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Style guide

*INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF REPRODUCTIVE BIOMEDICINE*

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This is a style guide for the articles published by the ***International Journal of Reproductive BioMedicine (IJRM)***. Ideally, the authors should adhere as closely as possible to these rules, but there may be cases where this might not be possible, or the style guide might be silent on a given point; should this be the case, please try to maintain consistency.

Please proof-read all work prior to submission to ensure a good standard of written English and the accuracy of references, and ensure you adhere to this guide when submitting the final version of your article (following peer review) as otherwise it might be returned to you for further alterations.

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## General Overview

### Manuscript format

The manuscript must be type written in Microsoft Word, with margins of 2.5 cm. Pages should be numbered consecutively, beginning with the title page and continuing through the last page of typewritten material. Avoid underlining. Manuscripts should be written using clear and concise English.

### Types of articles

* **Original articles**
  + A maximum of 4000 words
* **Systematic reviews**
  + The protocol of these studies should adhere to PRISMA guidelines (for systematic reviews of RCTs) or MOOSE guidelines (for observational studies)
* **Non-systematic reviews (narrative reviews)**
  + Should be written by experts and contain critical assessment of the current knowledge of the field
  + A maximum of 5000 words
* **Short communication / brief reports**
  + Can be in the form of a research article, systematic review or ongoing research report which discusses its interesting findings
  + A maximum of 2000 words
* **Letter to the editor**
  + Should be about previous articles, criticism, review of books, analysis of a related topic in reproductive medicine, or expansion and explanation about an idea or a complicated problem
  + 1000-1500 words
* **Editorial article**
  + Should be written by either the Editor-in-Chief or the Editorial Board. The Editor-in-Chief can also ask an expert to write one
  + Could involve a deep analysis about the up-to-date topics in reproductive medicine, challenging systems or proposing solutions in the reproductive medicine field
  + A maximum of 2000 words
* **Case reports**
  + Necessary documentations of the case(s) like pathology reports, laboratory test reports, and images should be included in the submission package, along with 1-4 figures
  + A maximum of 3000 words

## Article Metadata

### Article title

Sentence cased: capitalize the first word of the title, the first word after a dash or colon, and any proper nouns.

Gene names in the article title should be written in italic.

There should be no abbreviations in the title.

The title should include the type of study.

When the name of a hospital is included in the title, the word ‘hospital’ should be lowercase.

**Example**: Prevalence of menopausal hot flashes in Lebanon: A cross-sectional study

### Authors

Full names should be provided, followed by affiliation superscript and academic degree(s) with periods after each letter (use the following for academic degrees: M.Sc., M.D., Ph.D.). The authors should be separated by a comma.

**Example**: Kaivalya Gongadashetti1 M.D., Pankush Gupta1 M.D., Rima Dada2 M.D., Neena Malhotra1 M.D.

Authors’ initials as defined in scientific forums, ORCID iD and email addresses of all authors should be provided.

### Affiliations

Full affiliations should be provided including the full name of the university, institute or organization, and the city and country, with a period at the end.

**Example**:

Department of Urology, Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences, Yazd, Iran.

Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India.

When the word ‘hospital’ is included in an affiliation, it should be capitalized.

### Contact details for the corresponding author

These must include:

* Postal address (including name of st., ave., blvd., etc.) and postal code
* Cell number with country code, written as (+…) .....
* Email address
* ORCID iD
* Twitter account name, where available, to allow for social media promotions

### Running title

A running title should be provided of no more than 50 characters.

### Abstract

Should be no more than 250 words and should be structured as follows, depending on the type of article:

***Original articles and systematic reviews***

* Background
* Objective
* Materials and Methods
* Results
* Conclusion

***Non-systematic reviews and Letters to the editor***

* (Non-structured)

***Case reports***

* Background
* Case
* Conclusion

***Abbreviations***

Any abbreviation in the abstract needs to be defined when it is first used. If a phrase is used fewer than three times in the abstract it should not be abbreviated. Any abbreviation defined in the abstract needs to be redefined upon first mention in the body text.

***Numbering of lists***

When there is a list in the Materials and Methods section of the abstract (for example of groups or steps), use a rounded parenthesis ‘)’ after the numbers or letters used (e.g., a) b) c) or 1) 2) 3) or i) ii) iii)) instead of a period.

### Key words

A minimum of 3 key words needs to be provided. These should be specific and relevant to the paper.

Capitalize the first word of each key word phrase and any proper nouns.

