

AJAN

AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF ADVANCED NURSING

An international peer-reviewed journal of nursing and midwifery research and practice



The [Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing \(AJAN\)](#) is the peer-reviewed scholarly journal of the [Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation \(ANMF\)](#).

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Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing (AJAN): Author Guidelines

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Requirements at Submission

As part of the submission process, authors are required to check off their manuscript's compliance with all of the following items. Manuscripts may be returned to authors that do not adhere to these guidelines.

- The manuscript must align to *AJAN's* Mission, Aims, and Scope.
- The manuscript must be presented in accordance with the manuscript style and structure detailed below.
- The manuscript must be accompanied by a cover letter in line with the requirements below.
- The authors must clearly and truthfully declare any relevant conflicts of interest.
- The manuscript must not be published or submitted to any other publisher while it is under consideration by *AJAN*.
- A separate title page file is included with the submission and is presented in line with the requirements below.
- A structured abstract is included in the manuscript file and is presented in line with the requirements below.
- Consecutive line numbers must be included in the manuscript.
- In-text citations and the reference list must be complete and correctly formatted.
- The manuscript must be written in a clear, understandable fashion and use correct English spelling, grammar, and syntax.
- Any other material (e.g. supplementary files) is attached and clearly defined/labelled

General Information

Mission and Aim

The Mission of *AJAN* is to provide a forum to showcase and promote a wide variety of original research and scholarly work to inform and empower nurses, midwives, and other healthcare professionals to improve the health and wellbeing of all communities and to be prepared for the future.

To realise this mission, *AJAN's* aims are to:

- Equip the nursing, midwifery, and wider health professions to deliver safe, quality, evidence-based care in all settings.
- Promote the professional and personal safety and wellbeing of nurses, midwives, and other healthcare staff in all environments.
- Support nurses and midwives to be leaders in clinical and maternity care, research, and policy across health and social issues.

- Publish and disseminate a wide variety of high-quality, evidence-based original research and other scholarly work to inform and influence health, maternity, aged care, and public health policy, research, and practice.
- Maintain and promote values that underpin an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable future for all communities.

Journal Scope

The *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing* publishes a wide variety of original research, review articles, practice guidelines, and commentary relevant to nursing and midwifery practice, health- maternity- and aged- care delivery, public health, healthcare policy and funding, nursing and midwifery education, regulation, management, economics, ethics, and research methodology. Further, the journal publishes personal narratives that convey the art and spirit of nursing and midwifery.

As the official peer-reviewed journal of the ANMF, *AJAN* is dedicated to publishing and showcasing scholarly material of principal relevance to national nursing and midwifery professional, clinical, research, education, management, and policy audiences. Beyond *AJAN*'s primarily national focus, manuscripts with regional and international scope are also welcome where their contribution to knowledge and debate on key issues for nursing, midwifery, and healthcare more broadly are significant.

Ethical and legal Considerations

The *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing* adheres to the principles of transparency, ethical editorial practice, and publishing standards set by the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#).

Manuscripts that report research studies submitted without prior human research ethics committee approval will not normally be considered for publication. In some instances, studies that have not received ethics approval may be published at the discretion of the journal providing that ethics approval would not normally be required (e.g. some quality improvement projects). Authors are requested to notify the editorial office upon submission of their manuscript and explain why ethics approval has not been secured. A letter from the relevant institution's human research ethics committee may be requested indicating that the committee does not typically provide ethical approval for studies such as the one being considered for publication in the *AJAN*.

Declaration and Verification of Originality

All submitted manuscripts must be original and not previously published elsewhere (excepting abstracts, preliminary reports, and theses). Submissions cannot be under consideration for publication elsewhere, and if accepted, must not be published elsewhere in similar form, or in any other language. This may be appealed where permission is sought from and granted by *AJAN* and the publisher of the original work. The *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing* will not accept manuscripts that reproduce significant sections of a previously published theses.

