

Queries about submission requirements may be addressed to either of the managing editors:

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EDITORIAL POLICIES

Submission

Authors must submit manuscripts online at www.ees.elsevier.com/ajog. Hard-copy submissions will NOT be considered or returned. All policies of the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, particularly with regard to Conflicts of Interest, Inappropriate Acts, and IRB approval, also apply to abstracts presented at Society meetings and published in this Journal as a result of the proceedings.

Submitted manuscripts will first be screened by the Journal staff and editors. Because of the large number of papers submitted for consideration, it is important for the Journal to process submissions in a timely fashion. Many papers are turned away based on this in-house screening alone, authors will be notified of the decision promptly. For many papers, an immediate decision is made to decline without further peer review. All other papers are sent out for peer review.

Ethics of the editorial process

"Specific inappropriate acts in the publication process," available at www.AJOG.org, describes the Journal's policies regarding ethical practices, which apply to all submitted articles, whether accepted for publication or not. **Authors are advised to review this document prior to submission.**

Noncompliance with any of the provisions of this policy may lead to an investigation and to an editorial judgment regarding these policies. Besides describing issues such as plagiarism and falsification of data, the document contains information regarding duplicate publication of which all prospective authors must be aware. If a report by any or all of the same author(s) has previously been published in any medium that deals in any respect whatsoever with the same patients, animals, laboratory experiments, or data, in part or in full, as those reported in the manuscript being submitted, a reprint of the published article(s) or a copy of the final manuscript must be uploaded with the submitted manuscript. Additionally, a current copy of any new manuscript being prepared for possible publication must be provided. The author(s) are to inform the editors in detail about the circumstances surrounding the reports as well as their similarities and differences.

The same requirement applies to the submission of a manuscript in which additional patients, animals, laboratory experiments, or data were added to those reported in a previous publication, submission, or accepted manuscript. Articles previously published in another language will not be considered for publication in the Journal.

Previous submission (unpublished)

If the manuscript was previously submitted elsewhere and not accepted, the authors may, if they wish, provide a copy of the peer review comments and a detailed response to each point.

Human and nonhuman experimentation

Authors must follow the ethical standards for human experimentation established in the Declaration of Helsinki. (World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki: recommendations guiding physicians in biomedical research involving human subjects. *JAMA* 1997;277:925-6). The editors assume that a manuscript emanating from a particular institution is submitted with the approval of the requisite authority. The authors of reports of human experimentation that requires local institutional approval must have obtained this approval **before the experiment was started**; upon request of the Journal editors, the author(s) are required to provide copies of the appropriate documentation. Institutional approval must be indicated in the Materials and Methods section

of the submitted manuscript. If the study is exempt from Institutional Review Board approval, an explanation must be provided under Materials and Methods.

For reports of experiments on nonhuman animals or other species, authors must state in the Materials and Methods section of the manuscript that guidelines for the care and use of the animals approved by the local institution were followed. The type(s) of nonhuman animals or other species used in an investigation must be named in the Title, Abstract, Key Words, and Materials and Methods sections of the manuscript.

Trial and research guidelines

The following guidelines must be adhered to when formulating the study. Upon submitting the manuscript, authors are to indicate on the Submission Checklist the type of trial/research used.