All words should be in italic, separated by commas, and with a period at the end.

Key words should be based on the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) terms of Index Medicus (http://www.nlm.nih.gov/ mesh/MBrowser.html)

**Example**: **Key words:** *Oxidative stress, Infertility, Polycystic ovary syndrome.*

### Articles based on a thesis

If the article is based on a thesis, under the key words section add the following in bold and italic, inserting the appropriate details for the type of thesis and author name: ‘This article has been extracted from M.D./Ph.D. Thesis. (Author name)’

**Example**: ***This article has been extracted from M.D. Thesis. (Niloofar Borzou)***

## Structuring your article

### Structure of the body text

The following structure should be used, based on the type of article:

***Original articles, systematic reviews, short communication / brief reports***

1. Introduction

2. Materials and Methods

3. Results

4. Discussion

5. Conclusion

Acknowledgements

Conflict of Interest

References

***Non-systematic review***

1. Introduction

2. Discussion

3. Conclusion

Acknowledgements

Conflict of Interest

References

***Case reports***

1. Introduction

2. Case Presentation (this should include an Ethical considerations section)

3. Discussion

4. Conclusion

Acknowledgements

Conflict of Interest

References

***Letter to the editor***

(Unstructured)

### Clinical trials

RCTs should include the method of randomization and the primary outcome measure in the abstract.

In addition, the registration number of the trial and the name of the trial registry must be mentioned under the Key words section, using the following format: “Registration ID in ….: …..”

Make sure that all the information provided in the article is in accordance with the information posted on the registry site related to the clinical trial.

In these articles, table I should include demographic information.

A CONSORT flow diagram must be included.

### Introduction section

This should summarize the purpose and the rationale for the study. It should neither review the subject extensively nor should it include the data or conclusions of the study. Please explain the purpose of the study at the end of the Introduction section.

### Materials and Methods section

This should include the study design and exact methods of the experiment or observations, definitions such as for diagnostic criteria, the population samples, and laboratory and statistical methods. If an apparatus was used, its manufacturer's name and country should be given in parentheses. If the method used is an established method, give the reference, but if the method is new, give enough information so that another author can perform it.

The type of study should be mentioned in this section. This should be the same as the type of study mentioned in the title, abstract and rest of the body text.

The time (specific month(s), year) and place of study (…., city, country) should be mentioned in this section.

When there is a list in the Materials and Methods section (for example of groups or steps), use a rounded parenthesis ‘)’ after the numbers or letters used (e.g., a) b) c) or 1) 2) 3) or i) ii) iii)) instead of a period.

This section should also include an Ethical considerations section with details of ethical approval. An ethics committee approval code should be provided, if relevant; this should be formatted as follows: (Code: #). In human studies, it should be mentioned whether written or oral consent was obtained from the participants. Animal studies should include a statement about how the ethical guidelines for working with laboratory animals were followed.

A statistical analysis section should also be included (except for review articles which only review the literature without any statistical analyses). The statistical methods must be mentioned and any general computer program that was used should be specified, using its full, not abbreviated, name. Inadequate or incorrect statistical analyses frequently cause rejection or delays in the review of manuscripts. Where appropriate, authors should seek advice from a professional statistician before the manuscript is submitted.

### Results section

This section should include the pertinent findings in a logical sequence with tables and figures as necessary. The contents of the tables should not be fully repeated in the text. Instead, a reference to the table number may be given. Long articles may need sub-headings to clarify their contents. Unnecessary overlap between tables, figures and text should be avoided.

### Discussion section

The discussion should emphasize the present findings and the variations or similarities with other work done in the field by other researchers. Conclusions based on the findings, evidence from the literature that supports the conclusions, applicability of the conclusions, and implications for future research should be included in this section. The detailed data should not be repeated. Emphasize the new and important aspects of the study and the conclusions that follow from them. It must be mentioned whether the hypothesis mentioned in the article is true, false or whether no conclusions can be derived. Limitations should be included in this section, not as a separate section.

### Conclusion section

In this section, authors should state the final conclusion that they have reached. The results of other studies should not be stated here.

### Acknowledgements section

The authors must use this section to thank contributors who helped them with completing the studies or preparing the paper but who do not meet the criteria for authorship. This can include anyone who provided technical assistance to the author or someone who had a helpful discussion with them, etc.

The source(s) of financial and material support should also be mentioned in this section. If the study had no financial support then this should be stated. (However, review articles which do not need funding are not required to state this in the Acknowledgement section).

