



## In this section:

### Formatting your paper

Language editing services

Policies

Reproducing figures and images

Suggesting reviewers

Writing a cover letter

Video abstracts

Video: How to submit your article

## Formatting your paper

These are general formatting guidelines across BMJ, please always refer to journal-specific instructions for authors for article type specifications. You can browse the titles on our [Journals](#) website. If you are looking to submit to *The BMJ*, please visit [this section](#).

If you are unable to find the answer to your question, our editorial team will be on hand to offer assistance throughout the submission process. Contact details for the editorial team are on the journal's Contact Us page.

You can also refer to our [formatting checklist](#) to make sure you have covered everything on submission.

- [Title page](#)
- [Keywords](#)
- [Authors and Institutions](#)
- [Manuscript format](#)
- [Style](#)
- [Figures and illustrations](#)
- [Colour images](#)
- [File types](#)
- [Tables](#)
- [Multimedia files](#)
- [References](#)
- [Supplemental material](#)

### Title page

The title page must contain the following information:

- Title of the article
- Full name, postal address and e-mail of the corresponding author
- Full name, department, institution, city and countriy of all co-authors
- Word count, excluding title page, abstract, references, figures and tables

This is excluded for the journal *BMJ Quality and Safety* which operates triple-blind peer review.

[Back to top >>](#)

### Keywords

Authors can usually opt to (or are required to) choose keywords relevant to the content of the manuscript during the submission process. This assists in the identification of the most suitable reviewers for the manuscript. The selected keywords should also be included in the abstract itself.

[Back to top >>](#)

### Authors and Institutions

On submission of your article through our submission system you will be asked to provide a name, email address and institutional affiliation for all contributing authors. In the final published article author names, institutions and addresses will be taken from these completed fields and not from the submitted Word document. Refer to the [BMJ policy on authorship](#) for more information.

[Back to top >>](#)

### Manuscript format

The manuscript must be submitted as a Word document (*BMJ Case Reports* and *Veterinary Record Case Reports* request that authors submit using a template which should also be in Word format). PDF is not accepted.

The manuscript should be presented in the following order:

- Title page
- Abstract, or a summary for case reports (Note: references should not be included in abstracts or summaries)
- Main text separated under appropriate headings and subheadings using the following hierarchy: BOLD CAPS, bold lower case, Plain text, Italics
- Tables should be in Word format and placed in the main text where the table is first cited. Tables should also be cited in numerical order
- Acknowledgments, Competing Interests, Funding and all other required statements
- References. All references should be cited in the main text in numerical order

We have added a "submission prefill" tool to all of our journals, which typically reduces time taken to submit a paper by 25 percent. Just upload your manuscript and the system will automatically extract and populate the following submission fields: Title, Abstract, Authors, Institutions, Funders.

Figures must be uploaded as separate files (view further details under the Figures/illustrations section). All figures must be cited within the main text in numerical order and legends should be provided at the end of the manuscript.

Online Supplementary materials should be uploaded using the File Designation "Supplementary File" on the submission site and cited in the main text.

Please remove any hidden text headers or footers from your file before submission.

[Back to top >>](#)

### Style

Acronyms and abbreviations should be used sparingly and fully explained when first used. Abbreviations and symbols must be standard. SI units should be used throughout, except for blood pressure values which should be reported in mm Hg.

Whenever possible, drugs should be given their approved generic name. Where a proprietary (brand) name is used, it should begin with a capital letter.

To ensure a consistent approach, submitted articles should not include Trademark or Registered trademark symbols in the main text, tables or figures.

[Back to top >>](#)

### Figures and illustrations

Images must be uploaded as separate files. All images must be cited within the main text in numerical order and legends must be provided (ideally at the end of the manuscript). [Video: How to improve your graphs and tables](#)

[Back to top >>](#)

### Colour images

For certain journals, authors of unsolicited manuscripts that wish to publish colour figures in print will be charged a fee to cover the cost of printing. Refer to the specific journal's instructions for authors for more information.

Alternatively, authors are encouraged to supply colour illustrations for online publication and black and white versions for print publication. Colour publication online is offered at no charge, but the figure legend must not refer to the use of colours. [Detailed guidance on figure preparation](#)

[Back to top >>](#)

### File types

Figures should be submitted in TIFF, EPS, JPEG or PDF formats. In EPS files, text (if present) should be outlined. For non-vector files (eg TIFF, JPEG) a minimum resolution of 300 dpi is required, except for line art which should be 1200 dpi. Histograms should be presented in a simple, two-dimensional format, with no background grid.

