

ADVICE FOR AUTHORS

Relationship between the journal and authors

The editors of *Acupuncture in Medicine* have agreed to apply the code of conduct of the Committee on Publication of Ethics in their relationship with researchers, authors, and readers. They will ensure the quality of the work they publish, constantly seek to improve the journal, and support rights to freedom of expression.

The editors have a duty to maintain the integrity of the scientific record and to correct it where necessary; they expect authors to participate in applying the highest ethical standards in all aspects of publication. The journal has a duty to pursue any suggestion of scientific misconduct.

Relationship between editorial board and publishers

The BMAS funds editing, printing and distribution of the journal, and hosts its website. Editorial decisions are independent, and editors retain control of all journal content.

Ethical standards of journal content

Acupuncture in Medicine applies the standards of ethical research enshrined in the Helsinki Declaration (1975, revised 2000) and described in websites such as those of the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, Good Clinical Practice and the Medical Research Council, particularly requiring the use of a trial protocol (peer reviewed, for trials starting after May 2004), approval by an independent ethics committee, and informed consent of participants 'where necessary' – a phrase which includes (but is not restricted to) any study in which patients are to take any active participation.

If in doubt whether ethics committee approval is required, it is essential to obtain the opinion of the chairman of such a committee and to report the response. The journal also applies the standards of ethical publishing as described in International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and Committee on Publication Ethics.

Writing for Acupuncture in Medicine

The editors encourage authors to use a lively writing style. Think clearly what you wish to say, and then state it in the words you would use if you were talking to a colleague. Many authors assume they should use a formalised style for writing scientific papers, thinking this shows that their work is objective. In fact, this just makes papers difficult to read. For example, please avoid the passive voice where possible by using the first person, and by checking the text for any unnecessary passive constructions. Use short words, and do not use three when one will do. When a technical word has to be repeated because there is no real alternative, then repeat it.

Be careful with abbreviations: any that are unfamiliar may cause the reader to hesitate. So do not use many, but once you have introduced one keep using it.

You are encouraged to make full use of tables, graphs, photographs and diagrams, which should be placed after the text.

Fonts and formatting

Articles should be presented in Times New Roman, font size 12. Double line spacing is not required, and single spaces should be used in text and after punctuation. Page margins should be set to 2cm. Section headings are in bold italic; subheadings, in italic, should be used sparingly. The first line of a section is not indented, but in subsequent paragraphs the first line indent is set to 0.5cm.

All foreign words should be in italics, and proper nouns should have capital letters. For example, *de qi*, *Taiyang*, Wind-Damp. Please keep all other formatting to the absolute minimum: do not underline text, do not justify the text, and use only tab marks in tables, not spaces or returns.

We use English spellings, not American. For rules of hyphenation etc please follow the example of the BMJ Style Guide available on their website. Please follow the example of previous papers of a similar type to yours to see how titles for tables and legends for figures should be set out.

Published author guidelines

Please use the 'Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals'. These may be found online at <http://www.icmje.org/index.html>, and in hard copy: *Annals of Internal Medicine* 1997;126:36-47.

Authors of controlled trials are advised to consult the CONSORT statement. *Lancet* 2001;357(9263):1191-4.

All acupuncture treatment should be described according to the STRICTA recommendations (*Acupunct Med* 2002;20(1):22-5 and on our website).

The following abbreviations for meridians should be used: LU, LI, ST, SP, HT, SI, BL, KI, PC, TE, GB, LR, GV, CV. Use Chinese names to describe extra points. This Code was agreed a meeting of the WHO in 1989, reported in Jenkins M. A new standard international acupuncture nomenclature. *Acupunct Med* 1990;7(1):21-3.

Guidelines for writing some types of report for the journal have been published: White A. Writing case reports – author guidelines for *Acupuncture in Medicine*. *Acupunct Med* 2004;22(2):83-6. White A. Conducting and reporting case series and audits – author guidelines for *Acupuncture in Medicine*. *Acupunct Med* 2005;23(4):181-7.

Abbreviated guidelines

The following is a summary of Uniform Requirements but contains some minor amendments.

The title page should list full first names and surnames, main appointment and an institutional (or surgery) address for all authors; and for the corresponding author a contact address with telephone and fax numbers and email address.

A statement of conflicts of interest (financial or otherwise) should be given at the end of the article, even where there are none to declare. Sources of support should be listed in the same place, together with any acknowledgements.

Organising the article

Manuscripts should be an appropriate length, usually 2,500 to 3,000 words excluding references and tables for original reports. The text should be organised to conform to the following headings where relevant. Not all these headings need be used in a paper, for instance in some case reports the Presentation, History, and Examination may conveniently be combined under one heading.

Original papers and audits:

Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, Conflicts of interest, Sources of Support, Acknowledgements, Reference list. For original papers, add a Box of 3 or 4 statements summarising the work.

