

Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to optometric journals

I. Introduction

In May 1987, a number of optometric editors and writers met in St Louis, Missouri, to develop a standard set of publication guidelines for optometric journals. The journals listed at the end of this manuscript have endorsed these guidelines.

Optometric journals generally publish original contributions pertaining to clinical and theoretical optometry. Manuscripts are usually considered for publication only if they are original contributions and have not been submitted for publication elsewhere.

Manuscripts submitted for consideration for publication are evaluated by any or all of the following: (1) journal editor; (2) members of a peer review board; and (3) two or more independent referees who are specially selected as nationally recognized experts in the subject area of the manuscript. Referees judge the manuscript on one or more of the following criteria:

- A. usefulness to the practising optometrist;
- B. compliance with the editorial standards and objectives of the journal with regard to the originality of the contribution, clinical or scientific significance to the profession and suitability of the subject matter;
- C. enrichment of the optometric and other scientific literature. Optometric journals generally publish six basic types of manuscripts:
 - 1. research reports
 - 2. clinical procedures
 - 3. case reports
 - 4. literature review
 - 5. practice management manuscripts
 - 6. editorials

II. Research manuscript

A. Title

The title should be concise, meaningful and clear. It generally should not be in the form of a complete sentence. Subtitles may be used whenever needed for specific purposes relating to the title or text. Titles should indicate the content of the manuscript, serve as a guide to reference librarians and facilitate communication.

B. Author(s)

The name(s) of the author(s) should be typewritten and centred, one double space below the title. Proper names should be in capital and lower case letters, and the appropriate academic degree(s) should be indicated. Some journals include membership designations (e.g., FAAO, FCOVD, FBCO). In a multi-authored manuscript, the person should be listed first who has made the most significant intellectual contribution to the work regardless of academic rank or professional status. This list should include only those who have made a substantial contribution to the design and execution of the work and the writing of the manuscript. Authors should identify the name and address of the author to whom correspondence should be sent.

C. Abstract

Authors are required to submit abstracts with their papers. The abstract should be typed on a separate sheet of paper in one paragraph and it should not exceed 100 words. Abstracts should be as informative as possible and should contain statements regarding the nature of the problem studied, method, results and conclusions.

D. Key words

Authors should select key words (about 5) that reflect the primary subject matter of the paper. The purpose of key words is to assist reference librarians and others in retrieval and cross-indexing.

E. Text

The goal of scientific writing is effective communication. More specifically, its goal is to communicate abstract propositions, logical arguments, empirical observations and experimental results including their interrelations and interactions.

Authors should use the active voice (“This study shows” rather than “It is shown by this study”) and the first person (“I did” rather than “the author did”). The past tense is appropriate for describing what was done in an experiment; the present tense is suitable for referring to data in tables and figures.

Lens formulas and associated acuities should be expressed as in the following example: OD: +2.25 – 1.00 x 95, 20/20 (6/6).

Generic drug names should be used, followed by the proprietary name in parentheses at the first mention. Acronyms and abbreviations should always be spelled out at first mention.

Symbols and diacritical marks, when used, must be clearly drawn and identified in pencil in the margin, for example, “prism dioptre sign”.

Manuscripts should be organized within the framework of a formal outline. The standard outline for scientific reporting of studies, experiments or other research projects is as follows:

1. Introduction

The introduction has several functions. It acquaints the reader with other relevant work performed in the subject area. Only contributions that bear on the interpretation of the results should be referenced. The introduction also presents the general nature of the problem to be addressed, the specific aspect of the problem that was studied and the hypothesis and the manner in which it was tested.

2. Methods

The methods should be described in enough detail so that others could replicate them. However, if portions of the methods have been described elsewhere, a summary with appropriate citations is sufficient. It is essential to describe how case and control subjects were selected for study. It is important to describe any commercially available apparatus used in the study by identifying the manufacturer’s name and address. Brief descriptions of methods that have been published but may not be understood universally should be presented. In addition, limitations of the methods used should be presented, and new or modified methods should be described in detail.

It is important to identify all contact lenses, chemicals, drugs or ophthalmic lenses, including generic names, dosages and administration where appropriate. It is inappropriate to publish names of subjects or patients, their initials or other personal identification. Also, it is inappropriate to use ethnic terms when they serve only to perpetuate unnecessary, unscientific or derogatory connotations.

3. Results

The results should be presented in a logical order, emphasizing only the important findings of the study without elaboration. Limitations of the results and any implications should be stated. The statistical analysis, if any, should be clear and relevant.

4. Discussion

The discussion should elaborate on the data, noting the interrelations among the results and relating them to the original question asked in the study. Acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis should be stated. In addition, the discussion should emphasize any unique or new aspects of the study and discuss the relevancy of the results.

It is important to draw only those conclusions that can be supported by the results. Implications for basic and applied issues should be stated wherever possible.