Although *AJAN* editors make every effort to ensure the validity of published manuscripts the ultimate responsibility to ensure academic integrity lies with the author, not with *AJAN*, its editors or the publisher. Manuscripts may be checked with originality detection software. The author(s) of manuscripts that are suspected to contain plagiarised content, before or following publication, will be contacted by *AJAN*'s editors prior to any further action being taken (eg. manuscript rejection or retraction).

Copyright

Manuscripts accepted for publication become the property of *AJAN*, as such authors will be required to complete a Transfer of Copyright form. Receipt of this form will allow the publisher to administer copyright on behalf of the authors and *AJAN* whilst allowing continued use of the material by the author for scholarly communication.

Study Registration

The Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing encourages the prospective registration of studies and require it for clinical trials (as defined by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors - ICMJE). Registration should occur by the time of participant enrolment. Where a study has been registered, please give the registration number at the end of the abstract and in the body of the paper. Authors seeking to publish a prospective intervention study (other than clinical trials) that has not been registered in advance are encouraged to register at the earliest opportunity before submitting for publication.

Third Party Material

If requiring the use of third party copyrighted works, the author(s) must obtain written permission from the copyright owner and credit the source(s) within the manuscript. This includes permission to translate scales where a third party holds copyright.

Authorship

The *AJAN* follows the recommendations of the [ICMJE](#), as such a contributing author should be considered to have;

- 1) made a substantial contribution to the conception and design of the study; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data in the work;
- 2) made a substantial contribution to the drafting of the manuscript and/or critical revision for important intellectual content;
- 3) provided final approval of the submitted manuscript, and;
- 4) agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Individuals who meet some but not all of the criteria described above can be attributed as contributors at the end of the manuscript with their contribution specified.

Authors are responsible for determining authorship and as such *AJAN* will not enter authorship related discussions or arbitrate authorship disputes. All authors should collectively determine who is to be an author or acknowledged contributor. This authorship list must be finalised before submission of the manuscript to *AJAN*.

Changes to Authorship

Authors are expected to carefully consider and finalise the order and list of authors before submitting their manuscript, with the provided list being definitive at the time of submission. Any changes to this authorship must be made before acceptance for publication and only if approved by the journal editor. To request a change the editor is required to receive a) the reason for the change, and b) written confirmation from all authors stating their agreeance with the change. Where the change includes the addition or removal of an author, written confirmation from that individual is required.

Addition, removal or rearrangement of authors will only be considered in exceptional circumstances post-acceptance of the manuscript for publication, while considering the request publication of the manuscript will be suspended. If the manuscript has already been

published any requests approved by the journal editor will be made through publication of a corrigendum in a subsequent issue.

Conflict of Interest

Full disclosure of conflicts of interest to the editor are a requisite to publication. Conflicts of interest can be described where any primary interest may be influenced through a secondary interest. This may exist where existing financial and/or personal relationships with other individuals may influence the conduct and outcome of the authors work. The *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing's* approach to conflicts of interest operates in accordance with the ICMJE, and as such use of the ICMJE standard form is required where preparing a conflict of interest statement. The ICMJE standard form can be located on the [ICMJE](#) website. Where conflicts of interest are noted to exist, a statement outlining these must be made in a subsection at the end of the manuscript text prior to the references.

Declaring a conflict of interest does not necessarily preclude the submission from publication, however failure to disclose a conflict of interest is a form of misconduct potentially leading to correction or retraction of a publication. Once completed, a declaration of conflict of interest must be provided along with the manuscript at the time of submission. Where no conflicts of interest are noted to exist, a statement that no conflicts of interest exist must be made in a subsection at the end of the manuscript text prior to the references.

Role of the Funding Source

Authors are required to identify all sources of funding that enabled the conduct of the research and/or preparation of the submitted manuscript. Authors must also state the role, if any, that a funding source had in study design; in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, and; in the writing of the report. The corresponding author must state whether they maintained full access to all data within the study and final responsibility for the decision to submit for publication. All acknowledgements of role of the funding source are to be presented in a subsection at the end of the manuscript text prior to the references.

