

NURSING TIMES: AUTHOR GUIDELINES

Nursing Times publishes articles written by practising nurses to support readers in their clinical, management, leadership and teaching roles; articles are also added to our online archive on nursingtimes.net – the most visited nursing website outside the US. We welcome articles from both experienced and new authors. These guidelines offer advice on writing, describe the types of nursing practice articles you may choose to write and explain our submission and review process.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Before writing, read a few issues of *Nursing Times* to become familiar with our style and types of article.

Writing style

Nursing Times aims to meet the information needs of busy nurses, most of whom work in clinical practice. We publish articles in clear, plain English, avoiding complex or overly academic language, and keeping jargon to a minimum (see p3 for more information).

Articles should have a logical order, and be broken up with headings, bullet points, boxes, tables and figures as appropriate to help readers to follow your ideas.

Abbreviations should be kept to a minimum, and spelt out the first time they are used, with the abbreviation in brackets. Specialist terms should also be explained.

Include **three or four key words** and a **50–100-word abstract** (up to 200 words for Research reports,).

Article types

Discussion and Practice Review articles

These are normally commissioned, and discuss aspects of nursing practice or theory. They can be up to 3,500 words long (including abstract and references) and should include 5 Key points, highlighting the main issues nurses should consider in their own practice, material for up to three boxes or tables, and/or ideas for one or two illustrated figures. Please keep to a maximum of 20 references.

Innovations

These articles report on practice developments or audits undertaken or led by nurses, and aim to share useful information and inspire nurses to undertake similar initiatives to improve their own services.

Innovation articles can be up to 2,500 words long including abstract and references, and should include:

- **5 Key points**, highlighting the main issues nurses should consider in their own practice – these can be specific to the type of initiative described or may be applicable more generally;
- **Illustrative material**: one or two graphs, tables or boxes picking out key information or results, or suggestions for illustrations or photographs.

The article should explain how the initiative was undertaken, citing any evidence used to support the

work. It is often helpful to discuss any problems encountered, which others could learn from. The article should also include the results of any audits or evaluations demonstrating outcomes of the initiative. Please keep to a maximum of 10 references.

Research

Research Reports: These articles report on original nursing research. Our aim is to make research available in clear, plain English to nurses who are unlikely to read academic or specialist journals. Research Reports can be up to 3,500 words long including references (please keep to a maximum of 25 references), and include the following sections:

- Abstract (divided into the main sections of the article);
- Background;
- Aim;
- Literature review;
- Method;
- Results;
- Discussion;
- Conclusion;
- 5 Key points, highlighting the main issues arising from the study that can inform nursing practice;
- Up to four boxes, figures or tables;
- Up to 4 key words or search terms.

Research Reviews: Literature reviews often gather together valuable evidence on a subject or aspect of care that may be of great interest and value to nurses. Research Reviews are an opportunity to publish literature reviews at greater length than is possible in a Research Report.

The articles can be up to 3,500 words long including abstract and references, and should discuss the literature in a clear, logical format, broken into sections as appropriate to guide the reader through the article. They should include 5 Key points, highlighting the main issues nurses should consider in their practice.

Research Reviews should aim to:

- Draw out key issues relevant to the subject;
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of relevant literature;
- Identify gaps in the literature or problems to be solved;

- Draw together the main themes and arguments;
- Explain the relevance of the literature and its implications for nursing practice.

Research Reviews and Research Reports can be published as two-part series.

Research Methods: These discuss aspects of research as they apply to nursing, and aim to help nurses to develop research skills. They can be up to 3,500 words long including abstract and references (please keep to a maximum of 20 references), and include up to four boxes, figures or tables and 5 Key points, highlighting issues of interest to researchers.

Practice Educator

Practice Educator aims to help nurses to update their clinical skills, and provide a checklist to support and guide those who are responsible for teaching and/or assessing these skills.

Each article discusses a clinical skill and explains when, why and how it should be carried out. It also details the competencies nurses need to carry out a procedure and how care should be documented. Key references and relevant national guidelines are included so nurses can look at the skill in more detail. The article should be a maximum of 1,300 words including boxes and references and include:

- Indications for the procedure;
- Common myths/problems associated with the procedure;
- Key points for carrying out the procedure (1-2 photographs or diagrams where appropriate), for example, it is a clean or aseptic procedure, positioning of patient, details about using particular equipment;
- Examples of assessment tools.

It must also contain the following three boxes:

- Competencies required to carry out the procedure;
- Key references/ guidelines supporting current recommendations for practice
- Remember to document (listing what should be recorded after the procedure).

5-minute briefing

These articles give specialist nurses the opportunity to tell general nurses what they really need to know about the care of patients with specific conditions, and when they should call in the specialist nurse. The 5-minute briefing is a one-page article which distils a wealth of experience down to the essentials. It is presented in the following format:

- General introduction: Highlighting the main points about caring for this group of patients, e.g. the range of conditions and main symptoms (340-400 words).
- Five key points which encapsulate what every nurse needs to know about this specialism (up to 150 words).
- When to call in the specialist nurse: 5-8 bullet points highlighting when a general nurse needs to contact a specialist nurse (up to 150 words).
- Guidance and resources: 3-4 short bullet points.