- **Randomized controlled trial.** Authors are to consult the revised CONSORT statement (Moher D, Schulz KF, Altman D, for the CONSORT Group. The CONSORT statement: revised recommendations for improving the quality of reports of parallel-group randomized trials. *JAMA* 2001;285:1987-91; www.consort-statement.org). A flowchart as a figure must be submitted in the manuscript.
- **Meta-analysis or systematic review of randomized controlled trials.** Authors are to consult the QUOROM statement (Moher D, Cook DJ, Eastwood S, Olkin I, Rennie D, Stroup DF, for the QUOROM Group. Improving the quality of reports of meta-analyses of randomized controlled trials: the QUOROM statement. *Quality of Reporting of Meta-Analyses*. *Lancet* 1999;354:1896-900; www.thelancet.com; www.consort-statement.org/QUOROM.pdf).
- **Meta-analysis or systematic review of observational studies.** Authors are to consult the MOOSE guidelines (Stroup DF, Berlin JA, Morton SC, et al, for the Meta-Analysis of Observational Studies in Epidemiology [MOOSE] group. Meta-analysis of observational studies in epidemiology: a proposal for reporting. *JAMA* 2000;283:2008-12; www.jama.ama-assn.org or www.consort-statement.org/Initiatives/MOOSE/moose.pdf).
- **Diagnostic tests.** Authors are to consult the STARD Initiative (Bossuyt PM, Reitsma JB, Bruns DE, et al., for the STARD Group. Towards complete and accurate reporting of studies of diagnostic accuracy: the STARD Initiative. *Clin Chem* 2003;49:1-6; www.clinchem.org or <http://www.consort-statement.org/stardstatement.htm>).
- **Health economics.** In addition to the general instructions for authors and other guidelines applicable to their study (eg, CONSORT guidelines for a randomized controlled trial), authors of health economics manuscripts should consider the following issues specific to such studies and address them in the manuscript and/or submission letter. A health economics checklist is to be included with the general manuscript checklist at the time of submission.

Authorship

Each author must qualify by having participated actively and sufficiently in the study reported. The inclusion of each author in the authorship list of a report must be based only on 1) substantial contributions to (a) the concept and design or analysis and interpretation of data and (b) the author's having drafted the manuscript or revised it critically for important intellectual content; and 2) final approval by each author of the version of the manuscript being submitted. All conditions (1a, 1b, and 2) must be met. Others contrib-

uting to the work, including participants in collaborative trials, should be recognized separately in the Acknowledgment(s) section. In the cover letter that accompanies the submitted manuscript, it must be confirmed that all bylined authors fulfill all conditions. Accordingly, authors are encouraged to limit the number of authors listed.

Conflict of interest

Authors are expected to address any potential conflict of interest in the cover letter of the submitted manuscript. Such potential conflicts include any financial interest by the authors in a company producing products described in the submitted manuscript as well as stock, stock options, direct employment, consulting status, or membership in a speakers' bureau. If an author owns stock in the company valued at \$10,000 or more, or is employed by the company, either full time or part time, this should be stated in the cover letter. The monetary value of any such stock holdings should be named. Failure to do so may result in sanctions. If the manuscript is accepted, the editor in consultation with the author will decide what potential conflicts must be disclosed to the reader on the first page of the article. Such information is confidential, is not given to the reviewers, and does not play a part in the decision of the quality or timeliness of the manuscript. No policy could cover every contingency that might be construed as a conflict of interest. Therefore, it is the hope and preference of the editors that if any possibility of a conflict of interest exists when authors submit a paper, the authors reveal this situation to the editors to allow us to determine whether readers should be so informed when the article is published. If the editors determine that no conflict exists, no such notification will be published with the article. The usual and customary listing of sources of support and institutional affiliations on the title page is proper and does not imply a conflict of interest.

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Copyright statement

Upon acceptance of a manuscript, the publisher will require a signed copyright statement.

Permissions

Direct quotations, tables, or figures that have appeared in copyrighted material must be accompanied by written permission for their use from the copyright owner and original author along with complete reference information. Photographs of identifiable persons must be accompanied by signed releases; if not, all recognizable features must be masked.

Submission checklist

The checklist that follows this document must be completed in full by the author(s) and included with the submitted manuscript. Complete descriptions of each item to be checked are provided under the appropriate heading. **If the checklist is not completed in full, the submission will not be considered.**

Suggested reviewers

Upon submitting a manuscript, authors are required to provide the name, address, and e-mail address of at least 3 potential reviewers for editorial consideration. Suggested reviewers may include anyone knowledgeable in the area of study presented. Authors should not knowingly recommend as a potential reviewer a person with a potential conflict of interest, either financial or personal (positive or negative bias), such as a mentor or close associate. Additionally, the authors should not recommend any individuals located at the same institution as any of the authors.

