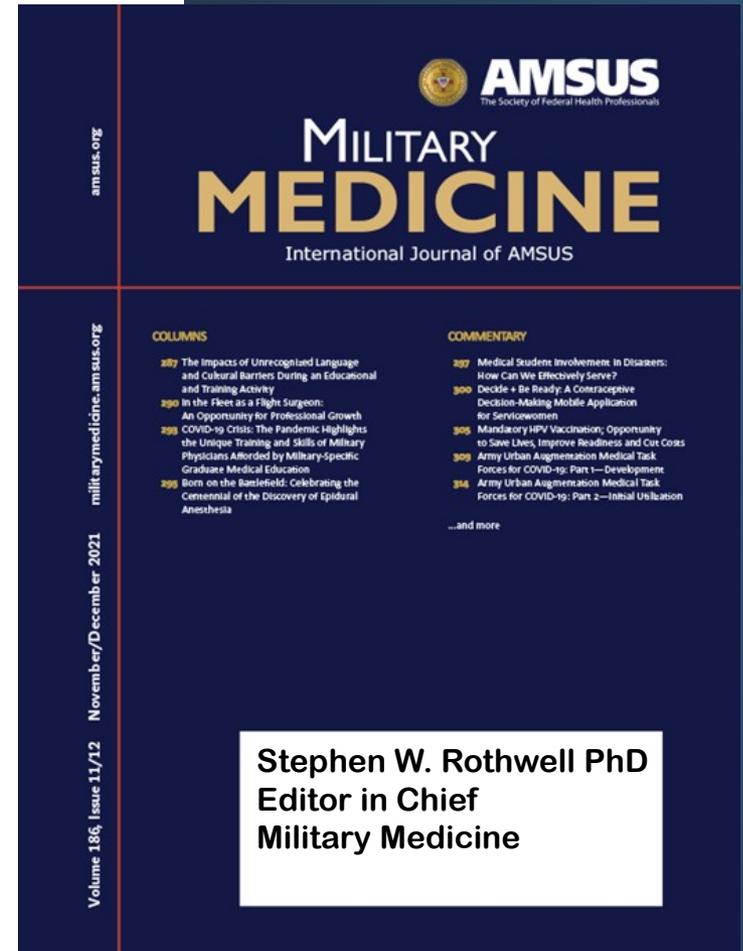


The importance of communicating evidence based, high-science, patient centered journal content: An Author/Reviewers Guide

15 February 2023
National Harbor, MD



The importance of communicating evidence based, high-science, patient centered journal content: An Author/Reviewers Guide

brought to you by the Editors of
Military Medicine

- Stephen W. Rothwell, Ph.D., Editor-In-Chief
- Laura Talbot, Col (Ret) RN, PhD, EdD, Editor
- Ramey L. Wilson, COL (Ret), MD, MPH, Associate Editor
- Anthony J. LaPorta, COL (Ret), MD, Associate Editor
- G. Richard Holt, COL (Ret), MD, Associate Editor
- Sergei Bankoul, Col MC Army of Switzerland, Editorial Board
- William H.J. Haffner, CAPT (Ret), MD, Editor Emeritus



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Learning Objectives:

At the end of this session, the participant will be able to:

1. Describe the manuscript submission process for the *Military Medicine*, a peer-reviewed medical journal.
2. Summarize the importance of publishing research, quality improvement and case reports in peer-reviewed literature to improve patient care
3. List the key steps in the preparation and submission of an article to a peer-reviewed medical journal.
4. Describe the roles and responsibilities of being a peer-reviewer of a medical or health journal.



Become an Author/Reviewer of an evidence based patient care journal

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Become an Author/Reviewer

Other than the exception below, the authors nor our family members have any financial interest in any commercial product, service, or organization providing financial support for this presentation.

Potential Conflict of interests

- Stephen Rothwell, PhD, Editor in Chief
Royalty Payments, St. Teresa Medical



The following have no Potential Conflicts of Interest to declare:

- Laura Talbot, RN, PhD, EdD, Editor
- Ramey L. Wilson, MD, MPH, Associate Editor
- Anthony J. LaPorta, MD, Associate Editor
- William H.J. Haffner, MD, Editor Emeritus
- G. Richard Holt, MD, Associate Editor
- Sergei Bankoul, MD Editorial Board

HOW TO CLAIM CE/CME CREDIT FOR THIS MEETING

**If you registered to receive continuing education credit for this activity,
please visit the following link to complete the post-course evaluations:**

amsus.cds.pesgce.com

Introduction

Dr. Stephen Rothwell
Editor in Chief

This session builds on our collective views based upon –

- Years of experience as members of the
- Editorial Board and Journal Staff
- Significant numbers of publications
- Personal reflections
- Evaluations from previous presentations

