

Instructions to authors

The *Malta Medical Journal* is published by the University of Malta Medical School, with the aim of publishing papers of merit on all aspects of medicine. The Editorial Board and a panel of referees assist the Editor in accepting and choosing papers suitable for publication.

Submissions

Submissions to the Editor should comply with the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals, as prepared by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and available at www.icmje.org. Lack of compliance to these guidelines may result in delay for publication and the Editorial Board reserves the right to refuse any such material unless it complies with these guidelines. Hence, adherence to these guidelines is strongly advised.

The Editorial Board will only consider submissions that have not been published elsewhere. If any material submitted is closely related to a previously published paper, the author(s) must provide a copy of the published paper. The Editorial Board will notify the author that the submitted paper has been received and is being reviewed.

A covering letter should include consent for review and publication of the paper together with transfer of copyright to the Malta Medical Journal. The author must also include a declaration that the material submitted is not currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. Any competing interests should also be clearly noted. These will be disclosed only at the discretion of the Editorial Board, but will not be available to the referees.

Four paper copies of the manuscript should be sent to The Editor, Malta Medical Journal, University of Malta Medical School, Guardamangia MSD 06, Malta, accompanied by a letter signed by all authors and indicating the corresponding author who will take responsibility for the authenticity of the paper submitted.

In addition, an electronic copy should be submitted either online to the Editor at mmj-editor@um.edu.mt or on disk, in either case saved as Word Document or in rtf format.

Text

The text submitted in printed form should be submitted as four copies of double-spaced typescript on one side of numbered A4 sheets. It should include a separate title page, with a title

name of not more than 90 characters including spaces, list of authors and their signatures with their two (2) highest medical and scientific degrees or fellowships only and affiliations. The contact details of the corresponding author: postal and e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers, together with email of all authors are required.

An abstract should precede the paper. It should not be more than 250 words, and should contain more than three but up to five keywords, selected from accepted MeSH terms. For reference see the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH terms) www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/meshhome.html.

Papers should not be more than 3,000 words, including abstract and references, preferably in a common standard font such as Times New Roman or Courier. Any formatting like Bold, Italic or Underline should be clearly marked on the hard copy. Special characters should be written (e.g. β as beta). Any measurements should be given in SI units, but commonly used units may be given in parenthesis. Generic names should be used for any medication with any trade names mentioned in parenthesis.

References

References should appear as superscript numbered in order of appearance. This applies also to online references. The numbered list should appear at the end of the article according to the "Uniform Requirements" (www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html). References must conform to the "Vancouver style", as recommended by the *Index Medicus*. References to papers which have been accepted but are still awaiting publication, should be referenced as "in press". Copies of these references should be provided to the Editor. All authors must be listed when there are less than seven, otherwise, only the first six should be mentioned, followed by "et al." The accuracy of references is the responsibility of the author.

Figures and tables

Each submitted manuscript should include hard copies of figures and tables, provided on separate pages, together with their respective legends. Figures should be provided as 3 glossy photographs, with an internal scale marker where appropriate. Tables should be printed separately, and graphs should be drawn on a white background, with no gridlines. Bar graphs and pie charts should be displayed in 2D. Where necessary, hatching

should always be used in preference to shading. Colours should be avoided. The raw data that has been used to prepare any graph should be provided.

Remember that figures, graphs or tables will take up the width of a column and at most two and should therefore remain clear and readable when reduced or increased to this size.

Legends should be sufficiently detailed so as to allow the reader to understand the figure / table without reference to the main text. The meaning of any abbreviations or symbols used in the figure / table should be included in the legend.

Authors of accepted manuscripts may submit quality image files (minimum 300 dpi at final printed size, supplied electronically in TIFF format) to be considered for direct use in publication. This is at the discretion of the Editor. Any electronic material is to be saved as a separate file, not with the text.

The author is responsible for obtaining and providing written permission of any figures printed previously elsewhere.

Ethics

The Editorial Board may refuse any material submitted which does not conform to normal ethical practice. In the case of material that deals with research on human or animal subjects, authors are requested to state that they have obtained the necessary approval from the relevant ethical / animal welfare committee, and to specify the name of the committee(s) in the manuscript.

If reference made to any patient may lead to identification of this patient, e.g. in photographs, case reports, signed permission of the patient should be sought. This is the responsibility of the author.

Copyright

The Editorial Board retains the copyright of all material published in the Malta Medical Journal. Any reprint in any form of any part will require permission from the Editorial Board.

Material submitted to the Editorial Board will not be returned, unless specifically requested.

Statistical advice for contributors

1. The statistical methods are an integral part of the research methodology and should be reported as thoroughly as all other aspects.
2. The term *p* for *p*-values should be expressed in italic lower case.
3. The term *n* (italic, lower case) should only be used to refer to a sample of the whole eligible population, while *N* (italic, upper case) should only be used when referring to the whole eligible population.
4. 95% confidence intervals for effect sizes (where available) should be presented in addition to *p*-values, and both should be given to 3 decimal places.
5. Means should preferably be expressed as “mean (95%CI)” rather than “mean ± SD” or “mean ± SEM.”
6. *p*-values should be expressed by stating the actual value (rather than $p < 0.05$ etc) unless the value is less than 0.001, in which case $p < 0.001$ should be used. When referring to non-statistically significant results, it is advisable to also provide the *p*-value, rather than simply stating “not significant” or “NS” or “ $p > 0.05$.”
7. If statistical testing across multiple groups is carried out, then an appropriate *post-hoc* test should be applied, e.g. the Bonferroni test for multiple pairwise comparisons.
8. Figures should also adhere to the principle that confidence intervals are preferable to *p*-values. The error bars in graphs should reflect the 95%CI values rather than SEM or SD values.
9. Percentages should be presented to one decimal place, following the numbers that generate them. For example when describing survey data, authors should use a format along these lines: “27 patients (31.2%)” or “patients showing a positive clinical response ($n=27$, 31.2%)”
10. The sampling method used in a study must be stated and any justifications for using it must be made.
11. If complex statistical models are being employed, then justification of the model choice is required.
12. The manuscript should discuss potential weaknesses and biases in the statistical design, conduct, and analysis.
13. The use of specific terminology such as ‘random’, ‘significant’, ‘association’ and ‘correlation’ should be reserved for their correct statistical context.

Malta Medical Journal

Instructions to Authors – Checklist

Details

Title	_____	Qualifications - 2 only	Email address
Corresponding author	_____	_____	_____
Other Authors	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

work submitted to another Journal	Yes	No
covering letter attached	Yes	No
competing interests	Yes	No

Text

standard font Times New Roman, Courier	Yes	No	
special formatting marked	Yes	No	eg italics, bold, underline
special characters spelled	Yes	No	eg alpha, beta
generic names	Yes	No	eg atenolol, diclofenac
saved as rtf or Microsoft Word document	Yes	No	
4 hard copies provided	Yes	No	

Abstract

less than 250 words	Yes	No	
Keywords included (3-5)	Yes	No	check MeSH terms

References

Vancouver style	Yes	No	www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html
references in superscript	Yes	No	
references after full stops	Yes	No	eg this way. ⁷
reference has > 6 authors	Yes	No	list only six (6)

Figures / Tables

hard copies provided	Yes	No	
saved separately (not in text)	Yes	No	figures in TIFF format
tables in 2D, data provided separately	Yes	No	
legends provided	Yes	No	
written permission if photographs of patients taken	Yes	No	

Ethics

Ethical Board approval obtained	Yes	No
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