Article Style and Structure

Language Standards

The *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing* supports and encourages manuscript submissions from authors from around the globe and acknowledges that authors whose native language is not English may have difficulties writing manuscripts to the standard of English required by the journal. In this instance, we encourage authors to engage the services of a scientific editor or copyeditor to improve the quality of the manuscript before submitting.

While the journal is pleased to receive submissions from anywhere in the world, unfortunately, where the quality of written expression interferes with the ability of readers or reviewers to understand the material, manuscripts may be sent back to authors.

Title Page

The title page must be submitted as a separate file (DOC, DOCX, or RTF) and may be more than one page in length if necessary.

Titles must be specific, descriptive and concise. Titles should be written in sentence case (i.e. only the first word of the text and proper nouns capitalised). Study design should be noted in

the title where appropriate, as an example this may include where the study is a clinical trial, systematic review or meta-analyses.

The title page should be the only file which lists the names, post-nominals, and affiliations of the authors.

The title page should also include the details of the corresponding author, acknowledgements, funding support, and a declaration of any relevant conflicts of interest.

Article Style

File Format

Manuscript files may be submitted in the following formats: DOC, DOCX or RTF. Microsoft word documents should not be locked or protected.

Length

Manuscripts may be of any length, no word count or limit to number of figures or amount of supporting information is applied. All manuscripts however, must present and discuss findings concisely. The editors reserve the right to reject manuscripts that are deemed too long, or to request that the author(s) shorten the manuscript to a more suitable length.

Font

For the body of the manuscript, please use a standard 12 font size and 'Arial' font. To add symbols to the manuscript, use the Insert → Symbol function in your word processor or paste in the appropriate Unicode character

Headings

Please limit manuscript sections and sub-sections to five heading levels. Make sure heading levels are clearly indicated in the manuscript text. Recommended heading levels are:

Heading Level One (e.g. Title) – Size 14, Bold

Heading Level Two (e.g. Abstract, Background, Methods, Results, Discussion) – Size 12, Bold

Heading Level Three (e.g. subsections/headings i.e. Participants) – Size 12, Bold, Italic

Heading Level Four (e.g. lower subheadings i.e. Themes) – Size 12, Italic

Heading Level Five (e.g. sub-themes) – Size 12, Italic, Indented

Layout and Spacing

Manuscript text must be 1.5 spaced, text must be formatted into a single column only (i.e. not multiple columns).

Page and Line Numbers

Page and line numbers must be included in the manuscript file only. Use continuous line numbers throughout the document, i.e. do not restart the numbering on each page.

Footnotes

Footnotes are not permitted. Any manuscripts utilising footnotes will be returned to the authors and a request made to move the information, depending on appropriateness, either into the main text or to the reference list.

Language

Manuscripts must be submitted in academic British English. Any manuscripts utilising American English will be returned to the authors and a request made to update the language style to British English prior to resubmission.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations must be defined upon first appearance in the text. Non-standard abbreviations must not be used unless they appear at least three times in the text. Abbreviations should be kept to a minimum. Abbreviations or acronyms must not be used at the start of new sentences, in which case the whole term must be spelled out. Abstracts may only contain standard abbreviations which are spelled out at the first use; e.g. Emergency department (ED).

Reference Style

The *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing* uses “Vancouver” referencing style. Within the body of the manuscript (in-text), references should be cited sequentially using superscripted Arabic numerals only following punctuation. For example:

“as reported by Sharplin and colleagues.¹”

Two references are separated by a comma. For example.^{1,2}

Three or more consecutive references must include a hyphen between the first and last citation. For example.^{1-3,6,12,21-24}

References in tables, figures, and boxes should be in numerical order according to where the item is cited in the text.

Please do not use references in the abstract.

Equations

We recommend using MathType for display and inline equations, as it will provide the most reliable outcome. If this is not possible, Equation Editor or Microsoft's Insert→Equation function is acceptable.