Reprints

The publisher will send reprint-ordering information directly to the corresponding author of articles accepted for publication during the production process.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PREPARATION OF MANUSCRIPTS

The requirements for manuscripts submitted to the Journal generally conform to the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals, established by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (www.icmje.org). Manuscripts must be submitted in English with a font size no smaller than 12. Number pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner in the following order: title page, condensation, abstract, text, acknowledgments, references, figure legends, and tables. **The author(s) accept(s) responsibility that the electronic file is complete and accurate upon submission, revision, and acceptance.**

Basic format

Title page (page 1)

The title page (page 1) should contain, in the following sequence: the title (concise and suitable for indexing purposes; conclusion statements should NOT be included); author line, including each author's first name, middle initial, and LAST NAME (surname in all capital letters), with highest academic degrees (MD, PhD, MPH, and the like may all be used, but honorary degrees are not permitted); city or cities, state(s), and country or countries other than the United States in which the study was conducted; divisional and/or departmental and institutional affiliations at the time the study was performed; source(s) of financial support, if any; presentation information (if the findings of the submission were presented at a meeting, include the name of the meeting, the organization presenting the meeting, the city and state or city and non-US country in which the meeting was held, and the day, month, and year of the presentation); disclaimers, if any; the name of the individual responsible for reprint requests, along with his/her contact information; full mailing address, email address, or both (if reprints will not be available, this should be so stated); and the name, address, business and home telephone numbers, fax

number, and email address of the author responsible for correspondence related to the manuscript.

Word count

The word counts of both the abstract and the text (excluding references) should be stated in the lower left corner of the title page and on the checklist.

Condensation (page 2)

Page 2 of the manuscript should contain a 1-sentence condensation of the paper, double spaced, and consisting of no more than 25 words, that briefly and concisely states its essential point(s). This sentence, which is subject to copy editing to conform with Journal style, will appear in the Table of Contents.

Abstract page, including key words/phrases (page 3)

Page 3 of the manuscript should consist of the abstract, double spaced, preceded by the title of the article and the name(s) of the author(s). Below the abstract, list 3 to 5 key words or short phrases, alphabetized, for indexing purposes.

Abstract formats

Research articles

A structured abstract of no more than 150 words should contain the following major headings:

- **Objective(s):** Reflects the purpose of the study (the hypothesis that is being tested).
- **Study Design:** The setting for the study, the subjects (number and type), the treatment or intervention, and the type of statistical analysis used.
- **Results:** The outcome(s) of the study and, if appropriate, its/their statistical significance.
- **Conclusion(s):** The significance of the results.

Case Reports and Clinical Opinions

A 1-paragraph unstructured abstract for a Case Report should contain no more than 50 words. An unstructured abstract for a Clinical Opinion should contain 50 to 150 words.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations are not acceptable in the title and should be avoided, if possible, in the abstract. In the text they should be kept to a practical minimum. The full word or phrase for which an abbreviation stands should precede its first use in the text unless it is a conventional standard unit of measurement. Conventional units of measure are recommended, with *Système International* (SI) units shown in parentheses. Only standard abbreviations may be used. For this and other issues of style, authors are advised to consult the *AMA style manual* (Iverson C, Christiansen S, Flanagan A, et al. *AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors*. 10th ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2007).

