested, one should specify the significance level.

The Editorial Board does not recommend using only p-values and recommend presenting confidence intervals for the estimates. In description of statistical methods, references to manuals and guides should be given. In addition to statistical hypothesis testing we recommend calculating effect size. If several statistical tests are used in the study, one should mention all of them and indicate what criteria in what situation were used. Imprecise descriptions of data analysis are not informative and should be avoided. The use of statistical tests should be justified. For example, if parametric tests were used, one should present how the conditions for use of parametric tests were tested (normal distribution, homogeneity of variance, etc). Description of statistical tests should be unambiguous. For example, if means of two independent samples were compared using Student's t-test, one should indicate which of the t-tests was used (for independent samples, for paired samples or for one sample). If a correlation analysis was performed, one should specify what correlation coefficient (Pearson, Spearman, Kendall, etc.) was calculated. When a multivariable analysis was used, please, specify the procedure of variable selection as well as reference categories. If an unconventional method of data analysis was used, one should justify the use of this method; provide brief description as well as the reference. If software was used for data analysis, one should indicate its name, version and manufacturer.

3. Ethical considerations

All experimental studies should follow the Helsinki Declaration of 1975 and its subsequent revisions. No personal information should be presented particularly if the paper contains photos. If lab animals were used in the study the authors should state that the procedures of experiments were performed according to national laws and regulation. The authors must state whether the study was approved by the Ethics Committee, present the name of the authority, date and protocol number. Alternatively, the authors must give a rationale for not having an ethical expertise.

Results

This section should contain only the results which were obtained using the methods specified in the previous section and in accordance with the aims of the study. One should not compare the results with findings from other studies or discuss own findings in this section. The results should be presented in the text, tables and figures in natural sequence using the same structure as specified in the Methods. Information presented in the text should not be duplicated in tables or figures and vice versa. Only those results which are relevant to the aims of the study should be presented. General characteristics of the sample must be presented in Table 1. We recommend presenting not only measures of central tendency for continuous data, but also the measures of variability or confidence intervals for means. Means and standard deviations should be presented with one or two decimal points. For categorical data we recommend presenting absolute numbers, proportions and confidence intervals for

proportions. Proportions below 1% can be presented with two decimals while other proportions can be presented with one decimal. We do not recommend using statements like “ $p < 0.05$ ”, because they are not informative enough. Instead of using “ $p < 0.05$ ” or “ $p > 0.05$ ” we recommend presenting exact p-values with three decimal points ($p < 0.001$ is an exception).

The authors should remember that statistical significance does not imply causality or the fact that the findings are clinically important. Units of measurement should correspond to the International System of Units SI.

Tables should be numbered with Arabic numbers. Each table should have a self-explanatory title making it possible to read the table without reference to the text. Use uppercase Arabic numbers for footnotes under the table. Tables should not include information that does not belong to the study goals and tasks.

Figures. All figures, illustrations and photographs should be presented electronically. Photographs should be in JPEG format. Figures can be in Excel or JPEG formats. All figures should have titles and be understandable without reference to the main text. All figures should be numbered with Arabic numbers.

Discussion

Discussion section is often considered as the most important part of the article showing the ability of the author(s) to critically evaluate their findings, assess their validity and compare the findings with the results from other studies. We recommend using the following structure of this section (subheadings can be omitted):

1. Short summary of the main findings of the paper (not more than 2–3 sentences).
2. Strength of the study
3. Limitations of the study
 - a. Systematic errors
 - i. Selection bias
 - ii. Information bias
 - iii. Confounding
 - b. Random errors
4. Comparison of the findings with the results of similar studies from other countries and regions
5. Interpretation of the results
6. Conclusions