Case reports:

Abstract, Keywords, Description of the case (patient, presentation and history, examination, investigations, diagnosis, treatment, outcome), Literature search, Discussion, Summary if appropriate, Acknowledgements, Reference list.

Patient consent must be provided for all case reports, using our form.

Discussion articles, editorials:

Use subheadings as appropriate to help the reader.

Abstract and Keywords

An Abstract, structured for original reports and audits, of up to about 250 words is required; this will appear in Medline and a number of other electronic databases. Up to 8 keywords should be given to aid computer listing, using MeSH terms available on the PubMed database.

Tables and Figures

Authors are encouraged to use tables and figures to make their message more accessible. This journal is unusual in being willing to publish both table and figure of the same data: the table for the detailed record of the data, the figure for easier understanding. However, authors are strongly discouraged from also presenting the data in the text.

Reference list

References should be numbered in the text in citation order as superscript numerals, following punctuation where present. For authors who use Reference Manager, we can provide the correct output style. All books or papers that are referred to in the text must be listed. Those that are not referred to may not be listed. List references using the following convention (see Uniform Requirements for full details):

Journal

1. Blossfeldt P. Acupuncture for chronic neck pain--a cohort study in an NHS pain clinic. *Acupunct Med* 2004;22(3):146-51.

Chapter in book

2. Han JS. Central neurotransmitters and acupuncture analgesia. In: Pomeranz B, Stux G, editors. *Scientific bases of acupuncture*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag; 1989. p. 7-26.

Book

3. Baldry PE. *Acupuncture, trigger points and musculoskeletal pain*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone; 1993.

Reference not in English

4. Hansen PE, Hansen JH. [Acupuncture therapy for chronic tension headache. A controlled cross-over study]. *Ugeskr Læger* 1984;146(9):649-52.

or

5. Hansen PE, Hansen JH. Akupunkturbehandling af kronisk tensionshovedpine. *Ugeskr Læger* 1984;146(9):649-52.

The names of all authors in a reference should be given up to a limit of six, after which they should be followed by *et al*. The title of the paper should be given in full and the journal name abbreviated as listed in PubMed journals database. Year, volume, issue and page numbers are listed without spaces. The authors are responsible for the accuracy of the references.

Notwithstanding these guidelines, papers not conforming to either the format or presentation requested will be considered, but may take longer to reach publication.

Submission process

Submissions are made on the understanding that the work is not currently under consideration by another journal, which should be confirmed in the submission letter. Articles should be submitted as standard word processor files, as an

attachment to an email sent from the email address you wish us to reply to. Send the email to Editor@medical-acupuncture.org.uk. Or, you may submit the paper on floppy disk (3.5in) or CD to the Administrative office in Cheshire, at the address inside the front cover.

Text and tables should be submitted as a single file; figures, photographs, diagrams, and graphs should be placed in a separate file. Original photographs should be submitted to achieve high quality reproduction, but some images may be acceptable as image files. Patients must not be identifiable in photographs, and they must give consent to publication. Consent must also be obtained for use of any copyright or previously published material.

A declaration, signed by the corresponding author on behalf of all authors, will be required at the time the paper is accepted for publication stating that all named authors meet the stated authorship criteria and that no qualifying author has been omitted. All files should be sent as email attachments to Editor@medical-acupuncture.org.uk, or mailed or faxed to the Cheshire office.

Editorial review

All submissions and correspondence are conducted through the managing editor. Submissions will be acknowledged; if you do not receive an acknowledgement within 10 days, please enquire. Occasionally, papers that are clearly unlikely to be unacceptable even with revisions will be rejected after consideration by the editor alone. In most cases, papers will be sent for peer review. Original papers will undergo double review, usually with one reviewer external to the editorial board. Articles submitted for other sections of the journal, such as Education, Practice and Debate or Audit, will normally be sent for single peer review. When necessary, statistical review will be undertaken separately and authors may be asked to provide raw data for this purpose, in the form of spreadsheets. In addition, all submissions are reviewed in detail by the editor. The confidentiality of the submitted work will be maintained throughout the editorial process.

Your paper will be formatted to our standard on receipt; this version will be returned to you and you must use this version for revisions. The majority of submitted manuscripts will require revision by the authors before acceptance; please describe the changes you make in a letter .

Authors who believe they have not been dealt with fairly by the editorial process should first write an informal letter to the editor stating their complaint. If they are not satisfied with the response, they can appeal to the editorial board, and if still not satisfied to the publishers (addressed to the President of the BMAS) at the London address.

Free electronic access

The journal is published in printed copy and circulated to all members of societies listed inside the front cover, to other subscribers and to postgraduate medical libraries. In addition, all articles published in the journal can be downloaded from the journal website. Most of this material is copyright free; however, individual authors may wish to reserve the copyright on individual items, in which case they should tell the editor when their article is accepted. We do not normally require authors to transfer the copyright of their work to the publishers.