



Quality of Author Guidelines in Nursing Journals

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When writing for professional communication, authors

required the statement (Tam, Lo, & Khalechelvam, 2017). While there were no significant differences in adherence to the PRISMA statement between systematic reviews and meta-analyses published in journals endorsing PRISMA versus those in journals that did not, Tam et al. (2017) recommended that journals require authors to follow these guidelines.

In a study analyzing the requirement of and adherence to the CONSORT statement and trial registration for randomized controlled trials (RCTs), Jull and Phyu Sin (2015) found that 7 of 15 nursing journals promoted the use of CONSORT, and 3 of those also endorsed trial registration. Those RCTs published in journals endorsing CONSORT had a lower risk for bias for blinding and more complete follow-up, while those published in journals promoting trial registration were three times more likely to be registered. The authors found an inadequate reporting of trials and recommended a stronger editorial position on adherence, such as by only publishing trials that have been registered and involving reviewers in checking for trial reporting (Jull & Phyu Sin, 2015). In a similar study of 96 trials published in four nursing journals, 37% of the RCTs did not meet at least half of the criteria of the CONSORT checklist used to determine adherence to the standards. One journal began recommending the use of CONSORT during the study, and this caused a significant increase in CONSORT scores for RCTs published within that journal (Smith et al., 2008).

Methods

Review Process and Form

The author guidelines of all of the journals ($n = 249$) in the Directory of Nursing Journals at the International Academy of Nursing Editors (INANE) website (<https://nursingeditors.com/journals-directory/>) were reviewed. The directory is a collaborative venture between INANE and the publication, *Nurse Author & Editor*. This list was selected as the journals are vetted based on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (COPE, 2014). The directory includes journals that are published in print, online only, or a combination of print and online. It also includes journals that require a subscription to access content, are open access (authors pay to publish and for their article to be freely available on the Internet), and are hybrid, that is, subscription journals that offer an option for open access. The vetting process ensures that there are no journals that are described as predatory (Oermann et al., 2016). The directory is updated in real-time as new or revised information is received by the list maintainers.

Tab 1. C e.e e., C.e.e.a .E.a a

Tab 3. Ethical requirements of Academic Journals

Ethical requirements	<i>n</i> (%)
Disciplinary code of ethics	18 (7.4)
Criteria for publication (ethical considerations)	138 (58.2)
Guidelines for authors, reviewers, editors	204 (85.7)
Guidelines for rejected manuscripts	204 (85.7)
Confidentiality of authors, reviewers, editors	114 (81.5)

and half of the journals ($n = 131$, 57.2%) described their peer review processes. Descriptions of ethical require-

might be useful to reference journal policy regarding who qualifies for authorship versus who should be thanked in an acknowledgement, thus providing additional guidance for authors.

Most nurse authors are familiar with the reference style they used in their nursing programs for papers, research

served in the majority of cases when writing for publication in nursing.

An area of consideration is the suggestion or requirement to use reporting guidelines, such as CONSORT or PRISMA. This review found that the suggestion to use such guidelines is low at less than 25%. Editors need to carefully consider whether adding this information will make their author guidelines longer, and potentially more confusing, or will add value to authors who seek to publish in their journals.

Editors of nursing journals face the complex challenge of balancing the pragmatic considerations of publishing with the more erudite purposes for which the journal exists. Length of manuscripts, numbers of references, formatting styles, reporting standards, and other requirements reflect the editorial quality of the publication but also place limitations on the journal's substantive content. The requirements of the journal, such as allowed word or page length or number of references, should be considered by authors when selecting a journal for submission of a manuscript. Some studies and topics may not be adequately communicated in a shorter paper or in a journal that limits the number of references. Authors can send a query to the editor asking if these requirements can be waived for their particular manuscript; if not, another journal might be more appropriate. All who participate in the process of publishing—editors, authors, publishers, and consumers—contribute to the development of the professional literature, which ultimately aims to advance the discipline.

Clinical Resources

- Committee on Publication Ethics: <https://publicationethics.org/>
- EQUATOR Network: <http://www.equator-network.org/>
- International Academy of Nursing Editors. Writing for publication: <https://nursingeditors.com/resources/writing-for-publication/>
- International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Recommendations: <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/>

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American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.).

