GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

INTRODUCTION

*Enfermería Clínica* is a peer-reviewed scientific journal that is a useful and necessary tool for nurses from the different areas of nursing (healthcare, administration, education and research) as well as for healthcare professionals involved in caring for persons, families and the community. It is the only Spanish nursing journal that mainly publishes original research. Its objectives are to promote the dissemination of knowledge, promote the development of evidence in care and contribute to the integration of research in clinical practice. These objective is pursued throughout the different sections that comprise the Journal: Original Articles and Short Original Articles, Reviews, Patient Care and Letters to the Editor. There is also an Evidence-Based Nursing section that includes two kinds of articles: comments about original articles of special interest written by experts, and evidence synthesis articles based on bibliographic reviews.

The journal is included in National Library of Medicine/Pubmed/Medline, Scopus/SClmago Journal Rank(SJR), Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) (Clarivate Analytics), CINHAL, Elsevier Bibliographic Databases, EBSCO Publishing, Biblioteca Nacional de Ciencias de la Salud, CSIC/IME, IBECS, Latindex, CUIDEN, Dialnet, Google Scholar Metrics.

**Types of article**

**Editorial.** This section will consider comments and reflections on any new topic related to care or to health sciences in general, that may be of interest to Nursing professionals.

Editorials will usually be commissioned by the editorial board, although the Journal is open to proposals on topics and authors that may be able to develop them.

**Originals.** Original research studies carried out using qualitative or quantitative methodology, or both, will be published in this section. Systematic reviews on any aspect related with care will also be considered for this section. The originals quantitative methodology must not exceeded 3,000 words. The maximum number of literature references will not exceed 30, and there will be no more than 6 Tables or Figures.

Their structure will be: Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion. It will include an structured abstract (Objective, Method, Results, and Conclusions), in Spanish and in English, of a minimum of 250 words each one.

The maximum number of authors allowed for these types of articles will be 6.

**Originals with Qualitative Methodology**
The original manuscripts with qualitative methodology will not be adapted to all the sections of the proposed structure, but they could take the following order: Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion, and Conclusions. If the type and content of the study so requires it, the number of words of the body of the manuscript could be extended to 25,750 characters with spaces, and the number of references, up to 40.

The recommendations to follow for manuscripts that have used quantitative methodology must be taken into account in the Abstract and the Introduction. The rest of the sections must contain sufficient information on the development of the study.

In the Method section it must give all the information necessary so that the readers may know how the study has been carried out. Thus, therefore it must explain the theoretical starting point, the design type followed must be described and justified. It must be explained how the participants have been selected, to mention the sample saturation, the contrasting of results with other participants / informants, the search for negative cases, mechanisms for ensuring information saturation, etc. It must described how the information collection techniques were used.

The results and discussion must be based on the rigour of the empirical data collected. It must differentiate in the text where the results are obtained from the participants are mentioned and the opinion of the authors, which must be based on the information of the participants. The most relevant data must be selected and identified with the initials of the groups or participants, for example, G1, G2, ACM, etc. The conclusions have to specify the response to the study question considered, indicating the contribution that it provides for the understanding of the phenomenon studied and indicating the relevance for patients and nurses.

**Brief Originals.** Research studies with the same characteristics as originals will be considered for this section, but on a smaller scale (series with a reduced number of observations, research studies with very specific aims and results), that may be published in a more abbreviated form. The maximum length of the text will be 9,400 characters with spaces, and up to 2 Tables and/or Figures will be allowed, and up to 10 literature references. The structure of these articles will be the same as Originals (Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion), with a structured Resumen/ Abstract (Objective, Method, Results, and Conclusions), in Spanish and in English, of 250 words each one.

Original articles and Short Originals include a section in which it summarises what is known on the topic and the new contributions of the study carried out. For this, it must include a text with two sub-sections that jointly must not exceed 500 characters (spaces included), with one paragraph indicating on the one hand “What is known” on the subject, and on the other hand “What it contributes”, in the study presented.

*The maximum number of authors allowed for these types of articles will be 6.*

**Special articles.** These types of articles may be on various topics, among which are highlighted: the approach to topics associated with research methodology, specialties, academic and professional development of Nursing or any other type of article in English or Spanish, of which the Editorial Team may consider its contents to be of great relevance for Nursing and in accordance with the currents trends at national and international level.

The Editorial Team is open to any suggestions by authors or interested groups in which the knowledge of a specific or novel aspect of the profession is updated. Its length must not exceed 16,750 characters with spaces, and up to 30 references.
The maximum number of authors allowed will be 6.

Nursing Care. In this section, articles will be published that deal with the current state of knowledge on specific aspects, experiences or interventions of Nursing that may be of great interest, particularly based on the experience of the author or authors. Their topics could include, not only problems in the health care setting, but also matters on teaching, research or management content. Their structure will be: Introduction, Development, Discussion, Conclusions, and References. The maximum length will be 9,400 characters with spaces. It will include a Resumen/Abstract of 1,650 characters with spaces, in Spanish and in English. Up to a maximum of 2 Tables and/or Figures will be allowed, and up to 10 literature references.

An impersonal text is recommended, with a clear division of the sections and with no more than a maximum of 4 authors.

Clinical Cases will also be included in this section, of basically descriptive works on one or several cases of exceptional interest, or due to their rare frequency, or for their unusual outcome or for their contribution to the knowledge of nursing practice in any of its aspects. This section allows clinical practice professionals to pass on their experiences in a systematic form, and that other professionals can understand them and discuss them, which without doubt contribute to bringing together the theory and the practice. Descriptions and/or evaluations of nursing interventional programs will be accepted.