Text

The editors recommend that Research articles be organized into sections identified with the following headings:

- **Introduction.** State concisely the purpose of the study and the rationale for the study. Present only the background, supported by a limited number of pertinent references necessary for the reader to understand why the study was conducted. The introduction should not include any data or conclusions from the current study.
- **Materials and Methods.** Describe briefly, but in sufficient detail to permit others to replicate the study, the plan, patients, experimental animals or other species, materials, and controls; methods and procedures; and statistical method(s) employed. **Institutional Review Board** issues are to be addressed here as stated in the section of this document entitled Human and Nonhuman Experimentation above. If the study was exempt from Institutional Review Board approval, an explanation should be provided under Materials and Methods. The generic, chemical, or proprietary names of drugs may be used. If the generic or chemical name is used, authors may, if they desire, insert the proprietary name in parentheses after the first mention in the text. When a proprietary drug name is used, it should be followed parenthetically (at first mention only) by the full name of the manufacturer and the city and state (US) or the city and country (non-US) in which its main headquarters are located. Do not insert the symbols for registered trademark (®) or trademark (™); if they are included, they will be removed before publication.
- **Results.** This section includes detailed findings and must cite all tables and/or figures, which should supplement, not repeat, the text. Emphasize only the most important observations; do not compare your observations with those of others. Such comparisons and comments are reserved for the Comment section.
- **Comment.** Do not repeat the details of data presented under Results or present any new data here. The editors strongly advise that the Comment section be structured as follows:
 - A brief statement of the principal findings, limiting any claims to those strictly supported by the data, avoiding speculation and overgeneralization. Give equal emphasis to positive and negative findings of equal scientific merit.
 - Strengths and weaknesses of the study.
 - Strengths and weaknesses of the study in relation to other studies, discussing particularly any differences in results.
 - Meaning of the study: eg, hypothesized mechanisms that might explain the

outcomes observed and/or the implications for clinicians or policy makers. Indicate whether additional research is required before the information is used in clinical settings.

- Unanswered questions and proposals for future research.

Use of statistics

In describing the statistical analyses that have been performed, authors must clearly state which tests were used to evaluate a specific data set. When data are presented in tabular form, the statistical test used to evaluate the data should be indicated with a footnote for each test used.

Acknowledgment(s)

Only persons who have made substantive contributions to the study should be named in this section.

References

Reference format should follow that in the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals (www.icmje.org). Use journal title abbreviations as in the List of Journals Indexed for MEDLINE (http://www.nlm.nih.gov/tsd/serials/terms_cond.html).

- Published abstracts may be used, although a reference to the complete published article, if available, is preferred.
- Websites may or may not be an appropriate means of citation; eg, websites that serve as repositories of genetic information maintained by NIH, NCI, or the National Library of Medicine are acceptable.
- Provisional patent applications are unacceptable.

The maximum number of references allowed is discussed under the section Description of Article Types, below.

Numbering and order

All references are to be numbered sequentially as they fall in the text. Any references cited only within table(s) or figure(s) should be numbered in the order in which those tables and/or figures fall in the main text, with the first of the table/figure reference numbers to follow the last number used in the reference list for the main text. Citations are to be inserted in Arabic numerals, superscripted, not in parentheses. If the reference falls at the end of a sentence, the superscript should follow the period at the end of the sentence. The surname of the first author of the cited reference should not be included, in parentheses or otherwise, except as desired within the text (Smith et al found. . .).

Authors must type the reference numbers in the reference list individually. Automatic reference numbering software is unacceptable.

If any reference is repeated or out of order, the author is responsible for renumbering all subsequent references prior to submission or resubmission. Additionally, should any reference(s) be added or deleted, the author is responsible for renumbering all subsequent references, both in citations within the text (and tables and figures) and, correspondingly, in the reference list at the end.

Examples (for up to 6 authors, list all; for 7 or more authors, list 3+ et al):

- **Journal article.** Brosens JJ, Pijnenborg R, Brosens IA. The myometrial junctional zone spiral arteries in normal and abnormal pregnancies. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2002;187:1416-23.
- **Book chapter.** Kim M. Amenorrhea: primary and secondary. In: Zuspan FP, Quilligan ED, eds. *Handbook of obstetrics, gynecology, and primary care*. St Louis, MO: Mosby; 1998:3-10.
- **Personal communications and unpublished data.** If essential, these may be used, within parentheses, at the appropriate location in the text, but not as numbered references. Written, signed permission from the individual(s) quoted *must accompany the manuscript upon submission*.