Patient voice

These articles give patients the chance to talk about their experience of nursing care and how it could be enhanced or to highlight particularly positive experiences. They also give nurses an opportunity to respond to specific concerns and to discuss how care should be delivered by suggesting learning points they can take away from a particular patient's experience.

The patient voice is a first-person, 400-word account of a patient's experience. It should:

- Discuss a particular aspect of their care;
- Explain what was lacking or was particularly good;
- What could be improved;
- Or it can include an aspect of care that worked well.

The second part of the article is a 300-word expert nurse's response to the patient's concerns, written in the first person. It should:

- Discuss the issues raised by the patient and how care could have been enhanced or how others could replicate best practice;
- End with three key learning points based on the patient scenario that nurses can use to improve care in the future.

If you wish to discuss the suitability of a proposed article please email Clinical1@emap.com, and you will be contacted by a commissioning editor.

REFERENCES AND DATA

References should be in Harvard style, with authors' name and year of publication in the text e.g., (Jones, 2011). List references in alphabetical order - where there are more than two authors, name the first author followed by et al) at the end of the article in the following formats:

Article:

Small G et al (2006) A study of osteoporosis. *Nursing Times*; 102: 1, 79-84.

Book:

Jackson C, Smith B (2006) *Clinical Communication Skills*. Dundee: Dundee University Press.

Book (chapter):

Clarke M (2005) The autonomic nervous system. In: Hinchliff S et al (eds) *Physiology for Nursing Practice*. London: Balliere Tindall.

Websites:

Department of Health (2007) *National Service Framework for Renal Services*. www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/NationalServiceFrameworks/Renal/DH_4102636

Note: Please restrict references to work published within the last eight years with the exception of seminal works and in literature reviews.

Figures and tables

Figures/tables can be used to clarify information. Tables can be placed at the appropriate section of the text. Graphs and figures should be supplied separately either as Excel files or as PDFs, and must not be

embedded in the Word document.

Photographs must be supplied as a high resolution JPeg (not PDF), and should be 320mm wide at 300dpi. Try to involve your medical illustration department. Images must not be embedded in a Word document.

SUBMITTING YOUR WORK

Articles should be submitted as a word-processed document without the use of reference management functions, coloured text or special formatting. Graphs and charts can be sent as Excel files, but please send the raw data so they can be accurately reproduced.

On the title page state the **full name job titles and places of work** of all authors in the order you would like them to be published, with **full contact details** for the lead author and, if appropriate, a second.

Articles should be emailed to **nt@emap.com** stating 'Practice article' in the subject.

Conflict of interest

If you have a financial or personal interest in products, technology or methodology mentioned in your article (e.g., if research was funded by a commercial company), please make this clear on your manuscript.

The review process

You will receive an email response confirming receipt of your email. If the subject matter and article level seem appropriate for *Nursing Times* it will be sent for double-blind peer review. Reviewers report on articles from a range of perspectives, including whether they fit within *Nursing Times* formats, accuracy, relevance and level, and are asked to make suggestions on how they could be developed.

You should receive a decision within approximately eight weeks of submitting your article. We may accept it as submitted, but it is more likely that we will ask you to undertake developments on the basis of the reviewer's report before accepting it. Some articles sent out for review are rejected.

We cannot give a publication date when your article is accepted, but will usually contact you shortly before publication with editing queries, and can let you know at this stage. You will be sent a copy of the issue in which your article is published.

Copyright

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If you reproduce copyright material from other sources, such as diagrams or assessment tools, you are responsible for obtaining permission to do so. Please obtain permission before submitting your article.

Pre-submission checklist

Please check before submitting your article:

- The title page includes lead author contact details;
- All references are cited in the text **and** included in

the reference list in Harvard style;

- Years of publications cited in the text match those in the reference list;
- Article references include the first author, article title, journal, volume, issue and page numbers;
- Book references include the first author (and editor, where appropriate), chapter title where appropriate, book title, town of publication and publisher;
- Website addresses link directly to a document or web page, rather than just a website homepage.
- You include the raw data for graphs and charts.

Writing Plain English

Plain English' is not simplistic or patronising; it is clear and concise with a tone and language appropriate for the audience. It means readers have to do less work to understand what is written and can focus on evaluating and appreciating its content. The list below shows how words and phrases can often be replaced by something simpler or more direct.

Complex	Simple
Additional/further	More
As itemised below	As listed below
As regards/with regard to	About
Assist	Help
By means of	By
Capability	Ability
Consequently	Then, so
Effect (as a verb)	Make, do
Facilitate	Help
For the purposes of	For
Following	After
Forward	Send
Function	Role, work, job
However	But
In addition	Also
In conjunction with	With
In order to	To
In relation to	About, of
In the event of	If
Necessitate	Cause
Per annum	A year
Prior to	Before
Proficiency	Skill
Purchase	Buy
Regarding	About, on, to, of
Relating to	About, on, to, of
Require	Need
Sufficient	Enough
Terminate	End, stop, finish
Therefore	So
Undertake	Do, try for
Until such time as	Until
With reference/regard to	About
Within (unless as 'inside')	In

For more information on writing plain English go to: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/free-guides.html>