Its length must not exceed 9,400 characters with spaces. It will include a Resumen/Abstract of 1,650 characters with spaces, in Spanish and in English. Up to a maximum of 2 Tables and/or Figures will be allowed, and up to 10 literature references.

It is obvious that not all clinical cases can be faithfully adapted to the outline proposed here; however, by following these guidelines as far as possible will without any doubt contribute to a better presentation and understanding of the case: Title of the clinical case, Description of the case (which will briefly include data collection, diagnostic tests performed and the clinical diagnosis, giving details on which health field the care was carried out), General Assessment (it is recommended to identify Nursing Diagnoses, Cooperation problems, according to NANDA taxonomy, using some form of systematic assessment: needs, functional patterns, etc.), Planning and Execution of the care (it is recommended to use expected Results and Interventions according to the NOC and NIC taxonomies), Evaluation of the Results / Follow-up and Discussion / implications for clinical practice.

Evidenced Based Nursing (EBN). Two types of articles are included in the section:

Literature review articles and update of knowledge in a specific field in the form of summaries of evidence (narrative reviews, integrators, scoping review).

The structure will be: Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion and Recommendations, depending on the levels of evidence and the findings found, and Bibliography. The maximum extension will be 6,400 characters with spaces. It will include a structured summary of 1,650 characters with spaces, in Spanish and English, and 3 to 5 key words (using Mesh / DECS descriptors). Up to 2 tables and / or figures and 15 bibliographical references will be accepted.

The recommendations for this format are the following:

Introduction: Should be brief, following the indications of the journal, should include the objective that defines the problem to be investigated;
**Methodology:** Use of descriptors and search strategy (reproducible, delimited in the study period, inclusion and exclusion criteria), nature of the sources consulted, procedure for data extraction and methodological evaluation, if applicable;

**Results:** Responding to the objectives set, it must contain the description of the results found in the selection process of the articles, classification and synthesis of the studies found and their degrees of recommendation.

The following grades of recommendation are derived from the levels and degrees of evidence established by the Joanna Briggs Institute in 2014 (http://joannabriggs.org/jbi-approach.html#tabbed-nav=Grades-of-Recommendation): Grade A or strong; Grade B or weak for a specific care strategy;

**Discussion and Recommendations:** Following the usual structure of the journal, the authors should present their opinions and reflections derived from the findings, comparing them with the results obtained in other studies, with the corresponding bibliographic references. The possible limitations will also be indicated. The pertinent conclusions and recommendations will be reflected according to the degrees of recommendation found, as well as to the implications for the practice;

**References:** See section References format. It is recommended that the majority come from prestigious authors and publications, being recommended that at least 50% correspond to references of the last 50 years and 80% to references of the last 10 years.

**Tables:** A flow chart and summary table must be included with the selected articles.

**Evidenced Based Nursing (EBN).** Summaries of evidence in a comment articles format will be published in this section. In these types of articles, the comments must be made by experts on the subject and must be focused on applicability of the results obtained in practice and an analysis of the methodological rigour with the study has been performed. These articles will be considered extremely useful for readers and have as an objective to translate the scientific evidence into the health care setting, and to bring the most relevant studies in a national and international context closer to the professionals, providing tools that will enable the validity and relevance of their results to be estimated, as well as to evaluate if these may be useful to adapt to their clinical practice.

**Letters to the Editor.** This section will publish scientific and formally accepted observations on published works. It is also a space so that readers may send their comments on current topics, on any aspect associated with the health sciences that may be of interest for professionals. It is the ideal section for the exchange of ideas and opinions between readers, authors and the Journal Editorial Team, in which we invite you to take part. It should also include the investigation results that, due to its reduced length, will not constitute an article for the Originals or Short Original sections. The maximum length will be 700 words, and 1 Table or Figure will be allowed, and a maximum of 5 literature references.

**Contact details for submission**
You can send your manuscript at  http://ees.elsevier.com/enfclin

**Page charges**
This journal has no page charges.
Language
This journal is published in Spanish and in English language. Manuscripts can be sent in both languages. The journal will publish two versions, one in printed and online format and one only online translated entirely into English. The translation into English will not entail a cost for the authors.

Submission checklist
You can use this list to carry out a final check of your submission before you send it to the journal for review. Please check the relevant section in this Guide for Authors for more details.

Ensure that the following items are present:
One author has been designated as the corresponding author with contact details:
• E-mail address
• Full postal address
All necessary files have been uploaded:
Manuscript:
• Include keywords
• All figures (include relevant captions)
• All tables (including titles, description, footnotes)
• Ensure all figure and table citations in the text match the files provided
• Indicate clearly if color should be used for any figures in print
Graphical Abstracts / Highlights files (where applicable)
Supplemental files (where applicable)
Further considerations
• Manuscript has been ‘spell checked’ and ‘grammar checked’
• All references mentioned in the Reference List are cited in the text, and vice versa
• Permission has been obtained for use of copyrighted material from other sources (including the Internet)
• A competing interests statement is provided, even if the authors have no competing interests to declare
• Journal policies detailed in this guide have been reviewed
• Referee suggestions and contact details provided, based on journal requirements

For further information, visit our Support Center.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Ethics in publishing
Please see our information pages on Ethics in publishing and Ethical guidelines for journal publication.