Figures, tables, videos, and computer graphics

Figures

Submit figures online, each in a separate file, not embedded in the manuscript document. Cite figures consecutively, as they appear in the text, with Arabic numbers (Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3A, etc.). Each figure must be assigned a brief title as well as a legend.

Figure legend page

Legends should appear on a separate page, not with each figure. The legend page is to be numbered in sequence after the last page of the reference list. List

all figures sequentially, as they appear in the text, with Arabic numerals (Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3A, etc.), and accompanied by a 1- or 2-sentence description. Any symbol, arrowhead, or letter used to identify parts of a photograph, drawing, or other illustration must be explained. Any abbreviations must be spelled out. If appropriate, explain the internal scale and identify the method of staining in photomicrographs. If a figure was previously published by you or others, a statement that permission has been granted and by whom should appear in the figure legend, as should a full citation of the original site of publication.

Tables

Submit tables in separate files, not embedded in the manuscript. Tables are to be double spaced and numbered sequentially, with Arabic numbers (Table 1, Table 2, etc.), in the order of text citation. Each column, including the first, must have a heading. Provide a brief title for each table. Put all explanatory matter in footnotes, including the spelling out of any nonstandard abbreviations used in the table. If a table, in whole or in part, was derived from copyrighted material, a footnote at the bottom of the table must credit the original source, cited fully. When using copyrighted material, submit a **completed permission form or letter** with the manuscript. Footnote symbols within tables should be used in the order noted on pages 90-95 of the AMA style guide, 10th edition. For placement, start in the upper left corner and work across, left to right, and down, line by line.

Videos and computer graphics

Authors are encouraged to submit videos and computer-generated graphics; eg, a slide presentation with or without animation and sound. An author who wishes to supply such material should notify the editors in the cover letter and note this intention in the Author Comments area of the online submission. Although the publisher will not edit any video or computer graphic, the editors and reviewers may suggest changes. All patient-identifying information must be removed or masked.

The maximum length of a video or computer graphic is 8 minutes. Longer submissions may be divided into smaller clips, each of which should be iden-

tified at the beginning of that section; eg, Video Clip 1, Graphic 1. A concise legend for each video clip or computer graphic presentation must be included with the manuscript. Videos are to be submitted in MPEG-1 or MPEG-2 (*.mpg) or QuickTime (*.mov) format. More detailed instructions can be found at <http://www.elsevier.com/artwork>. Videos and computer graphics accompanying a manuscript that is declined for publication will not be accepted separately. If the manuscript is accepted for publication, the presentation will be archived at www.AJOG.org.

Publication format

Research articles and Clinical Opinions will be published in 2 formats: 1) an abbreviated form, as a summary of the article, with 1 figure or table, in the printed Journal and 2) in full on the Journal website (www.AJOG.org). Case Reports and Residents' Issue articles, will be published online only. All articles will remain fully citable and available to searches.

Authors of Research articles and Clinical Opinions will be asked to highlight the most significant contents in the article for use in the preparation of an abbreviated version of the article for the printed Journal. To expedite publication, authors are encouraged to permit a Journal-affiliated medical writer to produce the article summary, which will be submitted to the authors for their review and approval prior to publication. Authors who prefer to produce the abbreviated version themselves will receive guidelines to follow. Author-produced article summaries will be subject to editing for length and consistency and to conform with Journal style. This format will accelerate publication considerably. An online version will be published once the production process is completed and will be fully accessible to subscribers before the print version is published. The full-length article will be available for citation before the print issue containing the summary appears. Impact factors and other citation indices will be based on the full-length online version. The print summary will appear with the full-length article on the Journal website.