Article Structure

The main body of the manuscript should be ordered in a manner that corresponds to the abstract. Subheadings may be used (see above for details on the use of heading levels in *AJAN*). Below is a brief guide to a standard structure for a research manuscript for publication in *AJAN*. Some variation may be necessary, which may be acceptable by *AJAN*.

Beginning Section

Abstract

Submitted manuscripts must include a structured abstract of no more than 400 words. The abstract should use standard headings such as:

Objective

Background

Study design and methods

Results

Discussion

Conclusion

Implications for research, policy, and practice

Other headings may be acceptable if those above are not suited to the type of article. For example; a case study or discussion paper. All abstracts must:

- Describes the main objective(s) of the study.
- Provide a high-level overview of the methodological process undertaken.
- Concisely summarise the important findings of the study and their significance.

Keywords

No more than six keywords should be provided. Ideally these should be different from the words in the title to improve article identification in online databases. Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) a controlled and hierarchically-organised vocabulary produced by the National Library of Medicine can be used to identify appropriate keywords.

Manuscript Contributions

Following the keywords, authors should include two sections:

What is already known about the topic?

- (text describing what is known about the topic)

What this paper adds

- (text describing what knowledge this paper adds to the topic)

Each may have up to three short, dot-pointed sentences of no more than 40 words each.

Objective

The objective of the work/research should be clearly and concisely stated explaining to the reader exactly what is hoped to be demonstrated or argued in the manuscript as well as the rationale for the study.

Background

The background should contextualise the manuscript within its field of study and must be comprehensive enough that readers outside of the field are able to understand the importance and significance of the study.

Background should:

- introduce and define the problem being addressed and its importance;
- provide a brief overview of relevant literature;
- make note of controversies or disagreements within the field of study, and;
- provide a brief concluding remark regarding the overall aim of the work.

Middle Section

Method

Description of the method should allow full replication of the study by other sufficiently skilled investigators.

Results

The results section should present and describe the relevant findings of the study. Interpretation of the results or analysis of the results in relation to other evidence should not appear in the results section.

Discussion

The discussion section should discuss the implications of the findings of the study. The discussion of these implications should refer to the overall objective/aim of the study and the findings impact on the field, related studies, and potential future direction for research.

Conclusion

Should state the concluding remarks, resulting from the findings and discussed implications of the study. Editorial decisions made by *AJAN* are not reliant on the perceived significance or impact of a study, as such the overstatement of concluding remarks should be avoided.

Implications for research, policy, and practice

This section may be dot-pointed under one to three subsections or written as a brief narrative. This section clearly and succinctly explains any implications or recommendations that can be made to decision makers and knowledge users based on the results of the work.

Ending Section

Acknowledgements

This section should include any acknowledgements to those who contributed to the study but do not meet the criteria for authorship. It is the authors responsibility to ensure any individual named in acknowledgement agrees to being stated as such. It should be clear what each acknowledged individual contributed (e.g. assistance with locating background literature and statistical analysis).

References

A reference list should follow the requirements of the Vancouver referencing style. Any and all available works are acceptable within a reference list provided they have been accepted for publication (where references have been accepted but are yet unpublished, supporting evidence is required to affirm the inclusion of the reference). Unpublished or unavailable works cannot be accepted as an appropriate reference.

In the reference list, journal article references should adhere to the following format:

Peters MDJ. Managing and Coding References for Systematic Reviews and Scoping Reviews in EndNote. *Med Ref Serv Q.* 2017; 36(1): 19-31.

In the reference list, journal names should be abbreviated in their standard form as in [Index Medicus](#)

If there are six authors or fewer, list all six in the form: surname space initials comma. For example:

Sharplin G, Corsini N, Cameron K, Ramsey I, Adelson P, Eckert M.

If there are seven or more list the first three in the same way, followed by et al.

For a book, list any editors and the publisher, the city of publication, and year of publication.

For a chapter or section of a book, also list the authors and title of the chapter/section, and the page numbers.

For online material, please cite the URL along with the date you accessed the website in brackets. For example: (accessed 19 Nov 2019)

Online journal articles can be cited using the DOI number.