Human and animal rights
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 (Declaration of Helsinki) for experiments involving humans; Uniform Requirements for manuscripts submitted to Biomedical journals. Authors should include a statement in the manuscript that informed consent was obtained for experimentation with human subjects. The privacy rights of human subjects must always be observed.

All animal experiments should comply with the ARRIVE guidelines and should be carried out in accordance with the U.K. Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, 1986 and associated guidelines,
EU Directive 2010/63/EU for animal experiments, or the National Institutes of Health guide for the care and use of Laboratory animals (NIH Publications No. 8023, revised 1978) and the authors should clearly indicate in the manuscript that such guidelines have been followed.

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 conflicts of interest 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. More information.

Submission declaration and verification
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 or as an electronic preprint, see 'Multiple, redundant or concurrent publication' section of our ethics policy for more information), 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, including electronically without the written consent of the copyright-holder. To verify originality, your article may be checked by the originality detection service Crossref Similarity Check.

Authorship
All authors should have made substantial contributions to all of the following: (1) the conception and design of the study, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data, (2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content, (3) final approval of the version to be submitted.

Changes to authorship
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.
**Clinical trial results**

In line with the position of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, the journal will not consider results posted in the same clinical trials registry in which primary registration resides to be prior publication if the results posted are presented in the form of a brief structured (less than 500 words) abstract or table. However, divulging results in other circumstances (e.g., investors' meetings) is discouraged and may jeopardise consideration of the manuscript. Authors should fully disclose all posting in registries of results of the same or closely related work.

**Reporting clinical trials**

Randomized controlled trials should be presented according to the CONSORT guidelines. At manuscript submission, authors must provide the CONSORT checklist accompanied by a flow diagram that illustrates the progress of patients through the trial, including recruitment, enrollment, randomization, withdrawal and completion, and a detailed description of the randomization procedure. The [CONSORT checklist and template flow diagram](#) are available online.

**Registration of clinical trials**

Registration in a public trials registry is a condition for publication of clinical trials in this journal in accordance with [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#) recommendations. Trials must register at or before the onset of patient enrolment. The clinical trial registration number should be included at the end of the abstract of the article. A clinical trial is defined as any research study that prospectively assigns human participants or groups of humans to one or more health-related interventions to evaluate the effects of health outcomes. Health-related interventions include any intervention used to modify a biomedical or health-related outcome (for example drugs, surgical procedures, devices, behavioural treatments, dietary interventions, and process-of-care changes). Health outcomes include any biomedical or health-related measures obtained in patients or participants, including pharmacokinetic measures and adverse events. Purely observational studies (those in which the assignment of the medical intervention is not at the discretion of the investigator) will not require registration.

**Copyright**

Upon acceptance of an article, authors will be asked to complete a 'Journal Publishing Agreement' (see [more information](#) on this). An e-mail will be sent to the corresponding author confirming receipt of the manuscript together with a 'Journal Publishing Agreement' form or a link to the online version of this agreement.

Subscribers may reproduce tables of contents or prepare lists of articles including abstracts for internal circulation within their institutions. Permission of the Publisher is required for resale or distribution outside the institution and for all other derivative works, including compilations and translations. If excerpts from other copyrighted works are included, the author(s) must obtain written permission from the copyright owners and credit the source(s) in the article. Elsevier has [preprinted forms](#) for use by authors in these cases.

For open access articles: Upon acceptance of an article, authors will be asked to complete an 'Exclusive License Agreement' ([more information](#)). Permitted third party reuse of open access articles is determined by the author's choice of [user license](#).

**Author rights**

As an author you (or your employer or institution) have certain rights to reuse your work. [More information](#).
Elsevier supports responsible sharing
Find out how you can share your research published in Elsevier journals.

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.

If no funding has been provided for the research, please include the following sentence:

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Funding body agreements and policies
Elsevier has established a number of agreements with funding bodies which allow authors to comply with their funder's open access policies. Some funding bodies will reimburse the author for the Open Access Publication Fee. Details of existing agreements are available online. After acceptance, open access papers will be published under a noncommercial license. For authors requiring a commercial CC BY license, you can apply after your manuscript is accepted for publication.

Open access
This journal offers authors a choice in publishing their research:

Subscription
• Articles are made available to subscribers as well as developing countries and patient groups through our universal access programs.
• No open access publication fee payable by authors.

The Author is entitled to post the accepted manuscript in their institution's repository and make this public after an embargo period (known as green Open Access). The published journal article cannot be shared publicly, for example on ResearchGate or Academia.edu, to ensure the sustainability of peer-reviewed research in journal publications. The embargo period for this journal can be found below.

Gold open access
• Articles are freely available to both subscribers and the wider public with permitted reuse.
• An open access publication fee is payable by authors or on their behalf, e.g. by their research funder or institution.

Regardless of how you choose to publish your article, the journal will apply the same peer review criteria and acceptance standards.

For open access articles, permitted third party (re)use is defined by the following Creative Commons user licenses:

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND)
For non-commercial purposes, lets others distribute and copy the article, and to include in a
collective work (such as an anthology), as long as they credit the author(s) and provided they do not alter or modify the article.

The open access fee for this journal is 1.500 EUR excluding taxes. Learn more about Elsevier's pricing policy.

Green open access
Authors can share their research in a variety of different ways and Elsevier has a number of green open access options available. We recommend authors see our green open access page for further information. Authors can also self-archive their manuscripts immediately and enable public access from their institution's repository after an embargo period. This is the version that has been accepted for publication and which typically includes author-incorporated changes suggested during submission, peer review and in editor-author communications. Embargo period: For subscription articles, an appropriate amount of time is needed for journals to deliver value to subscribing customers before an article becomes freely available to the public. This is the embargo period and it begins from the date the article is formally published online in its final and fully citable form. Find out more.