F. Acknowledgements

Only those who have made a substantial contribution to the study should be acknowledged. Authors are responsible for obtaining written permission from those acknowledged by name, because readers may infer that acknowledged persons have endorsed the methods and conclusions of the manuscript. Many contributions justify acknowledgement, but not authorship. Such contributions might include acknowledgement of technical help, financial support, sources of materials and persons who have contributed intellectually to the development of the manuscript. Also, any financial relation that might be interpreted as a conflict of interest must be acknowledged.

G. References

A list of references is placed at the end of the manuscript after the corresponding author’s address. References should be listed in sequential order as they are cited in the text by superscript numbers. Accuracy of citations is of major importance because it makes each specific reference retrievable by the reader. Authors should make every attempt to cite references that are relevant, original and current, and only references actually consulted. Manuscripts that have been accepted for publication but not yet printed should be cited in the footnote section. Manuscripts that have been submitted for consideration for publication, but have not been accepted, should not be referenced. The list of references should be checked for accuracy against the original publications.

Most optometric journals have adopted the style for references used by the US National Library of Medicine in Index Medicus. The titles of publications should be abbreviated according to the style used in Index Medicus. A list of abbreviated names of frequently cited publications is printed annually in the January issue of Index Medicus as the "List of the Journals Indexed".

Examples of the correct form of referencing are listed below:

Journal articles

1. Standard journal article
(List all authors when six or less; when seven or more, list only the first three and add et al.)
Alpar AJ. Botulinum toxin and its uses in the treatment of ocular disorders. *Am J Optom Physiol Opt* 1987 Feb;64(2): 79–82.
2. No author given
Anonymous. The OD–MD conflict: economic welfare. *Optom Manag* 1982 Jul;18(7):23–7.
3. Journal paginated by issue
Kloos S. How do TPAs impact practice? *Optom Manag* 1987 Apr;23(4):14–21.

Books and other monographs

4. Personal author(s)
Taylor S, Austen DP. *Law and management in optometric practice*. London: Butterworths, 1986.
5. Editor(s), compiler(s), chair(s) as author(s)
Bartlett JD, Jaanus SD, eds. *Clinical ocular pharmacology*. Boston: Butterworths, 1984.
6. Chapter in book
Mondino BJ. Bullous diseases of the skin and mucous membranes. In: Duane T, ed. *Clinical Ophthalmology*, vol. 4. Hagerstown, MD: Harper & Row, 1980:1–16.
7. Published proceedings paper
Norden CN, Leach NA. Calibration of the ERG stimulus. In: Lawville T, ed. *Proceedings of the XIV Annual Symposium of the International Society for Clinical Electroretinography (ISERG)*. Doc Ophthalmol Proc, series 12, XIV ISERG Symposium, May 10–14, 1977. Louisville: XIV Annual Symposium of the ISERG, 1977:393–403.
8. Monograph in a series
Wurster U, Hoffman I. Influences of age and species on retinal lactate dehydrogenase isoenzymes. In: Hockwin O, ed. *Gerontological Aspects of Eye Research*. New York: S Karger, 1978:26–39 (von Hahn HP, ed. *Interdisciplinary Topics in Gerontology*, vol 13).
9. Agency publication
United States Department of Health and Human Services. *Fifth Report to the President and Congress on the Status of Health Personnel in the United States: Optometry*, March 1986. Springfield, VA: United States Department of Commerce. National Technical Information Service, 1986; DHHS publication no. HRS-P-OD-86-1.
10. Footnotes
Optometric journals discourage excessive or improper use of footnotes, but realize that on specific occasions, they may be acceptable. Footnotes can be used to designate a non-retrievable citation, a personal communication or the institutional affiliation of the author. A footnote can also be used to identify sources of equipment or instruments. Footnotes should be identified with small superscript lower case letters in alphabetical order in the text and referred to at the end of the text of the manuscript under a listing "Footnotes".

III. Clinical procedures manuscript

This type of manuscript generally describes a procedure method or technique useful to the practising clinician. It can also review a body of literature on a specific clinical subject for the purpose of providing the practitioner with sound guidelines or recommendations regarding the subject matter. Headings for the clinical procedures paper do not usually follow the standard format for a research paper, but the author should use headings and subheadings that promote understanding of the topic.

IV. Case reports

Case reports describe a case, or a series of cases, in which something new or unusual is presented. This could involve clinical findings, diagnosis or management. The subheadings are: (1) Abstract; (2) Introduction; (3) Case report(s); and (4) Discussion.

Other types of case reports may be submitted in different formats, and authors should consider that innovative formats may accomplish the goal of sharing knowledge and information in a readily understandable manner.

