## **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

1. Read the Aims&Scope to obtain an overview and assess if your manuscript is suitable for our journal.
2. Use the [Microsoft Word Template] to prepare your manuscript.
3. Make sure that issues about [publication ethics](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph/instructions#ethics), [research ethics](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph/instructions#rethics), [copyright](https://www.mdpi.com/authors/rights), [authorship](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph/instructions#authorship), [figure formats](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph/instructions#figures), [data](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph/instructions#suppmaterials) and [references format](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph/instructions#references) have been appropriately considered.
4. Ensure that all authors have approved the content of the submitted manuscript.

**Overview**

AJNCD provides manuscript length guidelines below based on type of submission. Full experimental details must be provided so that the results can be reproduced.

Manuscripts submitted to AJNCD should neither be published previously nor be under consideration for publication in another journal. The main article types are as follows:

* **Editorials** are either written or commissioned by the Editors and should not exceed 1000 words (not including a maximum of 20 references; one small figure can be included).
* **Commentaries** (1000 words not including a maximum of 20 references and one small figure) offer a stimulating, journalistic and accessible insight into issues of common interest. They are usually commissioned by the Editors, but unsolicited articles will be considered.
* **Original Research Papers** should be a maximum of 3000 words (not including up to 50 references and an abstract of up to 250 words structured according to Objectives, Methods, Results, Conclusions and Keywords) with no more than five tables or illustrations.  The journal considers all original research manuscripts provided that the work reports scientifically sound experiments and provides a substantial amount of new information. Authors should not unnecessarily divide their work into several related manuscripts. Quality and impact of the study will be considered during peer review. The text should be divided into sections headed Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion.
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* **Letters to the Editor** should be no more than 400 words with a maximum of five references and one illustration or table.

**Reporting Guidelines**

*AJNCD*article types are based upon key reporting guidelines, as defined by the EQUATOR Network. Authors should prepare their manuscripts in accordance with the appropriate guidelines(s) and/or checklist(s) for each type of article. We ask that you use the checklist and flow diagram templates for the guidelines outlined by the EQUATOR Network. The appropriate checklist (and flow diagram, if applicable) must be included with each submission.

For information regarding reporting guidelines, authors should consult the EQUATOR Network web site (http://www.equator-network.org), which maintains a useful, up-to-date list of guidelines as they are published, with links to articles and checklists.

**Submission Process**

Manuscripts for the AJNCD should be submitted online at digitalcommons.fiu.edu/ajncd. The submitting author, who is generally the corresponding author, is responsible for the manuscript during the submission and peer-review process. The submitting author must ensure that all eligible co-authors have been included in the author list and that they have all read and approved the submitted version of the manuscript. To submit your manuscript, register and log in to the submission website.

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If the work involves the use of human subjects, the author should ensure that the work described has been carried out in accordance with [The Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association](https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/) (Declaration of Helsinki) for experiments involving humans. The manuscript should be in line with the [Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals](http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/) and aim for the inclusion of representative human populations (sex, age and ethnicity) as per those recommendations. The terms [sex and gender](https://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/understanding/gender-definition/en/) should be used correctly.

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**Declaration of interest**

All authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organizations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work. Examples of potential competing interests include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other funding. Authors must disclose any interests in two places: 1. A summary declaration of interest statement in the title page file (if double-blind) or the manuscript file (if single-blind). If there are no interests to declare then please state this: 'Declarations of interest: none'. This summary statement will be ultimately published if the article is accepted. 2. Detailed disclosures as part of a separate Declaration of Interest form, which forms part of the journal's official records. It is important for potential interests to be declared in both places and that the information matches.

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Submission of an article implies that the work described has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis), that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, without the written consent of the Publisher. In a covering message, please identify the person responsible for editorial correspondence (address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address). The covering message must be signed by the corresponding author on behalf of all authors. Also include details of any previous submission. It is also useful to give any information to the Editor-in-Chief to support the submission (e.g. original or confirmatory data, relevance, topicality) or whether any text, figures or tables can be omitted. Authors should suggest up to five reviewers. These suggestions may not always be used

**Use of inclusive language**

Inclusive language acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities. Content should make no assumptions about the beliefs or commitments of any reader; contain nothing which might imply that one individual is superior to another on the grounds of age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, disability or health condition; and use inclusive language throughout. Authors should ensure that writing is free from bias, stereotypes, slang, reference to dominant culture and/or cultural assumptions. We advise to seek gender neutrality by using plural nouns ("clinicians, patients/clients") as default/wherever possible to avoid using "he, she," or "he/she." We recommend avoiding the use of descriptors that refer to personal attributes such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, disability or health condition unless they are relevant and valid. These guidelines are meant as a point of reference to help identify appropriate language but are by no means exhaustive or definitive.