Elsevier Publishing Campus
The Elsevier Publishing Campus (www.publishingcampus.com) is an online platform offering free lectures, interactive training and professional advice to support you in publishing your research. The College of Skills training offers modules on how to prepare, write and structure your article and explains how editors will look at your paper when it is submitted for publication. Use these resources, and more, to ensure that your submission will be the best that you can make it.

Language (usage and editing services)
Please write your text in good English (American or British usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these). Authors who feel their English language manuscript may require editing to eliminate possible grammatical or spelling errors and to conform to correct scientific English may wish to use the English Language Editing service available from Elsevier's WebShop.

Informed consent and patient details
Studies on patients or volunteers require ethics committee approval and informed consent, which should be documented in the paper. Appropriate consents, permissions and releases must be obtained where an author wishes to include case details or other personal information or images of patients and any other individuals in an Elsevier publication. Written consents must be retained by the author and copies of the consents or evidence that such consents have been obtained must be provided to Elsevier on request. For more information, please review the Elsevier Policy on the Use of Images or Personal Information of Patients or other Individuals. Unless you have written permission from the patient (or, where applicable, the next of kin), the personal details of any patient included in any part of the article and in any supplementary materials (including all illustrations and videos) must be removed before submission.

Submission
Our online submission system guides you stepwise through the process of entering your article details and uploading your files. The system converts your article files to a single PDF file used in the peer-review process. Editable files (e.g., Word, LaTeX) are required to typeset your article for final publication. All correspondence, including notification of the Editor's decision and requests for revision, is sent by e-mail.
Submit your article

Please submit your article via http://ees.elsevier.com/enfclin

The manuscripts will be separated into the following files, which will be entered into the system in the following order:

**First page**: The following details should be indicated in the order given here: a) title of the article (in Spanish and in English); b) first name and the two surnames joined by a hyphen of each author (in order to identify you in the international data bases); c) institutional affiliation (full name of the department, and the centre where the work and its full address); d) name, professional affiliation, including e-mail address, and telephone of the author responsible for correspondence; e) total or partial funding of the study, if there is any; f) acknowledgements (this section must be used to acknowledge the help of individuals or institutions who may have contributed to the development of the work, but could not be considered as authors. The study subjects should appear first in this section, since without their cooperation the study would not have been possible).

At the end of this first page it will include the total number of characters with spaces of the abstract (in Spanish and in English), and of the body of the manuscript, (Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion). It will also indicate the number of characters with spaces of the paragraphs, “What is known” and “What it contributes”.

**What is known / What it contributes**: Include the paragraphs on “What is known” and “What it contributes”.

Text of the manuscript. It will include, in the following order: a) Abstract and key words, both in Spanish and in English; b) text or body of the manuscript, with the different sections depending on what it is about; c) literature references; d) Tables, if there are any.

Figures. They must be included in a separate file.

**STRUCTURE OF THE MANUSCRIPTS**

**Title**: It must briefly and concisely indicate the contents of the manuscript and it has to provide the maximum information with the minimum number of words (it recommended not to exceed 15). It must not include acronyms. A short title should be included with a maximum of 80 characters with spaces.

**Abstract and Keywords**: For Original and Short Original works, it has to be structured into the following sections: Objective, Method, Results (most important 3-4) and Conclusion (1-2, arising from the results). It should contain sufficient information for the reader to have a clear idea of the contents of the manuscript. It should not contain information that cannot be found later in the manuscript.

On the same page it will give between 3 and 6 keywords, directly related to the topic presented in the manuscript. MeSH terms (Medical Subject Headings) should be used or the Health Sciences Descriptors (Decs) so that they can be classified in the international data bases.

A Spanish and English version of the abstract and keywords must be submitted.

**Text or body of the manuscript**: It is advisable to divide the work clearly into sections, depending on the section to which it may be submitted:
Introduction: The introduction should include the definition of the basic concepts, contextualize the topic of study, justify its relevance and expose the current state of the topic. In the last part the objectives of the study will be defined. It will be as brief as possible, and its basic rule is to provide the basic information necessary for the reader to be able to understand the text that follows later. All of this supported with the most current and important literature references.

Method: An exhaustive description must be provided on how the study has been performed, with sufficient information so that other researchers can replicate it; that is, that they can perform it without consulting the authors.

Its content will be determined by the objectives of the study. It will contain several sub-sections that do not need to be specified in the text:

Design: The type of study performed must be mentioned, justifying, if necessary, the reasons for its choice.

Population and Study Setting: Indicate the place and the date of performing the study. Specify the characteristics of the studied population and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. If all the population has not been studied, it must indicate how the sample size was calculated and the value of the parameters used, as well as the sampling technique.

Variables: Define all the variables that have been collected, determined by the objectives established, particularly the variables of the most important results. If it is an experimental study, it must mention the intervention made (also of the control group, if relevant and the follow-up time.

Data collection: Explain how the data have been collected and who did it, as well as the tools used for this purpose, indicating if they are validated and the corresponding literature reference.

Data Analysis: Mention the statistics program used for the analysis and the analysis performed. Indicate the strategy used for the literature review, that is, data bases reviewed, the descriptors or keywords employed in the search and the years reviewed.