Personal acknowledgement should precede those of institutions or agencies.

### Conflict of Interest section

Conflicts of interest must be declared in this section, such as receiving funds or fees from, or holding stocks and shares in, an organization that may profit or lose through publication of your paper. If there are none then the following should be stated: ‘The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.’

## Formatting your article

### Headings

Main headings (e.g., Introduction, Materials and Methods) should be in title case, bold and numbered as 1. Introduction, 2. Materials and Methods, etc.

Subheadings of the above should be in sentence case with sequential differentiating numbers followed by a period (e.g., 2.4. and 2.4.1.).

### References

All of the sources of information that you use in your own research, both ideas and direct quotations, need to be acknowledged in the text as a citation. Each citation requires a reference containing all of the details of the source, which is included in a separate list.

The Vancouver referencing style should be used.

Original articles should include 30-35 references. For systematic reviews, up to 40 references can be stated. Non-systematic reviews should contain at least 60 references. 10-15 references should be stated for short communications / brief reports. Editorial articles should have at least 5 references, and case reports should have 5-10 references.

***In-text citations***

References should be numbered sequentially as they appear in the text according to the Vancouver style.

Each reference number should be in rounded parentheses (2), immediately after the citation and before the sentence’s period. Where multiple citations are listed together, include them all in the same parentheses, separated by a comma (2, 3, 4).

When citing authors in the text, acknowledge only the first author when there are three or more authors (e.g., Williams et al. (1) stated that…). When there are two authors cite both (e.g., Jones and Smith (2) reported that...).

***Reference list***

* In the References list at the end of the document, citations should be arranged by number and follow the Vancouver style
* At least 60% of the references should be from the past five years. The rest of the references should be a maximum of 10 years old
* Author’s name
  + Last name/surname followed by the initials, with no space or period between the surname and initials or between the initials; for example:
    - Darwin CR
  + Separate multiple author names with a comma and the final name should end in a period; for example:
    - Attenborough D, Darwin CR, Curie MS.
  + Include the surnames and initials of all authors when there are six or fewer. In the case of seven or more authors, the names of the first six authors followed by et al. should be listed.
  + Note: authors should be listed in the order that they are listed in the text that is being referenced (not alphabetically)
* Titles
  + Titles of articles, books and book chapters should be in sentence case with only the first letter of the title, the first letter after a dash or colon and proper nouns capitalized.
* Journal names
  + Journal names should be written in title case, in italics with no full stops, and abbreviations should conform to Index Medicus
  + Cite the name of the International Journal of Reproductive BioMedicine as: *Iran J Reprod BioMed*
* Organization names
  + Names of organizations are spelt out, not abbreviated
* Dates
  + For the year, use the 4 number format (e.g., 1990)
* Accessed online
  + When URLs are provided, this should be preceded with ‘Available at:’
* General formatting
  + There should be spaces between the year, volume and page numbers.
  + Inclusive page numbers should be given for all references.
  + The reference should end with a period, unless it ends with a URL or language name.
* Language
  + If the source is in a language other than English, include the English translation of the title in square brackets as the title. At the end of the reference include the name of the language in rounded parentheses, without a period; for example: (In Persian)

**Examples for different source types:**

**Journal:**

Author(s). Title of article (sentence case). Title of journal Year; Volume number: Page numbers.

Examples:

Salehnia M, Arianmanesh M, Beigi M. The impact of ovarian stimulation on mouse endometrium: A morphometrical study. *Iran J Reprod Med* 2006; 4: 11-17.

Andersen CY, Fischer R, Giorgione V, Kelsey ThW. Micro-dose hCG as luteal phase support without exogenous progesterone administration: Mathematical modelling of the hCG concentration in circulation and initial clinical experience. *J Assist Reprod Genet* 2016; 33: 1311–1318.

**Book**:

Author(s). Title: sub-title. Edition. Place of publication: Publisher; Year.

Examples:

Speroof L, Robert H. Clinical gynecology endocrinology & infertility. 6th Ed. Philadelphia: Robert-D; 1999.

Montag MH, Morbeck DE. Principles of IVF laboratory practice: Optimizing performance and outcomes. USA: Cambridge University Press; 2017.

**Chapter in a book:**

Author(s) of chapter. Title: sub-title of chapter. In: Author(s) (or editors) of the book. Title: sub-title of book. Place of publication: publisher; Year; page numbers.

**Report**:

Author(s). Title of report. Place of publication: publisher; Year. Page numbers.