But, these views are personal observations and have not been approved by DOD, DHHS, or VA



Military Medicine

Objectives of this Journal –

- Provide a forum for responsible discussion of common ideas and problems related to federal and international health
- Facilitate communication within and across fields
- Provide a prestige publication for members' writings
- Provide an historic, fully searchable reference file for published lessons learned over many years of operational medicine and applied public health

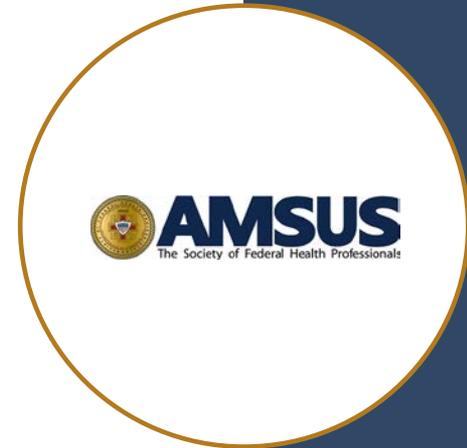


Military Medicine

Mission of this Journal –

Promote awareness of federal medicine, especially -

- Operational medicine (e.g., military, natural disaster response)
- Applied public health
- Veterans' health
- Other relevant medical/health related topics of interest to the broad range of AMSUS members



Why should we publish?

- Invaluable process of
 - formulating an answerable question
 - reviewing pertinent literature
 - gathering and evaluating data
 - drawing conclusions based upon the results
 - discussing their significance
- Advancing knowledge
- Information sharing - dissemination
- Provide outcomes basis for changes in military/federal healthcare policies or practices



Why should **you** want to publish?

- Provide a searchable, referenced record of findings
- Promotion and/or career advancement
- Validation of productivity
 - Curriculum vitae enhancement
 - Annual performance review
 - Contribution to the effectiveness of the “team”
- Mentoring/transferring of “corporate knowledge” to colleagues and mentees
- Expanding the boundaries of scientific knowledge
- Supplement the current experts in field



Selecting best journal for your article

Anthony J. LaPorta, COL (Ret), MD
Associate Editor, Military Medicine



Selecting best journal for your article

- Publishing a scholarly article is a major step in developing as a professional.
- A bad journal can hurt your future
- Once your paper is published, it is very difficult to unpublish



Warning

BE AWARE OF
PREDATOR
JOURNALS!

- Emails or websites have old salutations or hyperbolic language.
- You are being recruited by a group that is not germane to your research
- The journal, conference or publisher is very similar to an established group
- Promises a quick review and early acceptance
- You cannot verify the editorial staff.
- Excessive cost for publication

Selecting best journal for your article

- Know the journal – For *Military Medicine* topics include:
 - Military and Federal health concerns
 - Operational Medicine
 - Public Health topics
 - Nursing
 - Allied Health professions
 - International/NATO/Global Health Initiatives



Development of articles for a variety of healthcare audiences

- Write to a general healthcare audience.
- *Military Medicine* is a mainstream professional journal whose readers come from all biomedical and healthcare disciplines.
- Essential to follow the specific published Guidelines for Authors for a given journal



Development of articles for a variety of healthcare audiences

- Conclusions must match the data presented in a precise fashion.
- Scientific manuscripts should never be in the form of
 - a military after-action report
 - a governmental briefing
 - or a podium PowerPoint presentation.



Development of articles for a variety of healthcare audiences

- *Avoid overly lengthy introductions.* The introduction should provide just enough background so the reader can appreciate the context of the main body.
- *Avoid or minimize use of acronyms and abbreviations.* In most cases they obscure instead of clarify.
- Use only abbreviations and acronyms that are readily retrieved through a quick literature search.
- Define each acronym or abbreviation the *first time* it is used.



Military Medicine Article Categories

Selecting Best Type of Article

Feature Articles

Reviews

Brief Reports

Quality Improvement Projects

Commentaries

Case Reports

Column Contributions

Letters to the Editor



Military Medicine Article Categories

1. The Feature Article

- Presents new research findings with complete data to validate conclusions and discussion
- Important “housekeeping” considerations (applicable to all articles)
 - IRB approval requirements
 - Study design
 - Statistical analysis
 - Local clearance processes



Feature Articles

Original Research contributions

Prospective Clinical Trials

Retrospective Clinical Analysis

Laboratory Research

Systematic Reviews with meta-analysis

- Complete reports of up to 4,000 words
- Structured Summary (abstract) of 250-500 words
- Limited to four tables/figures
- Limited to 40 references