Ethical Aspects: It must be specified, in the case of research studies, whether it has been approved by the corresponding Ethics Committee, and whether it complies with the requirements established in national and international guidelines for clinical trials and similar studies as applicable.

Results: It must only include the most important results, according to the objectives and the statistical analysis mentioned in the Method section. The results must respond exactly to the objectives that have been established and must make clear whether or not they certify the working hypothesis. There should not be any objective in the introduction that is not given a response in the results and any objective not mentioned in the introduction should not have a response in the results. Assessments or comments on the results obtained should also not be included in this section.

In general, it should start with a description of the study subjects, to specifically know the number studied and their characteristics. If, subjects have been lost during the study, or it has not been able to contact, with the total of the sample selected, it must also indicate both the
number and the reason.

After the description of the subjects, a descriptive analysis of the most important variables will be presented, according to the measurement scale, and the most suitable manner to describe them will be chosen, attempting to provide the best information about each one (thus, frequencies and percentages will be used for the nominal qualitative variables, and for the quantitative ones, mean and standard deviation when they follow a normal distribution, etc.). The corresponding confidence intervals will also be indicated.

If there is more than one study group, each one must be characterised, and later indicate the comparisons between these groups in terms of statistical significance and magnitude of the difference and, above all, in terms of clinical relevance. Statistical tests that have not been described in the Method section must not be employed, and their results must be accompanied by a statistical value, degrees of freedom and statistical significance ($P$ value), and the confidence interval (where appropriate). To indicate the $P$ value, it is advisable not to use more than 3 decimals ($P=0.02$); thus, a value of $P=0.00001$ may be expressed as $P$.

Tables and/or Figures can be used to complement the information, not to duplicate it. The Tables and Figures must be sufficiently clear to be able to interpret them with the need to refer to the text. If abbreviations or initials are used, they must be explained in the Table or Figure footnotes.

If there is more than one study group, each one should be characterized, and then indicate the comparisons between these groups in terms of statistical significance and magnitude of the difference and, above all, in terms of clinical relevance.

After describing the subjects, the descriptive analysis of the most important variables will be presented, according to the measurement scale, and the most appropriate way to describe them will be chosen, trying to provide the best information about each one (thus, for the qualitative variables nominal frequencies and percentages will be used, for the quantitative, mean and standard deviation when following a normal distribution, etc.). The corresponding confidence intervals will also be indicated.

**Discussion:** In this section, the authors must express their opinions on study topic and the results obtained, avoiding repetition of the information that has been given in the Results or in the Introduction. Comparison should be made with the results obtained in other studies, with the corresponding literature references. Mention should be made of the possible limitations of the study that could determine the interpretation of the results. The conclusions and the appropriate recommendations will be reflected, as well as suggestions for future studies on the topic and the implications that it has for the practice. The Discussion, as in the Conclusions, must arise directly from the results, and comments or statements that are not associated with the results obtained in the study must be avoided. It should also take into account, that although statistically significant differences are found in the hypothesis contrasts, these differences may not be relevant in clinical practice and, therefore, there should be caution when interpreting them.

In the discussion should include the limitations of the study and finalize the conclusions within this same section, without indicating a specific heading for it.

**Bibliography:** The adapting of the literature references to the Vancouver Style and their accuracy are the responsibility of the authors, therefore it is advised to make an exhaustive review of these and check them with the original documents, so that they do not contain errors.
that could hinder locating them by interested readers. The literature reference must be consecutively numbered using Arabic numbers in superscript according to their appearance in the text for the first time. When they coincide with a punctuation sign, the citation will always precede that sign. Examples on how to write literature reference can be consulted on the page: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html.

The bibliographical references should be numbered correlatively according to their appearance in the text for the first time, with Arabic numerals flown. When they match a punctuation mark, the quote will always precede that sign.

It is recommended that the bibliographic references included should not be more than 10 years old, and that at least half of them be less than 5 years old, including references from prestigious journals.

Tables and Figures: The Tables will be presented at the end of the manuscript, one on each page, with the title in their upper part and numbered with Arabic numerals, in the order that they appear in the text. The Figures must be submitted in a separate file, also with a title and numbered in order of appearance. The Figures and Tables must not repeat the results that have been mentioned in the text and must be clear; they should not have to refer to the text to be able to understand their content, thus, the title must be explanatory and must be accompanied by the necessary clarification footnotes.

Referees
Please submit the names and institutional e-mail addresses of several potential referees. For more details, visit our Support site. Note that the editor retains the sole right to decide whether or not the suggested reviewers are used.

PREPARATION

Double-blind review
This journal uses double-blind review, which means the identities of the authors are concealed from the reviewers, and vice versa. More information is available on our website. To facilitate this, please include the following separately:
Title page (with author details): This should include the title, authors' names affiliations, acknowledgements and any Declaration of Interest statement, and a complete address for the corresponding author including an e-mail address.
Blinded manuscript (no author details): The main body of the paper (including the references, figures, tables and any acknowledgements) should not include any identifying information, such as the authors' names or affiliations.

Use of word processing software
It is important that the file be saved in the native format of the word processor used. The text should be in single-column format. Keep the layout of the text as simple as possible. Most formatting codes will be removed and replaced on processing the article. In particular, do not use the word processor's options to justify text or to hyphenate words. However, do use bold face, italics, subscripts, superscripts etc. When preparing tables, if you are using a table grid, use only one grid for each individual table and not a grid for each row. If no grid is used, use tabs, not spaces, to align columns. The electronic text should be prepared in a way very similar to that of conventional manuscripts (see also the Guide to Publishing with Elsevier). Note that source files of figures, tables and text graphics will be required whether or not you embed your
figures in the text. See also the section on Electronic artwork.
To avoid unnecessary errors you are strongly advised to use the 'spell-check' and 'grammar-
check' functions of your word processor.

