GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

INTRODUCTION

*Journal of Healthcare Quality Research (JHQR)* is the Journal of the Spanish Society of Quality Healthcare (Sociedad Española de Calidad Asistencial, SECA) and is a tool for the dissemination of knowledge and considerations about the quality management of health services.

*JHQR* publishes articles in Spanish and English associated with any aspect of research in the field of public health and health administration, including health education, epidemiology, medical statistics, health information, health economics, quality management, and health policies. The Journal publishes 6 issues, exclusively in electronic format. Articles are subjected to a rigorous, double-blind review process (peer review).

**Types of article**

1. **Originals.**

Empirical works related to any aspect of research in the field of Quality Healthcare in the areas of Nursing, Clinical Medicine, Public Health and Health Management/Administration (such as health promotion, health education, epidemiology, medical statistics, health economics, issues relating to quality management, research on health services, planning and health policies). The maximum length of the text shall be 3,000 words on font type Arial and font size 12. The body of the article shall comprise the following sections: introduction, material and methods, results and discussion. A structured abstract shall also be included in English and Spanish, along with 3-6 key words and 10-15 references, with a maximum of two tables or figures being permitted. Controlled clinical trials must be submitted in accordance with the CONSORT guidelines. These may be consulted at the CONSORT standards, available under [http://www.consort-statement.org/](http://www.consort-statement.org/) Other methodological study designs should follow the corresponding publication guidelines, such as STROBE, PRISMA, CARE, etc., which can be found at [http://www.equator-network.org/](http://www.equator-network.org/).

2. **Brief originals.**

These are works which, due to their reduced length, are not suitable for the originals section. The maximum length of the article body shall be 1,500-2000 words. A structured abstract shall be included in English and Spanish, along with 3-6 key words and 10-15 references, with a maximum of two tables or figures being permitted. The editors reserve the right to accept conventional originals in this format if the content and length is appropriate.

2. **A Quality Improvement Initiative Report**

Concise stories that describe and evaluate quality improvement interventions or initiatives that
aim to improve a process or system in healthcare. Includes novel approaches in any of the quality domain and explore how the initiative attempted to improve safety, effectiveness, patient-centeredness, timeliness, cost, efficiency, and/or equity of health care, empowerment of people/communities, etc.

Priority will be given to approaches that are transferrable and scalable to other settings and contexts.

The reports should contain impact evaluation of the initiatives, not only about satisfaction but also some structure, process or outcome measures. SQUIRE guidelines are highly recommended for this type or reports.

Structure and format:

Length is 600-900 words with up to 10 references.

Short title (max of 4 words) that clearly describes the nature of the quality improvement initiative or intervention

Introduction: describing the quality problem, a brief description of the context, the intervention or initiative and how it works and the aim of the solution.

Methods: Very brief description of the Quality improvement intervention or initiative, design, data collection, sample calculation and main outcomes or key performance indicators used to evaluate impact. Also include the setting, describing where the intervention was implemented and which stakeholders (healthcare providers, policymakers and patients are involved)

Results that convey the main findings without duplicating information in the table/figure(s)

Discussion concise text that puts the work into context, describes the main limitations, what factors others have to take into account to apply the intervention, what you have learned after the implementation process and suggests next steps for practice, policy, education or research.

Include no more than 2 tables and figures (total), focused on the main results.

Abstract: Up to 100 words with no headings. The abstract should convey the purpose, brief methods, main finding, and lesson learnt and implications.

Supplementary data: no supplementary data are allowed for this type of report.

3. Editorials.

Works of opinion written on behalf of the Editorial Board. Their length must not exceed 1,000 words, with a maximum of 10 bibliographical references. The subject will be related to the original works published in the journal or to topics of general interest. Figures or tables shall not be included, except in special cases where they are necessary to improve the understanding of the text.

4. Letters to the Editor.

This section features formally accepted scientific observations on the topics included in the journal, as well as comments or responses to published works or opinions on the same. They shall be started with the phrase: "Dear Editor,.

They should be written in a formal register, and
may not include pejorative or discourteous statements. The maximum length shall be 1,500 words, with one table or figure and up to 10 bibliographical references.

5. Other sections.

The journal also includes the following sections: Opinion articles, special articles, review articles, book reviews, professional information, bibliographic information, scientific activities, etc. The papers in these sections may be commissioned by the Editorial Team. The texts should be written in an impersonal manner and the use of discriminatory language regarding gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnic and racial identity, disability, etc. is not permitted.

Contact details for submission
You can send your manuscript at

https://www.editorialmanager.com/jhqr

Language
This journal publishes articles in Spanish or English language.

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 (3 to 5)
- 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 colour should be used for any figures in print

1. Graphical Abstracts / Highlights files (where applicable)
2. Supplemental files (where applicable)

Further considerations

- The 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

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

*Ethics in publishing*
Please see our information pages on [Ethics in publishing](#) and [Ethical guidelines for journal publication](#).

*Studies in humans and animals*
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. The manuscript should be in line with the [Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals](#) and aim for the inclusion of representative human populations (sex, age and ethnicity) as per those recommendations. The terms *sex* and *gender* should be used correctly.

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. The sex of animals must be indicated, and where appropriate, the influence (or association) of sex on the results of the study.

*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 but copies should not be provided to the journal. Only if specifically requested by the journal in exceptional circumstances (for example if a legal issue arises) the author must provide copies of the consents or evidence that such consents have been obtained. 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.

*Declaration of interest*
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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, 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.

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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 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.

**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.

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PREPARATION

Peer review
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**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. 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.

*Material and methods*
Provide sufficient details to allow the work to be reproduced by an independent researcher. Methods that are already published should be summarized, and indicated by a reference. If quoting directly from a previously published method, use quotation marks and also cite the
source. Any modifications to existing methods should also 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.
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• 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.

Highlights
Highlights are optional yet highly encouraged for this journal, as they increase the discoverability of your article via search engines. They consist of a short collection of bullet points that capture the novel results of your research as well as new methods that were used during the study (if any). Please have a look at the examples here: example Highlights.

Highlights 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
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: «Introduction and Objectives», «Patients or Materials and Methods», «Results» y «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.

Keywords
Immediately after the abstract, provide 3 to 5 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.

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General points
- Make sure you use uniform lettering and sizing of your original artwork.
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- 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.
- Ensure that color images are accessible to all, including those with impaired color vision.

A detailed [guide on electronic artwork](#) is available.

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• Submit graphics that are disproportionately large for the content.

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Text graphics may be embedded in the text at the appropriate position. See further under Electronic artwork.

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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.

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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.

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Reference style

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

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Reference to a journal publication:
Reference to a journal publication with an article number:
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
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