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Authors are expected to consider carefully the list and order of authors **before** submitting their manuscript and provide the definitive list of authors at the time of the original submission. Any addition, deletion or rearrangement of author names in the authorship list should be made only **before** the manuscript has been accepted and only if approved by the journal Editor. To request such a change, the Editor must receive the following from the **corresponding author**: (a) the reason for the change in author list and (b) written confirmation (e-mail, letter) from all authors that they agree with the addition, removal or rearrangement. In the case of addition or removal of authors, this includes confirmation from the author being added or removed. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Editor consider the addition, deletion or rearrangement of authors **after** the manuscript has been accepted. While the Editor considers the request, publication of the manuscript will be suspended. If the manuscript has already been published in an online issue, any requests approved by the Editor will result in a corrigendum.

**Ethics**
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**Role of the funding source**

You are requested to identify who provided financial support for the conduct of the research and/or preparation of the article and to briefly describe the role of the sponsor(s), if any, in study design; in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data; in the writing of the report; and in the decision to submit the article for publication. If the funding source(s) had no such involvement, then this should be stated.

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This journal operates a single anonymized review process. All contributions will be initially assessed by the editor for suitability for the journal. Papers deemed suitable are then typically sent to a minimum of two independent expert reviewers to assess the scientific quality of the paper. The Editor is responsible for the final decision regarding acceptance or rejection of articles. The Editor's decision is final. Editors are not involved in decisions about papers which they have written themselves or have been written by family members or colleagues or which relate to products or services in which the editor has an interest. Any such submission is subject to all the journal's usual procedures, with peer review handled independently of the relevant editor and their research groups.

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A cover letter must be included with each manuscript submission. It should be concise and explain why the content of the paper is significant, placing the findings in the context of existing work and why it fits the scope of the journal. Confirm that neither the manuscript nor any parts of its content are currently under consideration or published in another journal. Any prior submissions of the manuscript to AJNCD must be acknowledged. The names of proposed and excluded reviewers should be provided in the submission system, not in the cover letter.

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**Abstract**
A concise and factual **250-word** abstract is required. The abstract should state briefly the purpose of the research, the principal results and major conclusions. Please, structure the abstract using the subheadings Objectives, Methods, Results, and Conclusions. An abstract is often presented separately from the article, so it must be able to stand alone. For this reason, references should be avoided. Also, non-standard or uncommon abbreviations should be avoided, but if essential they must be defined at their first mention in the abstract itself.

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**Abbreviations** should be defined in parentheses the first time they appear in the abstract, main text, and in figure or table captions and used consistently thereafter.

***Acknowledgements***

Collate acknowledgements in a separate section at the end of the article before the references and do not, therefore, include them on the title page, as a footnote to the title or otherwise. List here those individuals who provided help during the research (e.g., providing language help, writing assistance or proof-reading the article, etc.).

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Authors must identify and declare any personal circumstances or interest that may be perceived as inappropriately influencing the representation or interpretation of reported research results. If there is no conflict of interest, please state "The authors declare no conflict of interest." Any role of the funding sponsors in the choice of research project; design of the study; in the collection, analyses or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results must be declared in this section. AJNCD does not publish studies funded by the tobacco industry. Any projects funded by pharmaceutical or food industries must pay special attention to the full declaration of funder involvement. If there is no role, please state “The sponsors had no role in the design, execution, interpretation, or writing of the study”.

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Follow internationally accepted rules and conventions: use the international system of units (SI). If other units are mentioned, please give their equivalent in SI.

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**Research Data and supplementary materials:** Note that publication of your manuscript implies that you must make all materials, data, and protocols associated with the publication available to readers. Disclose at the submission stage any restrictions on the availability of materials or information. Read the information about Data Deposit for additional guidelines.

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**Introduction:** The introduction should briefly place the study in a broad context and highlight why it is important. It should define the purpose of the work and its significance, including specific hypotheses being tested. The current state of the research field should be reviewed carefully, and key publications cited. Please highlight controversial and diverging hypotheses when necessary. Finally, briefly mention the main aim of the work and highlight the main conclusions. Keep the introduction comprehensible to scientists working outside the topic of the paper.

**Materials and Methods:** They should be described with enough detail to allow others to replicate and build on published results. New methods and protocols should be described in detail while well-established methods can be briefly described and appropriately cited. Give the name and version of any software used and make clear whether computer code used is available. Include any pre-registration codes.

**Results:** Provide a concise and precise description of the experimental results, their interpretation as well as the experimental conclusions that can be drawn.