**Article structure**

**Subdivision - unnumbered sections**
Divide your article into clearly defined sections. Each subsection is given a brief heading
(Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion). Each heading should appear on its own separate
line. Subsections should be used as much as possible when cross-referencing text: refer to the
subsection by heading as opposed to simply 'the text'.

**Introduction**
State the objectives of the work and provide an adequate background, avoiding a detailed
literature survey or a summary of the results.

**Method**
Provide sufficient detail to allow the work to be reproduced. Methods already published should
be indicated by a reference: only relevant modifications should be described.

**Results**
Results should be clear and concise.

**Discussion**
This should explore the significance of the results of the work, not repeat them. A combined
Results and Discussion section is often appropriate. Avoid extensive citations and discussion of
published literature.

**Conclusions**
The main conclusions of the study may be presented in a short Conclusions section, which may
stand alone or form a subsection of a Discussion or Results and Discussion section.

**Appendices**
If there is more than one appendix, they should be identified as A, B, etc. Formulae and
equations in appendices should be given separate numbering: Eq. (A.1), Eq. (A.2), etc.; in a
subsequent appendix, Eq. (B.1) and so on. Similarly for tables and figures: Table A.1; Fig. A.1,
etc.

**Essential title page information**
• **Title.** Concise and informative. Titles are often used in information-retrieval systems. Avoid
  abbreviations and formulae where possible.
• **Author names and affiliations.** Please clearly indicate the given name(s) and family
  name(s) of each author and check that all names are accurately spelled. You can add your
  name between parentheses in your own script behind the English transliteration. Present the
  authors' affiliation addresses (where the actual work was done) below the names. Indicate all
  affiliations with a lower-case superscript letter immediately after the author's name and in front
  of the appropriate address. Provide the full postal address of each affiliation, including the
country name and, if available, the e-mail address of each author.

- **Corresponding author.** Clearly indicate who will handle correspondence at all stages of refereeing and publication, also post-publication. This responsibility includes answering any future queries about Methodology and Materials. Ensure that the e-mail address is given and that contact details are kept up to date by the corresponding author.

- **Present/permanent address.** If an author has moved since the work described in the article was done, or was visiting at the time, a 'Present address' (or 'Permanent address') may be indicated as a footnote to that author's name. The address at which the author actually did the work must be retained as the main, affiliation address. Superscript Arabic numerals are used for such footnotes.

### Structured abstract

A structured abstract, by means of appropriate headings, should provide the context or background for the research and should state its purpose, basic procedures (selection of study subjects or laboratory animals, observational and analytical methods), main findings (giving specific effect sizes and their statistical significance, if possible), and principal conclusions. It should emphasize new and important aspects of the study or observations.

The headings will consist of: «Objective», «Method», «Results» and «Conclusions».

### Graphical abstract

Although a graphical abstract is optional, its use is encouraged as it draws more attention to the online article. The graphical abstract should summarize the contents of the article in a concise, pictorial form designed to capture the attention of a wide readership. Graphical abstracts should be submitted as a separate file in the online submission system. Image size: Please provide an image with a minimum of 531 × 1328 pixels (h × w) or proportionally more. The image should be readable at a size of 5 × 13 cm using a regular screen resolution of 96 dpi. Preferred file types: TIFF, EPS, PDF or MS Office files. You can view Example Graphical Abstracts on our information site.

Authors can make use of Elsevier's Illustration and Enhancement service to ensure the best presentation of their images and in accordance with all technical requirements: Illustration Service.

### Highlights

Highlights are a short collection of bullet points that convey the core findings of the article. Highlights are optional and should be submitted in a separate editable file in the online submission system. Please use ‘Highlights’ in the file name and include 3 to 5 bullet points (maximum 85 characters, including spaces, per bullet point). You can view example Highlights on our information site.

### Keywords

Immediately after the abstract, provide a maximum of 6 keywords, using British spelling and avoiding general and plural terms and multiple concepts (avoid, for example, 'and', 'of'). Be sparing with abbreviations: only abbreviations firmly established in the field may be eligible. These keywords will be used for indexing purposes.

### Abbreviations

Define abbreviations that are not standard in this field in a footnote to be placed on the first
page of the article. Such abbreviations that are unavoidable in the abstract must be defined at their first mention there, as well as in the footnote. Ensure consistency of abbreviations throughout the article.

**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.).

**Formatting of funding sources**
List funding sources in this standard way to facilitate compliance to funder's requirements:

Funding: This work was supported by the National Institutes of Health [grant numbers xxxx, yyyy]; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Seattle, WA [grant number zzzz]; and the United States Institutes of Peace [grant number aaaa].

It is not necessary to include detailed descriptions on the program or type of grants and awards. When funding is from a block grant or other resources available to a university, college, or other research institution, submit the name of the institute or organization that provided the funding.

If no funding has been provided for the research, please include the following sentence:

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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

**Artwork**

**Image manipulation**
Whilst it is accepted that authors sometimes need to manipulate images for clarity, manipulation for purposes of deception or fraud will be seen as scientific ethical abuse and will be dealt with accordingly. For graphical images, this journal is applying the following policy: no specific feature within an image may be enhanced, obscured, moved, removed, or introduced. Adjustments of brightness, contrast, or color balance are acceptable if and as long as they do not obscure or eliminate any information present in the original. Nonlinear adjustments (e.g. changes to gamma settings) must be disclosed in the figure legend.