Supporting Information/ Supplementary Files

Authors should submit essential supporting files and multimedia along with their manuscripts as supporting information. These files will be subject to peer review but will not be copyedited, and as such will be published as they are provided in a single combined .PDF file.

Other Elements

Figure captions are to be inserted immediately after the first paragraph in which the figure is cited. Figure files should be uploaded separately. Tables are inserted immediately after the first paragraph in which they are cited. Supporting information files are uploaded separately.

Table headings precede (are above) the table itself. Figure and box headings follow (are below) the figure or box.

Accompanying Files and Information

Cover Letter

Manuscripts submitted to *AJAN* must attach a cover letter to the submission signed by the corresponding author confirming that:

- The manuscript is original work and no part has been published or submitted elsewhere.
- All authors have read and approved the submitted version of the manuscript.
- Development of the manuscript has adhered to ethical standards.
- All authors fulfil the requirements of authorship recommended by the [ICMJE](#) manuscript.
- The authors should also explain to the Editor how their manuscript aligns to the *AJAN*'s Mission and Scope and what contribution their work makes to the journal, healthcare, professions, or scholarship more broadly.

Supplementary Files and Information

While every effort should be made to ensure that manuscripts are self-contained and able to be clearly understood by readers without recourse to additional information beyond that which is listed in the reference list. Where necessary, authors may include with the submission additional supplementary information, figures, data, or material.

This information will be provided to peer reviewers and reviewed by members of the editorial staff. If the manuscript is accepted for publication and published, the supplementary material will be available to interested readers via a separate link (i.e. not included within the journal issue).

The authors may be requested to move extraneous information from the manuscript (e.g. if the manuscript includes information that is deemed unnecessary) to supplementary materials during the course of the review and layout process.

Review Process

Initial Decision

The editorial review team assesses all submitted manuscripts at their time of submission, at this stage an in-house decision will be made as to whether the submitted manuscript is appropriate for potential publication in *AJAN*. Manuscripts accepted at this stage will be entered into the double-blind peer review process. Where manuscripts are not found to be appropriate, the outcome will be rapidly communicated to the author.

Double-Blind Peer Review

All manuscripts accepted to undergo peer review will be assessed by independent members of an expert panel. As the process is double-blinded, reviewers will not be informed of the author of the manuscript and vice-versa. Authors may suggest potential peer reviewers or advise of unacceptable peer reviewers (e.g. where there is a conflict of interest) in their cover letter accompanying their initial submission.

Recommendations made by the peer reviewers will be considered by the Editor-in-Chief and the author will receive notification as to the acceptance, provisional acceptance (acceptance with major or minor revisions) or decline of their manuscript.

The final decision to publish is made by the Editor-in-Chief in consideration of all recommendations made by reviewers, senior, and associate editors.

To register your interest to peer review for *AJAN* please email the editorial office.

Following Acceptance

Transfer of Copyright Form

Upon acceptance for publication an author will be required to complete a transfer of copyright form which will be emailed to the authors to complete. All listed authors will need to sign the form which should be returned by the submitting author in one email prior to publication.

Proofing, Copyediting, and Author Acceptance

The manuscript will be proofed and copyedited by *AJAN* staff. Once any necessary changes have been made the manuscript will be returned to the author for approval prior to publication.

It is important to note that our proofing and copyediting services are limited and that the costs of this are not passed on to the authors. Manuscripts written in an unacceptable standard of English cannot be taken forward for publication. In this case, we are not able to effectively copyedit the manuscript without potentially altering the meaning and intent of the article. Where necessary, we ask authors to work with a native English speaker or a scientific editor/copyeditor capable of understanding the content of the work to produce and submit a manuscript that would be understandable to the editors and the reviewers.

It is the authors' responsibility to look over any corrections made in the copyediting process to ensure that the material is accurate and correct.

Publication

The finalised manuscript will be published online in a quarterly issue of *AJAN*.

Journal Contact Details

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