

Writing Tips for Nursing Journal Contributors

Below you will find a list of the most common errors present in submissions to the journal. We have grouped errors by the article section in which they are most likely to occur. We encourage you to review your manuscript and fix any of these errors prior to final submission.

GENERAL SUBMISSION TIPS:

- **File format:** Please ensure all files are in “.docx” format, *not* PDF or other formats.
- **File Name:** Clearly label different versions of the manuscript by updating the file name. For example: “lead author last name_topic_version1 (Boxler_medicationerrors_version1)”
- **Tables & Graphs:** Please upload each table and graph as a *separate* file.
- **Overall style/formatting:** Use American Medical Association (AMA).

KEY PARTS OF YOUR SUBMISSION:

Abstract: 30-50 words concisely summarizing the overall purpose and main thesis of the paper. Nursing Research submissions must have an abstract that includes the purpose, methods, results, and conclusion. Do not include references or superscripts in the abstract.

Introduction:

- **IMPORTANT: Thesis/topic statement: In the introduction, include 1-3 sentences that explicitly state the topic and purpose of your article and its relevance to nurses.**
- **Abstract parallel:** Two sentences should closely mimic or match those used in the Abstract. We suggest forming the abstract from the introductory paragraph(s).

Body:

- **Cite references in AMA style** as numbered superscript citations in order of appearance in the body of the article. (1,2,3...), and use these numbers consistently throughout the text.
 - **Avoid overcitation.** Do not place the same reference in consecutive sentences if the source and the topic have not changed. Also, avoid undercitation to prevent plagiarism.

Conclusion:

- No new references should be added here.

WRITING TIPS AND COMMON ERRORS TO AVOID:

- **Use active voice wherever possible.**
 - In “active voice”, actions are performed by a subject.
 - Active voice: “The surgeon excised the tumor”
 - Passive voice: “The tumor was excised by the surgeon.”
 - **Why do we prefer active voice?** On the one hand, it increases the clarity of the subject performing an action. Clarity is of utmost importance when communicating clinical information. Passive voice is also dry, which will bore the reader.
- **Time disagreements.** Make sure the present and past tense match within a sentence and paragraph.

- **Sentence Length:** Combine short and long sentences. Do not try to place many interconnected thoughts into a single sentence.
- **Parentheses:** Try to combine evidence or statistics into one group of parentheses at the end of the sentence.
 - **Bad:** “Admission was less likely in patients taking the cephalosporin (43%) than in those taking placebo (32%), a difference that was statistically significant ($p = 0.03$).”
 - **Good:** “Admission was significantly less likely in patients taking the cephalosporin than in those taking the placebo (42% vs 32%, $p = 0.03$).”
- **Capitalizations:** Proper names are capitalized such as Alzheimer disease. Diagnoses, tests, and generic drugs are NOT capitalized.
- **Vague Statements:** Present evidence with citation whenever possible to avoid vague or generic statements. This avoids statements that could be common knowledge and thus does not present new information to the reader.
- **Avoid “Weasel Words”**
 - It has been suggested that...
 - Some might consider...
 - There is growing evidence that...
 - Preliminary evidence suggests that...
- **Gender vs Sex**
 - If discussion is physiological in nature, use sex
 - If discussion is psychological or behavioral, use gender
 - This is just a general rule. Context dictates usage and it is the discretion of editors to modify where necessary.
- **Race**
 - Follow AMA; All racial categories are capitalized.
- **IMPORTANT: Patient-first, person-first, culturally sensitive language**
 - Place patient before disease state or condition to avoid handicapping language.
 - Wrong: Obese patient; Right: Patient with obesity.
 - Review guidelines on patient-first, inclusive, culturally sensitive language.
- Reporting lab results: always include normal ranges and their references