**Electronic artwork**
General points
- Make sure you use uniform lettering and sizing of your original artwork.
- Embed the used fonts if the application provides that option.
- Aim to use the following fonts in your illustrations: Arial, Courier, Times New Roman, Symbol, or use fonts that look similar.
- Number the illustrations according to their sequence in the text.
- Use a logical naming convention for your artwork files.
- Provide captions to illustrations separately.
- Size the illustrations close to the desired dimensions of the published version.
- Submit each illustration as a separate file.
A detailed guide on electronic artwork is available. You are urged to visit this site; some excerpts from the detailed information are given here.

Formats
If your electronic artwork is created in a Microsoft Office application (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) then please supply 'as is' in the native document format. Regardless of the application used other than Microsoft Office, when your electronic artwork is finalized, please 'Save as' or convert the images to one of the following formats (note the resolution requirements for line drawings, halftones, and line/halftone combinations given below):

- EPS (or PDF): Vector drawings, embed all used fonts.
- TIFF (or JPEG): Color or grayscale photographs (halftones), keep to a minimum of 300 dpi.
- TIFF (or JPEG): Bitmapped (pure black & white pixels) line drawings, keep to a minimum of 1000 dpi.
- TIFF (or JPEG): Combinations bitmapped line/halftone (color or grayscale), keep to a minimum of 500 dpi.

Please do not:
- Supply files that are optimized for screen use (e.g., GIF, BMP, PICT, WPG); these typically have a low number of pixels and limited set of colors;
- Supply files that are too low in resolution;
- Submit graphics that are disproportionately large for the content.

Color artwork
Please make sure that artwork files are in an acceptable format (TIFF (or JPEG), EPS (or PDF) or MS Office files) and with the correct resolution. If, together with your accepted article, you submit usable color figures then Elsevier will ensure, at no additional charge, that these figures will appear in color online (e.g., ScienceDirect and other sites). Further information on the preparation of electronic artwork.

Illustration services
Elsevier's WebShop offers Illustration Services to authors preparing to submit a manuscript but concerned about the quality of the images accompanying their article. Elsevier's expert illustrators can produce scientific, technical and medical-style images, as well as a full range of charts, tables and graphs. Image 'polishing' is also available, where our illustrators take your image(s) and improve them to a professional standard. Please visit the website to find out more.

Figure captions
Ensure that each illustration has a caption. Supply captions separately, not attached to the figure. A caption should comprise a brief title (not on the figure itself) and a description of the illustration. Keep text in the illustrations themselves to a minimum but explain all symbols and abbreviations used.

Tables
Please submit tables as editable text and not as images. Tables can be placed either next to the relevant text in the article, or on separate page(s) at the end. Number tables consecutively in accordance with their appearance in the text and place any table notes below the table body. Be sparing in the use of tables and ensure that the data presented in them do not duplicate results described elsewhere in the article. Please avoid using vertical rules and shading in table
cells.

References

Citation in text
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.

Reference links
Increased discoverability of research and high quality peer review are ensured by online links to the sources cited. In order to allow us to create links to abstracting and indexing services, such as Scopus, CrossRef and PubMed, please ensure that data provided in the references are correct. Please note that incorrect surnames, journal/book titles, publication year and pagination may prevent link creation. When copying references, please be careful as they may already contain errors. Use of the DOI is encouraged.

A DOI can be used to cite and link to electronic articles where an article is in-press and full citation details are not yet known, but the article is available online. A DOI is guaranteed never to change, so you can use it as a permanent link to any electronic article. An example of a citation using DOI for an article not yet in an issue is: VanDecar J.C., Russo R.M., James D.E., Ambeh W.B., Franke M. (2003). Aseismic continuation of the Lesser Antilles slab beneath northeastern Venezuela. Journal of Geophysical Research, https://doi.org/10.1029/2001JB000884i. Please note the format of such citations should be in the same style as all other references in the paper.

Web references
As a minimum, the full URL should be given and the date when the reference was last accessed. Any further information, if known (DOI, author names, dates, reference to a source publication, etc.), should also be given. Web references can be listed separately (e.g., after the reference list) under a different heading if desired, or can be included in the reference list.

Data references
This journal encourages you to cite underlying or relevant datasets in your manuscript by citing them in your text and including a data reference in your Reference List. Data references should include the following elements: author name(s), dataset title, data repository, version (where available), year, and global persistent identifier. Add [dataset] immediately before the reference so we can properly identify it as a data reference. This identifier will not appear in your published article.

References in a special issue
Please ensure that the words 'this issue' are added to any references in the list (and any citations in the text) to other articles in the same Special Issue.
Reference management software
Most Elsevier journals have their reference template available in many of the most popular reference management software products. These include all products that support Citation Style Language styles, such as Mendeley and Zotero, as well as EndNote. Using the word processor plug-ins from these products, authors only need to select the appropriate journal template when preparing their article, after which citations and bibliographies will be automatically formatted in the journal's style. If no template is yet available for this journal, please follow the format of the sample references and citations as shown in this Guide.

Reference style
Text: Indicate references by superscript numbers in the text. The actual authors can be referred to, but the reference number(s) must always be given.

List: Number the references in the list in the order in which they appear in the text.