**Discussion:**Authors should discuss the results and how they can be interpreted in perspective of previous studies and of the working hypotheses. The findings and their implications should be discussed in the broadest context possible and limitations of the work highlighted. Future research directions may also be mentioned. This section may be combined with Results. The last paragraph of the discussion section should present the conclusions and recommendations.

**Author Contributions:**

AJNCD follows the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors ([**ICMJE**](http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html)) guidelines which state that, in order to qualify for authorship of a manuscript, the following criteria should be observed:

* Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
* Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
* Final approval of the version to be published; AND
* Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Those who contributed to the work but do not qualify for authorship should be listed in the acknowledgments. More detailed guidance on authorship is given by the [**International Council of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)**](http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html).

**Authorship must include and be limited to those who have contributed substantially to the work.** Each author is expected to have made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data; or the creation of new software used in the work; or have drafted the work or substantively revised it; AND has approved the submitted version (and version substantially edited by journal staff that involves the author’s contribution to the study); AND agrees to be personally accountable for the author’s own contributions and for ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work, even ones in which the author was not personally involved, are appropriately investigated, resolved, and documented in the literature.

For research articles with several authors, a short paragraph specifying their individual contributions must be provided after the acknowledgment section and before the references. The following statements should be used "Conceptualization, X.X. and Y.Y.; Methodology, X.X.; Software, X.X.; Validation, X.X., Y.Y. and Z.Z.; Formal Analysis, X.X.; Investigation, X.X.; Resources, X.X.; Data Curation, X.X.; Writing – Original Draft Preparation, X.X.; Writing – Review & Editing, X.X.; Visualization, X.X.; Supervision, X.X.; Project Administration, X.X.; Funding Acquisition, Y.Y.”.

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References must be numbered in order of appearance in the text (including table captions and figure legends) and listed individually at the end of the manuscript.

In the text, reference numbers should be placed in square brackets [ ], and placed before the punctuation; for example [1], [1–3] or [1,3]. For embedded citations in the text with pagination, use both parentheses and brackets to indicate the reference number and page numbers; for example [5] (p. 10). or [6] (pp. 101–105).

Please ensure that every reference cited in the text is also present in the reference list (and vice versa). Any references cited in the abstract must be given in full. Unpublished results and personal communications are not recommended in the reference list but may be mentioned in the text. If these references are included in the reference list, they should follow the standard reference style of the journal and should include a substitution of the publication date with either 'Unpublished results' or 'Personal communication'. Citation of a reference as 'in press' implies that the item has been accepted for publication.

When listing references, follow [AMA style](https://www.amamanualofstyle.com/view/10.1093/jama/9780190246556.001.0001/med-9780190246556-chapter-3-div1-46) and abbreviate names of journals according to the journal’s list in [PubMed](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed). List all authors and/or editors up to 6; if more than 6, list the first 3 followed by "et al." Note: Journal references should include the issue number in parentheses after the volume number.

Examples of reference style:

1. Barengo NC, Diaz PA, Tuomilehto JO, Pratt M, Mouse M. Disease surveillance in Disneyland. AJNCD. 2019;11(7):152-158.
2. Murray CJL. Maximizing antiretroviral therapy in developing countries: the dual challenge of efficiency and quality [published online December 1, 2014]. JAMA. doi:10.1001/jama.2014.16376
3. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. CMS proposals to implement certain disclosure provisions of the Affordable Care Act. http://www.cms.gov/apps/media/press/factsheet.asp?Counter=4221. Accessed January 30, 2012.
4. McPhee SJ, Winker MA, Rabow MW, Pantilat SZ, Markowitz AJ, eds. Care at the Close of Life: Evidence and Experience. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Medical; 2011.

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File for Figures and Schemes must be provided during submission in a single zip archive and at a sufficiently high resolution (minimum 1000 pixels width/height, or a resolution of 300 dpi or higher). Common formats are accepted; however, TIFF, JPEG, EPS and PDF are preferred.

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All Figures and Tables should have a short explanatory title and caption.

All table columns should have an explanatory heading. To facilitate the copy-editing of larger tables, smaller fonts may be used, but no less than 9 pt. in size. Authors should use the Table option of Microsoft Word to create tables.

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## **Supplementary Materials, Data Deposit**

AJNCD Research Data Policies

The AJNCD is committed to supporting open scientific exchange and enabling our authors to achieve best practices in sharing and archiving research data. We encourage all authors of articles published in the AJNCD to share their research data. Individual journal guidelines can be found at the journal ‘Instructions for Authors’ page. Data sharing policies concern the minimal dataset that supports the central findings of a published study. Generated data should be publicly available and cited in accordance with journal guidelines.