DESCRIPTION OF ARTICLE TYPES

The use of multimedia components such as PowerPoint, additional images, or video clips is encouraged for all article types.

Research articles

While authorship is generally limited to 7, additional authors may be considered on an individual basis only if they have met all authorship requirements (see Authorship, above). It is preferred that authors beyond 7 be listed at the end of the article in the Acknowledgments section. Manuscripts of more than 3000 words will not be considered. Include a structured abstract of no more than 150 words and accompanied by 3 to 5 alphabetized key words or short phrases for indexing purposes.

An abbreviated version of the article, containing no more than 1 figure or table, will appear in print; the article in full, containing all figures and tables, will be published on the Journal website. The editors encourage authors to permit a Journal-affiliated medical writer to produce the abbreviated version, which will be submitted to the authors for their review and approval before publication. Authors who prefer to produce the abbreviated version themselves will receive guidelines. Such article summaries will be subject to editing for length and consistency and to conform with Journal style.

Case Reports

Limited to 5 authors and 700 words. Include: 1) a 1-paragraph unstructured abstract of no more than 50 words; 2) 3 to 5 key words/phrases for indexing purposes; 3) a brief introduction; 4) 1 or more case descriptions, labeled either Case Report (if the article discusses only 1 case) or Case 1, Case 2, etc.; and 5) a section headed Comment. Case Reports will be published on the Journal website only.

Clinical Opinions

Limited to 7 authors, and 3000 words. Include an unstructured abstract of 50 to 150 words and 3 to 5 key words/phrases for indexing purposes. A Clinical Opinion should not be a systematic review of an extensively researched subject, but represent the authors' studied and balanced opinion on a specific issue of clinical importance or controversy. An abbreviated version, containing no more than 1 figure or table, will appear in print; the article in full will be published on the Journal website. The editors encourage authors to permit a Journal-affiliated medical writer to produce the abbreviated version, which will be submitted to the authors for their review and approval before publication. Authors who prefer to produce the abbreviated version themselves will receive guidelines. Such article summaries will be subject to editing for length and consistency and to conform with Journal style.

Images in Obstetrics; Images in Gynecology

An interesting image of clinical significance, such as a clinical photograph or evidence of a diagnostic test (ultrasound scan, MRI film, slide, photomicrograph, DNA blot, or similar), is accompanied by a case description of no more than 300 words. The manuscript should include: 1) a brief case presentation; 2) relevant image(s) accompanied by a short description; 3) a description of management, results, and patient outcome; and 4) the solution. Images will be published, in different forms, in both the printed Journal and online. The text of the print article should not exceed 300 words. The online article may include more pictures and/or a more detailed explanation than the print article, but should not exceed 500 words

and should be accompanied by no more than 5 references. The number of authors is limited to 3. The use of multimedia components such as PowerPoint, additional images, or video clips is encouraged.

Surgeon's Corner

The article introduces a new surgical technique, surgical instrument, or application of a standard surgical procedure. Surgeon's Corner will be published, in different forms, in both the printed Journal and online. The online version will include a video clip and an explanation of the technique or instrument. The print version will include a description of the clinical situation or video clip in 300 words or less. A sample picture may appear in the print edition of the Journal, where readers will be referred to www.AJOG.org for the full article. The use of multimedia components such as PowerPoint, additional images, or video clips is encouraged.

Letters to the Editors

Only submissions that reference an article published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology* will be considered for publication.

Letters are to be submitted online no more than 3 months after the date of the issue in which the related article appeared.

Letters should be brief and should contain no more than 400 words plus 1 to 4 references, one of which must cite the related Journal article. All data presented in the letter must be fully citable and listed as a supporting reference. Letters should be double spaced and signed by no more than 3 authors.

Include a title page as outlined above under Requirements for the Preparation of Manuscripts.