Examples:
Reference to a journal publication:
Reference to a book:
Reference to a chapter in an edited book:
Reference to a website:
Reference to a dataset:
Note shortened form for last page number. e.g., 51–9, and that for more than 6 authors the first 6 should be listed followed by 'et al.' For further details you are referred to 'Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts submitted to Biomedical Journals' (J Am Med Assoc 1997;277:927–34)(see also Samples of Formatted References).

Journal abbreviations source
Journal names should be abbreviated according to the List of Title Word Abbreviations.

Video
Elsevier accepts video material and animation sequences to support and enhance your scientific research. Authors who have video or animation files that they wish to submit with their article are strongly encouraged to include links to these within the body of the article. This can be done in the same way as a figure or table by referring to the video or animation content and noting in the body text where it should be placed. All submitted files should be properly labeled so that they directly relate to the video file's content. In order to ensure that your video or animation material is directly usable, please provide the file in one of our recommended file formats with a preferred maximum size of 150 MB per file, 1 GB in total. Video and animation files supplied will be published online in the electronic version of your article in Elsevier Web products, including ScienceDirect. Please supply 'stills' with your files: you can choose any
frame from the video or animation or make a separate image. These will be used instead of standard icons and will personalize the link to your video data. For more detailed instructions please visit our video instruction pages. Note: since video and animation cannot be embedded in the print version of the journal, please provide text for both the electronic and the print version for the portions of the article that refer to this content.

**Supplementary material**

Supplementary material such as applications, images and sound clips, can be published with your article to enhance it. Submitted supplementary items are published exactly as they are received (Excel or PowerPoint files will appear as such online). Please submit your material together with the article and supply a concise, descriptive caption for each supplementary file. If you wish to make changes to supplementary material during any stage of the process, please make sure to provide an updated file. Do not annotate any corrections on a previous version. Please switch off the 'Track Changes' option in Microsoft Office files as these will appear in the published version.

**RESEARCH DATA**

This journal encourages and enables you to share data that supports your research publication where appropriate, and enables you to interlink the data with your published articles. Research data refers to the results of observations or experimentation that validate research findings. To facilitate reproducibility and data reuse, this journal also encourages you to share your software, code, models, algorithms, protocols, methods and other useful materials related to the project.

Below are a number of ways in which you can associate data with your article or make a statement about the availability of your data when submitting your manuscript. If you are sharing data in one of these ways, you are encouraged to cite the data in your manuscript and reference list. Please refer to the "References" section for more information about data citation. For more information on depositing, sharing and using research data and other relevant research materials, visit the research data page.

**Data in Brief**

You have the option of converting any or all parts of your supplementary or additional raw data into one or multiple data articles, a new kind of article that houses and describes your data. Data articles ensure that your data is actively reviewed, curated, formatted, indexed, given a DOI and publicly available to all upon publication. You are encouraged to submit your article for Data in Brief as an additional item directly alongside the revised version of your manuscript. If your research article is accepted, your data article will automatically be transferred over to Data in Brief where it will be editorially reviewed and published in the open access data journal, Data in Brief. Please note an open access fee is payable for publication in Data in Brief. Full details can be found on the Data in Brief website. Please use this template to write your Data in Brief.

**ARTICLE ENRICHMENTS**
**AudioSlides**
The journal encourages authors to create an AudioSlides presentation with their published article. AudioSlides are brief, webinar-style presentations that are shown next to the online article on ScienceDirect. This gives authors the opportunity to summarize their research in their own words and to help readers understand what the paper is about. More information and examples are available. Authors of this journal will automatically receive an invitation e-mail to create an AudioSlides presentation after acceptance of their paper.

**AFTER ACCEPTANCE**

**Proofs**
One set of page proofs (as PDF files) will be sent by e-mail to the corresponding author (if we do not have an e-mail address then paper proofs will be sent by post) or, a link will be provided in the e-mail so that authors can download the files themselves. Elsevier now provides authors with PDF proofs which can be annotated; for this you will need to download the free Adobe Reader, version 9 (or higher). Instructions on how to annotate PDF files will accompany the proofs (also given online). The exact system requirements are given at the Adobe site. If you do not wish to use the PDF annotations function, you may list the corrections (including replies to the Query Form) and return them to Elsevier in an e-mail. Please list your corrections quoting line number. If, for any reason, this is not possible, then mark the corrections and any other comments (including replies to the Query Form) on a printout of your proof and scan the pages and return via e-mail. Please use this proof only for checking the typesetting, editing, completeness and correctness of the text, tables and figures. Significant changes to the article as accepted for publication will only be considered at this stage with permission from the Editor. We will do everything possible to get your article published quickly and accurately. It is important to ensure that all corrections are sent back to us in one communication: please check carefully before replying, as inclusion of any subsequent corrections cannot be guaranteed. Proofreading is solely your responsibility.

**Offprints**
The corresponding author will, at no cost, receive a customized Share Link providing 50 days free access to the final published version of the article on ScienceDirect. The Share Link can be used for sharing the article via any communication channel, including email and social media. For an extra charge, paper offprints can be ordered via the offprint order form which is sent once the article is accepted for publication. Both corresponding and co-authors may order offprints at any time via Elsevier's Webshop. Corresponding authors who have published their article open access do not receive a Share Link as their final published version of the article is available open access on ScienceDirect and can be shared through the article DOI link.

**AUTHOR INQUIRIES**
Visit the Elsevier Support Center to find the answers you need. Here you will find everything from Frequently Asked Questions to ways to get in touch. You can also check the status of your submitted article or find out when your accepted article will be published.