The “Discussion sections” begins with a short summary of the main findings. The main results are those which answer the main research question of the study specified in the Aims. There is no point in drawing attention to side results simply because some statistically significant differences have been detected. One should not repeat the information already presented in other sections of the manuscript. One should not present the results in this section, but rather compare the findings with the results from other studies. It is important not only to compare the results, but also to speculate on why different results were obtained. An important part of the Discussion section is a subsection on strengths and weaknesses (limitations) of the study. This information is seldom presented by Kazakhstani authors, but is required in international peer reviewed journals. It is better to critically evaluate the study in the Discussion section than to get critical comments by international reviewers or even worse - the readers. Possibilities of application of the obtained results in practice can also be discussed if applicable. The authors may suggest directions for further studies based on the

study results. One may formulate new hypotheses and speculate about the mechanisms that may explain the findings

Conclusions are the last part of the main text of the article. They can be presented at the end of the Discussion section or as a separate section. Conclusions should logically stem from the main results of the study and be in line with the study aims. Overstepping the data is a common feature of articles published in the countries of the former Soviet Union, which is often criticized by international reviewers.

Authorship

Authorship should comply with the guidelines of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). Authors must 1) substantially contribute to conception and design of the study, data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the results; 2) Prepared the first draft of the manuscript and/or made important intellectual contributions to subsequent versions and 3) Approved the final version of the manuscript. Each of the authors should fulfil all three criteria. Each author takes public responsibility for the content and quality of the paper. Securing funding, general management of the project or working group and other contributions different from the abovementioned do not qualify for authorship. Persons who contributed to the study but do not qualify as authors should be mentioned in the **Acknowledgements** section.

After the Acknowledgements section the authors should state whether they have any conflicts of interest. If no conflicts of interest are involved the authors may write “The authors declare no conflicts of interest”. Sources of funding should be disclosed. Funding authority and grant number should be given.

Right before references we recommend the authors to present their ORCID and SPIN identification numbers. This will help to identify other papers published by the same authors and may increase the number of citations of the contributors. Links to obtain ORCID and SPIN identification numbers are presented below.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/register>

SPIN: http://elibrary.ru/projects/science_index/author_tutorial.asp

SPIN ID is not obligatory for non-Russian speakers.

References

References should be written in accordance with Vancouver style, preferably with indication of the source of the index DOI (digital object identifier). Example:

1. **Böcking W., Ahrens U., Kirch W., Milakovic M. First results of the introduction of DRGs in Germany and overview of experience from other DRG countries. J Public Health (Oxf) 2005;13:128-137. doi: 10.1007/s10389-005-0103-4. [Cross Ref];**
2. **Marx W. Tracking historical papers and their citations. European Science Editing 2012;38(2):35–37**

Links are numbered by their citation in the text. References in the text should be given in square brackets and marked by Arabic numerals according to the References listed alphabetically (first national, then international). Surnames of international authors should be given in original spelling. It is advisable to refer to more modern publications (not older than 2004). The number of references should be between 20 and 30 for original articles and no more than 100 for review papers. We do not recommend citing conference abstracts,

newspaper publications, personal communications and other sources which are not peer reviewed.

References are presented in two versions to the requirement of ISD "Scopus":

1. Russian and foreign sources in accordance with the Vancouver style.
2. In the transliteration of the letters of the Latin alphabet with the translation of sources of publications into English.

On the website <http://www.translit.ru/> you can use the program of transliteration of the Russian text into Latin (BSI variant) for free.

Rejected articles are not returned.

West Kazakhstan Medical Journal recommends using international guidelines for specific study designs where applicable. In order to avoid omitting of important information in some specific types of studies, please, check the instructions using the links below:

Research type	Guideline	Source
Randomized controlled trials	CONSORT	www.consort-statement.org www.mediasphera.ru/recom/consort.htm
Studies of accuracy of diagnostic tests	STARD	www.consort-statement.org/stardstatement.htm http://www.mediasphera.ru/recom/tab11.htm
Meta-analysis of controlled trials	QUOROM	http://www.mediasphera.ru/recom/quorom.htm
Observational epidemiological studies	STROBE	www.strobe-statement.org
Meta-analysis of observational studies	MOOSE	www.consort-statement.org/initiatives/moose/moose.pdf