Letters are subject to minor editorial alterations and may be shortened without the approval of the author(s). The editors routinely invite the author(s) of the related article to respond in writing. Published Letters are accompanied by either a reply from the original author or the statement "Reply declined."

Review articles

Review articles are submitted upon invitation of the Journal editors. ■



Submission Checklist

The completed checklist must be included upon submission. The form may be photocopied from the most recent issue of AJOG in which it appeared (January 2007 or later) or printed from the website and completed, scanned, and uploaded. If this form is not completed in full, the submitted manuscript will not be considered. For more detail, please see the Information for Authors document.

General

- The manuscript, including all figures, tables, and required items, has been submitted online at www.ees.elsevier.com/ajog.
- The completed checklist is uploaded at the time of submission.
- I attest that all authors have consulted the document Specific Inappropriate Acts in the Publication Process, which appears on the Journal website, and that all authors are in compliance.
- The word count of both the abstract and text (excluding references) appears in the lower left corner of the Title Page and is listed below:
Abstract word count _____
Text word count _____
- The local institution as stated in the Materials and Methods section has approved human experimentation. Institutional Review Board Project # _____ was obtained on _____ (date).
- The author(s) agree that Institutional Review Board approval documentation will be provided upon request.
- If the study was exempt from Institutional Review Board approval, an explanation is provided under Materials and Methods.
- Guidelines for the care and use of *nonhuman* animals or other species approved by the institution have been followed as indicated under Materials and Methods. The species is named in the Title, Abstract, Key Words, and Materials and Methods sections.
- The author(s) agree that upon request, original data quoted or utilized in the submitted manuscript will be provided.

Trial/research type (check one):

- Randomized controlled trial: the CONSORT statement has been consulted. A flowchart as a figure is submitted in the manuscript.
- Meta-analysis or systematic review of randomized controlled trial: the QUOROM statement has been consulted.
- Meta-analysis or systematic review of observational studies: the MOOSE statement has been consulted.
- Diagnostic tests: the STARD Initiative has been consulted.
- Health economics: the checklist specific to Health Economics papers (see Information for Authors) has been consulted and is submitted with the manuscript.
- Descriptive
- Case/control
- Prospective observational cohort
- Analysis of data from a prospective or retrospective database
- All elements of the manuscript are typed in English, double spaced, with a font size no smaller than 12, and 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and sides.
- All pages are numbered in the following order: title page, condensation, structured or unstructured abstract, body of the text, acknowledgments only of persons who have made substantive contributions to the study, references, figure legends, and tables.
- Signed written permission from both the copyright holder and the original author for the use of tables, figures, or quotations previously published and their complete references are enclosed with the manuscript.
- Signed written permission for the use of quotations from personal communications and unpublished data has been obtained from the person(s) being quoted and is enclosed.

Cover letter

- The cover letter with required information is included with the manuscript. Required information must include, but is not limited to: Authorship, Conflicts of Interest, Previous Publications, and IRB approval.

Authorship

- In the cover letter that accompanies the submitted manuscript, I have confirmed that all authors fulfilled all conditions required for authorship.

Conflict of interest

- The cover letter that accompanies the submitted manuscript addresses all potential conflicts of interest for each author as described in the Information for Authors.
- Are any authors either current or former employees of, or consultants to, a company whose product(s) is/are discussed in this article? If so, that information has been provided.
- Do any authors have stock or stock options in a company whose product(s) is/are discussed in this article? If so, I have stated the value of stock or stock options in the current market.
- Are any authors members of a speakers' bureau for a company whose product(s) is/are discussed in this article? If so, I have stated this.

Previous or intended publication

- The submitted manuscript includes a reprint and/or a current copy of each article that the author(s) has/have previously published, submitted for possible publication, or presented in any manuscript form that discusses the same patients, animals, laboratory experiment, or data, in part or in full, as those reported in the submitted manuscript. Refer to the Information for Authors for detailed requirements.
- Similarities, differences, and further explanations are provided in the cover letter that accompanies the submitted manuscript.