For figures consisting of multiple images/parts, please ensure these are submitted as a single composite file for processing. We are unable to accept figures that are submitted as multiple files.

During submission, ensure that the figure files are labelled with the correct File Designation of "Mono Image" for black and white figures and "Colour Image" for colour figures.

Figures are checked using automated quality control and if they are below the minimum standard you will be alerted and asked to resupply them.

Please ensure that any specific patient/hospital details are removed or blacked out (e.g. X-rays, MRI scans, etc). Figures that use a black bar to obscure a patient's identity are not accepted.

[Back to top >>](#)

### Tables

Tables should be in Word format and placed in the main text where the table is first cited. Tables must be cited in the main text in numerical order. Please note that tables embedded as Excel files within the manuscript are NOT accepted. Tables in Excel should be copied and pasted into the manuscript Word file.

Tables should be self-explanatory and the data they contain must not be duplicated in the text or figures. Any tables submitted that are longer/larger than 2 pages will be published as online only supplementary material. [Video: How to improve your graphs and tables](#)

[Back to top >>](#)

### Multimedia files

You may submit multimedia files to enhance your article. Video files are preferred in .WMF or .AVI formats, but can also be supplied as .FLV, .Mov, and .MP4. When submitting, please ensure you upload them using the File Designation "Supplementary File – Video".

[Back to top >>](#)

### References

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of cited references and these should be checked before the manuscript is submitted.

#### Citing in the text

References must be numbered sequentially as they appear in the text. References cited in figures or tables (or in their legends and footnotes) should appear at the end of the reference list to avoid re-numbering if tables and figures are moved around at peer review/proof stage. Reference numbers in the text should be inserted immediately after punctuation (with no word spacing)—for example,[6] not [6].

Where more than one reference is cited, these should be separated by a comma, for example,[1, 4, 39]. For sequences of consecutive numbers, give the first and last number of the sequence separated by a hyphen, for example,[22-25]. References provided in this format are translated during the production process to superscript type, and act as hyperlinks from the text to the quoted references in electronic forms of the article.

Please note that if references are not cited in order the manuscript may be returned for amendment before it is passed on to the Editor for review.

#### Preparing the reference list

References must be numbered consecutively in the order in which they are mentioned in the text.

Only papers published or in press should be included in the reference list. Personal communications or unpublished data must be cited in parentheses in the text with the name(s) of the source(s) and the year. Authors should request permission from the source to cite unpublished data.

Journals from BMJ use a slightly modified version of Vancouver referencing style (see example below) available in Endnote. Note that [The BMJ](#) uses a different style.

#### BMJ reference style

List the names and initials of all authors if there are 3 or fewer; otherwise list the first 3 and add 'et al.' (The exception is the Journal of Medical Genetics, which lists all authors). Use one space only between words up to the year and then no spaces. The journal title should be in italic and abbreviated according to the style of Medline. If the journal is not listed in Medline then it should be written out in full.

[Check journal abbreviations using PubMed](#)

[Check citation information using PubMed](#)