Review Articles

Scholarly Reviews and Practice Guidelines that thoughtfully integrate current literature with the goal of guiding policy or practice

Goal: Integrate already published data to add new relevance

- Complete reports of up to 4,000 words
- Structured Summary (abstract) of 250-500 words
- Limited to four tables/figures
- Limited to appropriate references
- Follow PRISMA guidelines for review
Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

<http://www.prisma-statement.org/>





PRISMA 2020 Checklist

Sample:
Please refer to the website to see the entire listing

| Section and Topic | Item # | Checklist item | Location where item is reported |
|-------------------------------|--------|--|---------------------------------|
| TITLE | | | |
| Title | 1 | Identify the report as a systematic review. | |
| ABSTRACT | | | |
| Abstract | 2 | See the PRISMA 2020 for Abstracts checklist. | |
| INTRODUCTION | | | |
| Rationale | 3 | Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge. | |
| Objectives | 4 | Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses. | |
| METHODS | | | |
| Eligibility criteria | 5 | Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses. | |
| Information sources | 6 | Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists and other sources searched or consulted to identify studies. Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted. | |
| Search strategy | 7 | Present the full search strategies for all databases, registers and websites, including any filters and limits used. | |
| Selection process | 8 | Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and each report retrieved, whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process. | |
| Data collection process | 9 | Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, whether they worked independently, any processes for obtaining or confirming data from study investigators, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process. | |
| Data items | 10a | List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each study were sought (e.g. for all measures, time points, analyses), and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect. | |
| | 10b | List and define all other variables for which data were sought (e.g. participant and intervention characteristics, funding sources). Describe any assumptions made about any missing or unclear information. | |
| Study risk of bias assessment | 11 | Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process. | |
| Effect measures | 12 | Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (e.g. risk ratio, mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results. | |
| Synthesis methods | 13a | Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis (e.g. tabulating the study intervention characteristics and comparing against the planned groups for each synthesis (item #5)). | |
| | 13b | Describe any methods required to prepare the data for presentation or synthesis, such as handling of missing summary statistics, or data conversions. | |
| | 13c | Describe any methods used to tabulate or visually display results of individual studies and syntheses. | |
| | 13d | Describe any methods used to synthesize results and provide a rationale for the choice(s). If meta-analysis was performed, describe the model(s), method(s) to identify the presence and extent of statistical heterogeneity, and software package(s) used. | |
| | 13e | Describe any methods used to explore possible causes of heterogeneity among study results (e.g. subgroup analysis, meta-regression). | |
| | 13f | Describe any sensitivity analyses conducted to assess robustness of the synthesized results. | |
| Reporting bias assessment | 14 | Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases). | |
| Certainty assessment | 15 | Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome. | |

- **Brief Reports**

- Up to 3,000 words, plus Structured Summary of 250-500 words
- 4 Tables/Figures
- Often a report of preliminary findings

- **Quality Improvement Projects**

- Up to 3,000 words, plus Structured Summary of 250-500 words
- **Guidelines for SQUIRE 2.0**

SQUIRE 2.0

Notes to Authors

- The SQUIRE guidelines provide a framework for reporting new knowledge about how to improve healthcare.
- The SQUIRE guidelines are intended for reports that describe [system](#) level work to improve the quality, safety, and value of healthcare, and used methods to establish that observed outcomes were due to the [intervention\(s\)](#).
- A range of approaches exists for improving healthcare. SQUIRE may be adapted for reporting any of these.
- Authors should consider every SQUIRE item, but it may be inappropriate or unnecessary to include every SQUIRE element in a particular manuscript.
- The SQUIRE Glossary contains definitions of many of the key words in SQUIRE.
- The [Explanation and Elaboration](#) document provides specific examples of well-written SQUIRE items, and an in-depth explanation of each item.
- Please cite SQUIRE when it is used to write a manuscript.

- **Case Reports** with reviews of the historical literature

- Fewer than **2,000** words, plus Structured Summary of 250-500 words
- How is this case different or unique?



- **Commentary-Discretion of the Editorial Staff**

- Fewer than 2,500 words, 250 abstract, limited number of references, no tables
- Commentary on contemporary issues often evolving or Controversial Issues

- **Letters to the editor**

- Fewer than 1000 words, no abstract, “references available upon request”
- Generally, in reaction to a published article, with a response invited from original author



Columns

Each column has its own managing editor

1200 words total

Unstructured Abstract of 50 words

Topics:

- Global Health
- History of Medicine
- Leadership
- Student column: A view through the Scope



Formatting the Manuscript

Laura Talbot, PhD, EdD, RN

Editor, Military Medicine

Professor

The University of Tennessee Health Science Center
College of Medicine, Department of Neurology



Title Page

- Title page – includes standard information such as key words and author contact information (**See Guidelines for template**)
- Number of words, pages, tables, figures and references
- Corresponding author/guarantor's name and email address, order of authorship
- Title of the manuscript
- Short title (running head) of 50 characters or less
- Previous presentations
- All funding sources
- Conflict of interest
- Registration numbers for IRB, ClinicalTrials.gov, etc.