Examples:

World Health Organization. WHO laboratory manual for the examination and processing of human semen. Switzerland: World Health Organization Press; 2010. 285–286.

National Health Research Ethics Committee of Nigeria. Sub-code for research involving animals. Nigeria: Federal Ministry of Health; 2014. Available at: http://nhrec.net/nhrec/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Final-Sub-code-for-Research-involving-animal-use-v2.pdf

**Papers accepted for publication, but not yet published:**

Author(s). Title of article, Title of journal Year, in press.

Example:

Naseri MMKG, Mohammadian M, Naseri ZG. Antispasmodic effect of *Physalis alkekengi* fruit extract on rat uterus, *Iran J Reprod Med* 2022, in press.

### Tables

Tables should be submitted in an editable format.

Please ensure that you are consistent with the number of decimal places in each table.

Each table should have a title above the table. This should be in sentence case with no period mark at the end.

The first left column should be in bold and aligned left.

The titles of the other columns should be aligned in center with only the first letter capitalized. ‘P-value’ should be capitalized when in the title of a column.

Variables should have units.

The caption under the table should include the following information, as relevant: how the data have been described in the table, the statistical test(s) used, the complete form of any abbreviations used in the table, and any other important supplementary issues related to the table. In this caption, phrases should be separated by a comma or period. More specifically, phrases which include a verb should be followed by a period; in other cases, a comma should be used. Any word following a comma, period, colon or semi-colon should be capitalized. ‘P-value’ should be capitalized when following a superscript, asterisk or punctuation. In the caption, ‘mean’ should be capitalized (e.g., Results presented as Mean ± SD).

Tables are numbered with Roman numerals (Table I, Table II, Table III). Ensure all tables are cited in consecutive order.

In the text, ‘table’ should not be capitalized, e.g., table x. In parentheses, ‘table 1’ or ‘tables 1 and 2’ should be capitalized (e.g., Table 1 or Tables 1 and 2).

If there are tables cited in the Materials and Methods section, they should be placed before the Ethical considerations section. If there are tables cited in the Results section, they should be placed at the end of the Results section. If there are tables cited in the Discussion section, they should be placed at the end of the Discussion section. Tables should be placed in the order in which they are cited with tables placed before figures.

### Figures

Each figure should have a title as a caption below the figure. This should be in sentence case with a period at the end.

The magnification of figures (if relevant) must be cited at the end of the figure title (using the following formatting: x400 magnification). The complete form of abbreviations should also be included.

Figures which contain diagrams or bar charts should be in black and white with different shading or hatching for different variables.

Flowcharts should be included in chart format not as a shape. Clinical trials should have a CONSORT flow diagram. Systematic reviews should include a PRISMA flowchart.

Figures are numbered as Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, etc.

Multi-part figures should be numbered sequentially as they appear. Each part should have a description in the figure title.

In the text, ‘figure’ should not be capitalized, e.g., ‘figure 1’ or ‘figures 1 and 2’. In parentheses, ‘figure’ should be capitalized (e.g., Figure 1 or Figures 1 and 2).

If there are figures cited in the Materials and Methods section, they should be placed before the Ethical considerations section. If there are figures cited in the Results section, they should be placed at the end of the Results section. If there are figures cited in the Discussion section, they should be placed at the end of the Discussion section. Figures should be placed in the order in which they are cited with tables placed before figures.

Figures should also be sent separately as a JPEG or GIF.

### Supplementary materials

Supplementary Materials such as movie clips, questionnaires, etc. may be published in the online version of the journal.

## Basic styling

### Spelling

Use US spelling.

### Dictionary

Follow Merriam Webster (<https://www.merriam-webster.com>)

### Abbreviations / acronyms

Abbreviations should be defined with the complete form the first time that they are mentioned in the body text.

Abbreviations should only be used to shorten phrases not words.

Phrases that appear fewer than three times in the body text should not be abbreviated.

Acronyms can be defined in headers, or they can be used in headers without defining if they have already been defined earlier in the main text.

### Numbers

All numbers, including numbers less than 10, should be written in numerals (e.g., 2, 9, 20, 73), not spelt out in words, except for the number one if it appears without units, and zero.

The number of decimal places included should be consistent.

Fractions should be spelt out in full in the main text (half, three-quarters, one-third), but written in digits in tables (1/2).

The ‘th’ and ‘nd’ for numbers should be in superscript form (e.g., 4th).

‘%’ should be used instead of ‘percent’.

When a number appears at the start of the sentence, you can retain it as it is (e.g., ‘73 patients were included in the study.’)