V. Literature reviews

The purpose of the review is to analyze, consolidate and synthesize the literature on a subject of interest. Topics should be relevant to the journal's readers. A review can make an important contribution to the literature by arriving at a supportable conclusion. Headings for the literature review do not usually follow the standard format (research manuscripts), but the author should use headings and subheadings that promote understanding of the topic.

VI. Practice management manuscripts

Topics should be selected that would enhance the efficiency of patient care and promote sound practice administration. Abstract, key words and references are not necessary; however, headings and subheadings that facilitate understanding of the topic should be used.

VII. Editorials

An editorial is generally a concise article consisting of a critical argument or personal opinion, or highlighting an important issue. An editorial does not necessarily depend upon literature support. Letters to the editor are encouraged by most journals.

VII. Tables, figures and appendices

A. Tables

Each table should be typed double-spaced on a separate page. Tables are usually not submitted as photographs. Tables should appear in consecutive order in the text designated by Arabic numerals (example: Table 1). Locations of tables within the body of the text should be specified in the manuscript. An appropriate table title should be on the same page as the table to which it applies.

B. Figures

All figures, whether line drawings, black-and-white photographs, colour photographs or 35-mm slides, should add to the presentation of a manuscript.

All figures should be of professional quality, whether they are drawings or photographs. Most computer-generated "drawings" are unacceptable. Figures should be submitted as 5 x 7 inch (13 x 18 cm), black-and-white or colour, glossy prints.

All figures, whether line drawings, black-and-white photographs or colour photographs, should be designated as "Figures". They should be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals throughout the text of the manuscript (example: Figure 3). Locations of figures within the body of the text should be specified in the manuscript.

1. Legends

The numbers and captions should be typewritten, double-spaced, in paragraph form and on a separate sheet of paper. Legends for several figures should be typed on a single sheet of paper. Legends should be kept as short as possible and should not contain explanatory notes that duplicate the explanation in the text. All internal labels in the figure should be identified in the figure legend.

2. Labels

Authors should label figures adequately. On the back of each print, the author should place a label that indicates the name of the author, the title of the article, the figure number and the direction of the top of the figure. When labelling slides, clearly label with author's name, figure number and a red mark to indicate the upper right hand corner for viewing the slide, not projecting the slide. To facilitate the review process, the authors should submit an original and three copies of each line drawing, photograph or slide.

C. Appendices

Occasionally it is necessary for the author to supply subordinate information that is relevant to the study but that might distract the reader because of excessive detail; for example, computer programs, mathematical formulae, address lists, surveys or other data that might be cumbersome to present in the text. Appendices should be labelled Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, etc. Each should have a short, descriptive title.

IX. Submitting the manuscript

A. General guidelines

The manuscript should be typed double-spaced on a heavy grade of white bond 21.6 x 27.9 cm (8 x 11 inch) or ISO A4 21.2 x 29.7 cm with margins of at least 2.5 cm (1 inch). Print quality should be highly legible. For reviewing purposes, the original plus three photocopies of the manuscript should be submitted along with the original plus three high-quality duplicates of each figure and table. All pages should be numbered consecutively, beginning with the title page. The author's (authors') name(s) should appear only on the title page.

A cover letter should accompany all manuscripts and the letter should identify the corresponding author. The cover letter should also contain a statement that the manuscript has been approved by all of the authors of a multi-authored paper. In addition, the letter should indicate the type of article and whether or not the work has been submitted to other publications. Copies of letters of permission and other pertinent information should be included.

Authors should arrange manuscript pages as follows:

1. first page: title, name(s) of author(s), degrees and institutional affiliation(s), if any
2. second page: abstract and key words
3. text (start on a new page)
4. acknowledgements (start on a new page)
5. footnotes (start on a new page)
6. references (start on a new page)
7. appendices (start on a new page)
8. tables (each on its own page)
9. figure legends (all on one page, if possible)
10. figures (each separately)

B. Mailing instructions

Protection of manuscripts from rough handling while in transit is necessary. The mailing envelopes should be strong and provided with stiff cardboard or corrugated fillers slightly smaller than the envelope. Fillers are essential if drawings or photographs are to be enclosed. Authors should always retain copies of their manuscript as a precaution against the potential loss of originals. Manuscripts should be mailed to the appropriate editorial office of the journal.

Endorsements

The journals listed here will receive and consider for publication a manuscript prepared in accordance with these guidelines. Their editors may elect to make changes in editorial style prior to publication, but the original papers as submitted will not be returned to authors for changes before review.

Use of "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Optometric Journals" has been endorsed by the following journals: *Canadian Journal of Optometry*, *Clinical and Experimental Optometry*, *International Contact Lens Clinic*, *Journal of the American Optometric Association*, *Journal of Optometric Education*, *Journal of Optometric Vision Development*, *Journal of Vision Rehabilitation*, *Ophthalmic and Physiological Optics*, *Optometric Management*, *Optometry and Vision Science* and *Southern Journal of Optometry*.

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