Summary or Abstract

- Structured Summary of 250-500 words
 - State what is important about the study
 - Accessible through PubMed and other search engines
 - Consistency with the manuscript!
 - Accuracy, clarity, clarity, clarity!
 - Appears in print and on-line versions of the Journal
- Case Reports require an *unstructured* abstract (up to 250 words)



Text

- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
 - Graphs/figures versus tables
 - Tables versus text
 - Well-selected image or two
 - Visualize how these will look when reduced in print in black and white format in print, color on-line
- Provide sufficient detail for the reader to understand and even replicate the data analysis, but avoid excessive detail



Format: Preparing the manuscript

- *Statistical analysis, as appropriate*
 - Based upon study design
 - P value significance – implies an hypothesis
 - Sample size issues
 - Bias, imprecise denominators, variable time frames, subjects lost to follow-up
 - Important role of a statistician consultant is stressed



Format: Preparing the manuscript

- *Discussion*

- First sentence should clearly state what was found and why it is important
- Compare and contrast findings with the literature
 - Importance of the literature review
 - Reasonable number of references
- Strengths and limitations of study
- Recommendations for future study

- *Conclusions* – based only on the study results!



Common errors in manuscript preparation

- Using colloquial and slang language
- Subject, verb disagreements
- Using technical jargon without explanation of the terms
- Antecedent and pronoun disagreement
- Unclear pronoun references creating ambiguity
- Word confusion such as that/which, affect/effect, its/it's, choose/chose, advice/advise, accept/except, proceed/precede; between/among; less/fewer; greater than/above; less than/below
- Strings of prepositional phrases



Common errors in manuscript preparation

- First use of acronyms without spelling them out; Orphan abbreviations
- Using too many acronyms
- Lack of transition sentences between paragraphs
- Lack of introductory sentences to a new paragraph
- Unverified claims; Overstating the findings
- Passive versus active verb voice
- Spell check does not know the difference between “there” and “their”.
- Datum is singular, data is plural
- “This” on its own creates an ambiguous antecedent
- Failure to be concise



Peer Reviewers

Ramey L. Wilson, MD, MPH, FACP

Associate Editor, Military Medicine
Associate Professor of Medicine
Uniformed Services University, Bethesda, Maryland



The Peer Review Process

- The Journal depends very heavily on peer reviewers - they are the unsung heroes of the operation.
- Thank you, reviewers!

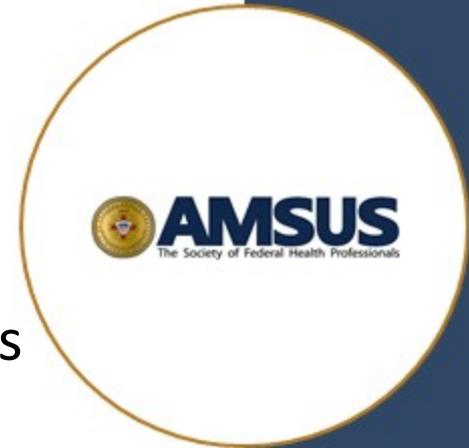
A screenshot of the Editorial Manager interface for Military Medicine. The page has a dark blue header with the "Military Medicine International Journal of AMSUS" logo on the left and "Editorial Manager" on the right. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for HOME, LOGIN, HELP, REGISTER, UPDATE MY INFORMATION, JOURNAL OVERVIEW, MAIN MENU, CONTACT US, SUBMIT A MANUSCRIPT, and INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS. The main content area is white and features a dark blue banner that reads "Welcome to Editorial Manager® for Military Medicine". Below this banner is a login form titled "Please Enter the Following" with a link for "Insert Special Character". The form includes fields for "Username:" and "Password:", and buttons for "Author Login", "Reviewer Login", "Editor Login", and "Publisher Login". Below the buttons are links for "Send Username/Password", "Register Now", and "Login Help". At the bottom of the form is the text "Software Copyright © 2009 Aries Systems Corporation." To the left of the login form is a smaller version of the "Military Medicine International Journal of AMSUS" logo. At the bottom of the page are four dark blue buttons with white text: "Tutorial for Authors", "Tutorial for Reviewers", "About the Journal", and "Contact Editorial Office".