A dash should be used instead of ‘to’ for ranges (e.g., 20–44 yr, from 150–300 gr)

The following formatting should be used:

* < x yr, < 23% (i.e., a space should follow <, >, ≤ or ≥)
* p = 0.01 (i.e, there should be a space before and after an equal sign)
* x–x% (for percent ranges)
* xoC (for temperatures)
* x400 magnification
* 3 km, 5 gr, 100 ml (i.e., there should be a space between a number and its units, unless specified otherwise in this guide, for example for temperature)
* FSH : LH (for a ratio)

### P-values

The exact p-value numbers up to two decimal places should be reported in the abstract, main text and tables.

To report a p-value that has three or more decimal places, round the number to two decimal places if the rounded number is greater than or equal to 0.01, or if it is less than 0.01, write p < 0.01.

It should never be written that p = 0.00. Instead write that p ≤ 0.001.

In the abstract and main text, when p-values are reported the following formatting should be used: p = …..., p < …... or p > …...

### Emphasis

Single inverted commas

### Hyphenation

As per the US dictionary followed

### Dashes

En Dash (–): Ranges, words of equal weight, parenthetical phrases (with space), theories and equations based on the names of two people, etc.

**Examples**: 10–12 kg, North–South border, Adams–Williamson equation

Em Dash (—): For parenthetical phrases and for setting off a particular phrase

### Commas

Use a comma after e.g. and i.e. in parentheses. However, in the main text, use ‘that is’ and ‘for example’, followed by a comma.

Oxford/serial commas: these can be used, depending on stylistic preferences, particularly in long sentences if required for clarity.

Thousandth separator: only for 5 digits and above; for example: 1000 but 10,000

### Quotation marks

Single inverted commas need to be used, and double quotations only within single inverted commas.

Use double quotes if the quoted matter is a direct quote made by someone.

Quotations with 45 words or more should be pulled out as a separate paragraph and indented as block quotes. Please provide the source name for each block quote.

### Parentheses

Use rounded parentheses ( ) for in-text references, p-values and when providing additional information or numbers within a sentence.

Use square parentheses / brackets [ ] when using parentheses within parentheses, except for the parentheses around reference numbers which should always be rounded parentheses.

### Italics

Use only for foreign words and the below specifications; for other terms, please follow the dictionary.

*t* test

Names of journals, newspapers, books, etc. should always be in italics (except within the references where only journal names should be in italics).

When ‘et al.’ is used in the body text it should not be in italic. When ‘et al.’ is used in tables and headers it should be in italic.

Gene name abbreviations in the body text or tables should be in italic form. The full gene name should not be in italic (except in the title of the article).

Family, genus and species names should be in italic, except for when the plural genus name is given (e.g., Streptococci).

### Date and time style

Use this style: March 14, 2018

Period: 2016–2017 (do not truncate)

Use twentieth century, but 1980s. However, remember to hyphenate if referring to an object; for example, a twentieth-century approach.

8:00 AM; 7:30 PM

### Equations

Equations should be displayed on a separate line. These must be submitted in an editable format.

If they are numbered, it should be in the following format: (1), (2), (3)

Chemicals, reagents and equipment

The company and country of origin should be specified for chemicals, reagents and equipment used.

Miscellaneous spelling, capitalization, hyphens and formatting of specific words and phrases

Use the following spelling/formatting:

* + p-value
  + *t* test
  + Chi-square test
  + Fisher’s exact test

When ‘et al.’ is used in the body text it should not be in italic; when it is used in tables and headers it should be in italic; and it should always be followed by a period.

The below words should be abbreviated as follows:

* + Week → wk
  + Year → yr
  + Hour → hr
  + Minute → min
  + Second → sec
  + Versus → vs.
  + Gram → gr

When a hospital’s name is included in the article title, main text or table, the word ‘hospital’ should be lowercase. When a hospital’s name is included in an affiliation, the word ‘hospital’ should be capitalized.

The following capitalization, hyphenation and spelling policies should be used for the below common terms:

* Type 2 diabetes
* anti-Mullerian hormone or Anti-Mullerian hormone
* vitamin D
* follicle-stimulating hormone
* one-way ANOVA

### Note to authors

If you have any questions or are unsure on any points, look at the most recent published issue and use the articles there as a guide. In addition, please also feel free to email the journal and publisher if further clarification is required. When multiple alternatives in phrases or formatting can be appropriate, please try to maintain consistency in which you choose to use.