Previous submission (unpublished)

- Copies of previous peer review comments and a detailed response to each point have been included, if the author wishes.

Reviewers

- Names, addresses, and e-mail addresses of at least 3 suggested reviewers are included.

Title page

- The following elements are given in the following sequence:
 - ___ Title does not include any conclusion statements and is concise and suitable for indexing purposes.
 - ___ Author(s) name(s) and highest academic degree(s) are shown. Surnames appear in all capital letters: eg, Frederick P. ZUSPAN, MD.
 - ___ City or cities, state(s), and non-US countries in which the study was conducted are provided.
 - ___ The name(s) of the institution(s), section(s), division(s), and department(s) in/by which the study was performed are provided and the institutional affiliation(s) of the author(s) at the time of the study is/are indicated.
 - ___ If the findings have been presented at a meeting/conference, the name of the host organization/association, etc., is provided, as outlined in the Information for Authors.
 - ___ Acknowledgment of financial support is cited.
 - ___ Contact information for the individual responsible for reprint requests includes name and full mailing address, e-mail address, or both, as the author wishes published in the Journal.
 - ___ If reprints will not be available, this has been stated on the title page.
 - ___ The corresponding author's name, address, business and home telephone numbers, fax number, and e-mail address have been provided.

Condensation

- Page 2 of the manuscript is a single sentence of 25 words or less delineating the paper's essential point(s) and double spaced.

Abstract and key words or short phrases

- The abstract (structured or unstructured format) is double spaced with required margins on page 3 headed by the title and author's or authors' name(s). Below the abstract, 3 to 5 key words or short phrases are alphabetized.
- A **structured abstract** of 150 words or less is submitted as required for Research articles and Society Original Research articles. The abstract contains the 4 required major headings: Objective(s), Study Design, Results, and Conclusion(s), each with a brief presentation.
- An **unstructured abstract** is submitted as required for Clinical Opinion (50 to 150 words) and Case Reports (maximum of 50 words), whether independent or society articles.

Text

- Research articles have been organized into the following sections and identified with the following headings, as described in the Information for Authors:
 - Introduction
 - Materials and Methods
 - Results
 - Comment

References

- Double spaced and inserted in the file without the use of automatic numbering software.
- Numbered sequentially as they appear in the text.
- Limited to the appropriate number as stated in the Instructions for Authors.
- Adhere to the format outlined in the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals. Examples shown in the Information for Authors have been followed.
- Do not contain any personal communications or unpublished observations, which, if used, are mentioned parenthetically in the text, unnumbered. Signed written approval by the person being quoted is included with the submission.

Figures

- Each figure has been uploaded separately and is not embedded in the manuscript text.
- Each figure is numbered with an Arabic numeral and cited in numeric sequence in the text.
- Each figure has a brief title.
- Figure legends appear together on a separate page, not on the figure itself.
- All patient identifying marks have been removed.
- All patterns or shadings are distinguishable from each other. Lines, symbols, and letters are smooth and complete and do not contain freehand lettering.

Figure legends

- A 1- or 2-sentence description is provided for each figure; all legends are presented in numeric order on 1 page.
- Each descriptive sentence is labeled with the corresponding figure number.
- The legend page is numbered in sequence after the reference page(s).
- Full credit is given to the original source of any copyrighted material.

Tables

- Each table, headed by a title and numbered in Arabic numerals, is double spaced on a separate page.
- Tables are cited in numeric sequence in the text.
- Footnote symbols are used in the order noted in the AMA style guide.

Videos and computer graphics

- The editors have been informed that the author intends to submit a video or computer graphic.
- A concise legend for each clip/graphic has been provided.
- Materials are submitted in *.mpg or *.mov format.
- Images adhere to Elsevier requirements for artwork at <http://authors.elsevier.com/ArtworkInstructions.html?dc=A11/>. ■