The Peer Review Process

In order to conduct an appropriate peer review the reviewer must...

- be familiar with the field and technical approaches
- grasp the principles of good science,
- understand the appropriate use statistics and methodological processes
- be “perennially skeptical”

“It has been said that the job of a reviewer is to see what the authors have not seen.”



Adapted from Hill JA. How to Review a Manuscript. J Electrocardiol. 2016 Mar-Apr;49(2):109-11. doi: 10.1016/j.jelectrocard.2016.01.001. Epub 2016 Jan 9. PMID: 26850498; PMCID: PMC4775410.

The Peer Review Process

- Reviewers perform the most detailed reading and analysis of a manuscript
- Reviewers provide confidential comments to the Editor (only)
- Reviewers provide more detailed comments to the authors, either directly in Editorial Manager or by attaching a Word or WordPerfect file (requires full Adobe Acrobat)



The Peer Review Process

- Authors are blinded to the reviewers but reviewers see authors' names and institutions
- Two peer reviewers are assigned to each manuscript and sometimes a third reviewer



The Peer Review Process

- Timely
- Complete
- Provides clear recommendations to the editors
- Provides honest, straightforward comments to the authors in positive constructive language



The Peer Review Process

- Provides actionable recommendations to improve the manuscript
- Ideal length is one page
- Even with a recommendation for rejection, the goal is always to help by mentoring authors toward improving their future written submissions



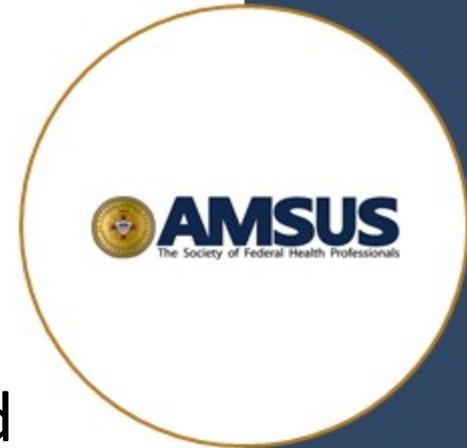
Process to Become a Reviewer

- Expect to review 2-4 manuscripts a year
- Invitation is extended by e-mail to your address of record
- Accept the offer if you are reasonably able to provide a timely review
- Suggest other reviewers if topic is outside area of your expertise



Process to Become a Reviewer

- We are always looking for reviewers!
- Download an application from Journal's web site
- Submit form to the *Military Medicine* office by e-mail or fax
- Include topical areas of interest and expertise
- Include current Curriculum Vitae (CV)



Reviewers' and Editor's Comments

- Rare for a manuscript to be accepted at initial submission
- Expect recommendations for revision
- Essential to address all recommendations in the revision and to provide comments in the responses to reviewer box
- Do not delay too long in striving for the perfect manuscript. Timeliness of publication is important
- Rejection letters – maintain perspective and move ahead



Acceptance criteria

- Guidelines - yes; hard and fast rules – no
- Reviewers and Editors serve as mentors as well as evaluators
 - Improve manuscript
 - Sometimes suggest another venue or a fresh look at topic
 - Constructive appraisals, though there are personal differences.
- Criteria for Acceptance:
 - Interest to the readers of *Military Medicine*
 - Absence of major flaws or fuzzy thinking
 - Appropriate format, style, and clarity



International Perspective

Sergei Bankoul, Col MC
Army of Switzerland,
Editorial Board, Military Medicine



International Perspective

- Authors who are not native speakers of English who submit manuscripts to international journals often receive negative comments from referees or editors about the English
- language usage in their manuscripts can contribute to a decision to reject a paper.
- To help reduce the possibility of such problems, we strongly encourage such authors to take at least one of the following steps:
 - Have your manuscript reviewed for clarity by a colleague whose native language is English.
 - Use a service such as one of those listed here: [Language Services](#)



Editing Services

- Oxford press, our publisher, offers editing services for authors especially when English is a second language. Here is a link that may be helpful.
- [Language services | Journals | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#)



Summary: Authors & Reviewers

- During this session we discussed the importance of publishing our work in our career development and advancement of healthcare science.
- Selected the most appropriate format for presenting our research.
- Discussed several key steps in the preparation and submission of a manuscript.
- Developed a greater understanding of the importance of the peer review process.



Conclusion

- Participants should now be very familiar with how to go about submitting to our Journal
- The Editorial Staff looks forward to your participation as an author and a reviewer
- Let's do it and have some fun in the process
- QUESTIONS?

