

Asia Pacific Journal of Health Management

The official journal of the Australian College of Health Service Executives

Guidelines for Contributors

About the Journal

The Asia Pacific Journal of Health Management (APJHM) is a peer reviewed journal for managers of organisations offering health and aged care services. It was launched as the official journal of the Australian College of Health Service Executives in 2006. The target audience is professionals with an interest in health and aged care services, research, management and policy development. The APJHM seeks to bring theory, research and practice together.

The mission of the APJHM is to advance understanding of the management of health and aged care service organisations within the Asia Pacific region through the publication of empirical research, theoretical and conceptual developments and analysis and discussion of current management practices.

Criteria for Acceptance of Manuscript

The APJHM invites the submission of research and conceptual manuscripts that are consistent with the mission of the APJHM and that facilitate communication and discussion of topical issues among practising managers, academics and policy makers.

Of particular interest are research and review papers that are rigorous in design, and provide new data to contribute to the health manager's understanding of an issue or management problem. Practice papers that aim to enhance the conceptual and/or coalface skills of managers will also be preferred.

Only original contributions are accepted (ie the manuscript has not been simultaneously submitted or accepted for publication elsewhere).

Five types of submission are accepted for publication by the journal:

1. Analysis of management practice (eg case study, interview, commentary);
2. Research article (empirical—quantitative and qualitative-and/or theoretical);
3. Research note;
4. Review article (eg policy review, trends, review or meta-analysis of research); and
5. Book review.

Decisions on publishing or otherwise rest with the Editor following the APJHM peer review process. The Editor is supported by an Editorial Advisory Board and an Editorial Committee.

Peer Review Process

All submitted research articles and notes, review articles and analysis of management practice articles go through the standard APJHM peer review process. Only original articles that have not been published or simultaneously submitted elsewhere are considered.

The process involves:

1. Manuscript received and read by Editor APJHM;
2. Editor with the assistance of the Editorial Committee assigns at least two reviewers. All submitted articles are blind reviewed (ie the review process is independent). Reviewers are requested by the Editor to provide quick, specific and constructive feedback that identifies strengths and weaknesses of the article;
3. Upon receipt of reports from the reviewers, the Editor provides feedback to the author(s) indicating the reviewers' recommendations as to whether it should be published in the Journal and any suggested changes to improve its quality.

For further information about the peer review process see **Guidelines for Reviewers** available from the ACHSE website at www.achse.org.au.

Submission Process

All contributions should include a covering letter (see details below) addressed to the Editor APJHM and be submitted either:

(Preferred approach)

- 1) Email soft copy (Microsoft Word compatible) to journal@achse.org.au

Or

- 2) in hard copy with an electronic version (Microsoft Word compatible) enclosed and addressed to: The Editor, ACHSE APJHM, PO Box 341, North Ryde NSW 1670;

All submitted manuscripts are acknowledged by email.

All contributors are requested to comply with the following guidelines. Manuscripts that do not meet the APJHM guidelines for manuscript preparation and require extensive editorial work will be returned for modification.

Manuscript Preparation

Language and format

Manuscripts must be typed in English, on one side of the paper, in Arial 11 font, double spaced, with reasonably wide margins using Microsoft Word.

All pages should be numbered consecutively at the centre bottom of the page starting with the Title Page, followed by the Abstract and Key Words Page, the body of the text, and the References Page(s).

Title page and word count

The title page should contain:

1. Title. This should be short (maximum of 15 words) but informative and include information that will facilitate electronic retrieval of the article.
2. Word count. A word count of both the abstract and the body of the manuscript should be provided. The latter should **include** the text only (ie, exclude title page, abstract, tables, figures and illustrations, and references). For information about word limits see **Types of Manuscript – some general guidelines** below.

Information about authorship should not appear on the title page. It should appear in the covering letter.

Abstract, key words and abbreviations page

The abstract may vary in length and format (ie structured or unstructured) according to the type of manuscript being submitted. For example, for a research or review article a structured abstract of not more than 300 words is requested, while for a management analysis a shorter (200 word) unstructured abstract is requested. (For further details, see below - **Types of Manuscript – some general guidelines.**)

Abbreviations – these should be kept to a minimum and any essential abbreviations should be defined (eg PHO – Primary Health Organisation).

Key words – three to seven key words should be provided that capture the main topics of the article.

Main manuscript

The structure of the body of the manuscript will vary according to the type of manuscript (eg a research article or note would typically be expected to contain Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion – IMRAD, while a commentary on current management practice may use a less structured approach). In all instances consideration should be given to assisting the reader to quickly grasp the flow and content of the article.