#### Example references

- Journal article:** 13 Koziol-Mclain J, Brand D, Morgan D, et al. Measuring injury risk factors: question reliability in a statewide sample. *Inj Prev* 2000;6:148–50.
- Abstract/supplement:** 16 Roxburgh J, Cooke RA, Deverall P, et al. Haemodynamic function of the carbomedics bileaflet prosthesis [abstract]. *Br Heart J* 1995;73(Suppl 2):P37.
- Preprints:** Rostami A, Sepidarkish M, Leeftang M, et al. First snap-shot meta-analysis to estimate the prevalence of serum antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 in humans. *MedRxiv* 20185017 [Preprint]. September 02, 2020 [cited 2020 Sep 20] <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.08.31.20185017>. [More information about preprints >>](#)
- Data citations:** [dataset] [52] Wang G, Zhu Z, Cui S, Wang J. Data from: Glucocorticoid induces incoordination between glutamatergic and GABAergic neurons in the amygdala. Dryad Digital Repository. August 11, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.k9q7h>. [More information about data citations >>](#)
- Electronic citations:** Websites are referenced with their URL and access date, and as much other information as is available. Access date is important as websites can be updated and URLs change. The "date accessed" can be later than the acceptance date of the paper, and it can be just the month accessed.
- Electronic Journal articles:** Morse SS. Factors in the emergency of infectious diseases. *Emerg Infect Dis* 1995 Jan-Mar;1(1). [www.cdc.gov/hcicod/EID/vol1no1/morse.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hcicod/EID/vol1no1/morse.htm) [accessed 5 Jun 1998].
- Electronic letters:** Bloggs J. Title of letter. *Journal name* Online [eLetter] Date of publication. url eg: Krishnamoorthy KM, Dash PK. Novel approach to transeptal puncture. *Heart* Online [eLetter] 18 September 2001. <http://heart.bmj.com/cgi/eletters/86/5/e11#EL1>
- Book:** 15 Howland J. Preventing Automobile Injury: New Findings From Evaluative Research. Dover, MA: Auburn House Publishing Company 1988:163–96.
- Chapter in a book:** 14 Nagin D. General deterrence: a review of the empirical evidence. In: Blumstein A, Cohen J, Nagin D, eds. Deterrence and Incapacitation: Estimating the Effects of Criminal Sanctions on Crime Rates. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences 1978:95–139.
- Legal material:** Toxic substances Contro Act: Hearing on S776 Before the Subcommittee of the Environment of the Senate Comm. on Commerce, 94th Congress 1st September (1975).
- Law references:** The two main series of law reports, Weekly Law Reports (WLR) and All England Law Reports (All ER) have three volumes a year e.g. Robertson v Post Office [1974] 1 WLR 1176

There are good historical precedents for the use of square and round brackets. Since 1891, round ones have referred to the date of the report, square ones to the date of publication of the report. Apart from not italicising the name of the case, we use the lawyers' style; be careful with punctuation, e.g. Caparo Industries plc v Dickman and others [1990] 1 All ER 568-608.

#### Digital Object Identifier (DOI)

A DOI is a unique string created to identify a piece of intellectual property in an online environment and is particularly useful for articles that are published online before appearing in print (and therefore have not yet been assigned the traditional volume, issue and page number references). The DOI is a permanent identifier of all versions of an article, whether raw manuscript or edited proof, online or in print. Thus the DOI should ideally be included in the citation even if you want to cite a print version of an article. [Find a DOI](#).

- Cite an article with a DOI before published in print:** Alwick K, Vronken M, de Mos T, et al. Cardiac risk factors: prospective cohort study. *Ann Rheum Dis*Published Online First: 5 February 2004. doi:10.1136/ard.2003.001234
- Cite an article with a DOI once published in print:** Vole P, Smith H, Brown N, et al. Treatments for malaria: randomised controlled trial. *Ann Rheum Dis*2003;327:765–8 doi:10.1136/ard.2003.001234 [published Online First: 5 February 2002].

[Back to top >>](#)

### Supplemental material

Additional information such as figures, tables, raw data and methodology statements, may be submitted and published alongside your manuscript as 'supplemental material'. Supplemental material shall only be accepted subject to the following criteria:

- Content:** Supplemental material should be used to support and enhance the content of your manuscript. Content should be directly relevant to the content of your manuscript.
- Publication:** Supplemental material will be published online only. This content may or may not be peer-reviewed, depending on the requirements of the relevant publication's editorial office.
- Citation:** The use of any supplemental material should be cited within the main text of the manuscript.
- Formatting:** Supplemental material will only be published on an 'as supplied' basis, without checking for accuracy, copyediting, typesetting or proofing. You are responsible for proofing the content and for ensuring that the style and formatting of your content is consistent with the corresponding manuscript.
- File submission:** Supplemental material may be submitted in PDF file format. Files should not exceed 350MB and should be uploaded using the file designation "Supplemental Material [Description]".
- Translated Abstract:** Where a translated version of the abstract in the author's local language is submitted, this file should be uploaded using the file designation "Abstract in local language".
- Restrictions:** Supplemental material hosted on a third party website or platform will not be accepted.
- Liability Disclaimer:** The relevant publication's Author Licence will apply in respect of any supplemental materials submitted. You are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of that content. A disclaimer of BMJ's liability will appear on the published supplemental material.

[Back to top >>](#)