Where ethical, legal or privacy issues are present, data should not be shared. The authors should make any limitations clear in the Data Availability Statement upon submission. Authors should ensure that data shared are in accordance with consent provided by participants on the use of confidential data.

Data Availability Statements provide details regarding where data supporting reported results can be found, including links to publicly archived datasets analyzed or generated during the study.

Below are suggested Data Availability Statements:

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The data presented in this study are openly available in [repository name e.g., FigShare] at [**[doi](https://www.doi.org/)**], reference number [reference number].
* Data available in a publicly accessible repository that does not issue DOIs
Publicly available datasets were analyzed in this study. This data can be found here: [link/accession number]
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## **Research and Publication Ethics**

### **Research Ethics**

### **Research Involving Human Subjects**

When reporting on research that involves human subjects, human material, human tissues, or human data, authors must declare that the investigations were carried out following the rules of the Declaration of Helsinki of 1975 ([**https://www.wma.net/what-we-do/medical-ethics/declaration-of-helsinki/**](https://www.wma.net/what-we-do/medical-ethics/declaration-of-helsinki/)), revised in 2013. According to point 23 of this declaration, an approval from an ethics committee should have been obtained before undertaking the research. At a minimum, a statement including the project identification code, date of approval, and name of the ethics committee or institutional review board should be cited in the Methods Section of the article. Data relating to individual participants must be described in detail, but private information identifying participants need not be included unless the identifiable materials are of relevance to the research (for example, photographs of participants’ faces that show a symptom). Editors reserve the right to reject any submission that does not meet these requirements.

Example of an ethical statement: "All subjects gave their informed consent for inclusion before they participated in the study. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of XXX (Project identification code)."

A written informed consent for publication must be obtained from participating patients who can be identified (including by the patients themselves). Patients’ initials or other personal identifiers must not appear in any images. For manuscripts that include any case details, personal information, and/or images of patients, authors must obtain signed informed consent from patients (or their relatives/guardians) before submitting to AJNCD. Patient details must be anonymized as far as possible, e.g., do not mention specific age, ethnicity, or occupation where they are not relevant to the conclusions.

You may refer to our sample form and provide an appropriate form after consulting with your affiliated institution. Alternatively, you may provide a detailed justification of why informed consent is not necessary. For the purposes of publishing in AJNCD, a consent, permission, or release form should include unlimited permission for publication in all formats (including print, electronic, and online), in sublicensed and reprinted versions (including translations and derived works), and in other works and products under Digital Common license.

### **Clinical Trials Registration**

Registration

The AJNCD follows the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) [**guidelines**](http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/publishing-and-editorial-issues/clinical-trial-registration.html) which require and recommend registration of clinical trials in a public trials registry at or before the time of first patient enrollment as a condition of consideration for publication.

Purely observational studies do not require registration. A clinical trial not only refers to studies that take place in a hospital or involve pharmaceuticals, but also refer to all studies which involve participant randomization and group classification in the context of the intervention under assessment.

Authors are strongly encouraged to pre-register clinical trials with an international clinical trial register and cite a reference to the registration in the abstract and Methods section. Suitable databases include [**clinicaltrials.gov**](https://clinicaltrials.gov/), [**the EU Clinical Trials Register**](https://www.clinicaltrialsregister.eu/) and those listed by the World Health Organisation [**International Clinical Trials Registry Platform**](http://www.who.int/ictrp/network/primary/en/index.html).

Approval to conduct a study from an independent local, regional, or national review body is not equivalent to prospective clinical trial registration. The AJNCD reserves the right to decline any paper without trial registration for further peer-review. However, if the study protocol has been published before the enrolment, the registration can be waived with correct citation of the published protocol.

CONSORT Statement

The AJNCD requires a completed CONSORT 2010 checklist and flow diagram  as a condition of submission when reporting the results of a randomized trial. Templates for these can be found on the CONSORT website ([**http://www.consort-statement.org**](http://www.consort-statement.org/)) which also describes several CONSORT checklist extensions for different designs and types of data beyond two group parallel trials. At minimum, your article should report the content addressed by each item of the checklist.

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During the submission process, please suggest three potential reviewers with the appropriate expertise to review the manuscript. The editors will not necessarily approach these referees. Please provide detailed contact information (address, homepage, phone, e-mail address). The proposed referees should neither be current collaborators of the co-authors nor have published with any of the co-authors of the manuscript within the last five years. Proposed reviewers should be from different institutions to the authors. You may identify appropriate Editorial Board members of the journal as potential reviewers. You may suggest reviewers from among the authors that you frequently cite in your paper.