For further details about the expected structure of the body of the manuscript, see below - **Types of Manuscript – some general guidelines.**

Major and secondary headings

Major and secondary headings should be left justified in lower case and in bold.

Figures, tables and illustrations

Figures, tables and illustrations should be:

- of high quality;
- meet the 'stand-alone' test;
- inserted in the preferred location;
- numbered consecutively; and
- appropriately titled.

Copyright

For any figures, tables, illustrations that are subject to *copyright*, a letter of permission from the copyright holder for use of the image needs to be supplied by the author when submitting the manuscript.

Ethical approval

All submitted articles reporting studies involving human/or animal subjects should indicate in the text whether the procedures covered were in accordance with National Health and Medical Research Council ethical standards or other appropriate institutional or national ethics committee. Where approval has been obtained from a relevant research ethics

committee, the name of the ethics committee must be stated in the Methods section. Participant anonymity must be preserved and any identifying information should not be published. If, for example, an author wishes to publish a photograph, a signed statement from the participant(s) giving his/her/their approval for publication should be provided.

References

References should be typed on a separate page and be accurate and complete.

The Vancouver style of referencing is the style recommended for publication in the APJHM. References should be numbered within the text sequentially using Arabic numbers in square brackets. [1] These numbers should appear after the punctuation and correspond with the number given to a respective reference in your list of references at the end of your article.

Journal titles should be abbreviated according to the abbreviations used by PubMed. These can be found at: <http://www.ncbi.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi>. Once you have accessed this site, click on 'Journals database' and then enter the full journal title to view its abbreviation (eg the abbreviation for the 'Australian Health Review' is 'Aust Health Rev'). Examples of how to list your references are provided below:

Books and Monographs

1. Australia Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). Australia's health 2004. Canberra: AIHW; 2004.
2. New B, Le Grand J. Rationing in the NHS. London: King's Fund; 1996.

Chapters published in books

3. Micken SM, Boyce RA. Organisational change and adaptation in health care. In: Harris MG and Associates. Managing health services: concepts and practice. Sydney: Elsevier; 2006.

Journal articles

4. North N. Reforming New Zealand's health care system. Intl J Public Admin. 1999; 22:525-558.
5. Turrell G, Mathers C. Socioeconomic inequalities in all-cause and specific-cause mortality in Australia: 1985-1987 and 1995-1997. Int J Epidemiol. 2001;30(2):231-239.

References from the World Wide Web

6. Perneger TV, Hudelson PM. Writing a research article: advice to beginners. Int Journal for Quality in Health Care. 2004;191-192. Available: <<http://intqhc.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/16/3/191>> (Accessed 1/03/06)

Further information about the Vancouver referencing style can be found at <http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/content/LIBReferenceStyles#Vancouver>

Types of Manuscript - some general guidelines

Analysis of management practice (eg, case study)

Content

Management practice papers are practitioner oriented with a view to reporting lessons from current management practice.

Abstract

Structured appropriately and includes aim, approach, context, main findings, conclusions. Word count: 200 words.

Main text

Structured appropriately. A suitable structure would include:

- Introduction (statement of problem/issue);
- Approach to analysing problem/issue;
- Management interventions/approaches to address problem/issue;
- Discussion of outcomes including implications for management practice and strengths and weaknesses of the findings; and
- Conclusions.

Word count: general guide - 2,000 words.

References: maximum 25.

Research article (empirical and/or theoretical)

Content

An article reporting original quantitative or qualitative research relevant to the advancement of the management of health and aged care services organisations.

Abstract

Structured (Objective, Design, Setting, Main Outcome Measures, Results, Conclusions).

Word count: maximum of 300 words.

Main text

Structured (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusions).

The discussion section should address the issues listed below:

- Statement of principal findings;
- Strengths and weaknesses of the study in relation to other studies, discussing particularly any differences in findings;
- Meaning of the study (eg implications for health and aged care services managers or policy makers); and
- Unanswered questions and future research.

Two experienced reviewers of research papers (viz, Doherty and Smith 1999) proposed the above structure for the discussion section of research articles. [2]

Word count: general guide 3,000 words.

References: maximum of 30.

NB: Authors of research articles submitted to the APJHM are advised to consult 'Writing a research article: advice to beginners' by Perneger and Hudelson (2004) and available at: <<http://intqhc.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/16/3/191>> This article contains two very useful tables: 1) 'Typical structure of a research paper' and 2) 'Common mistakes seen in manuscripts submitted to this journal'. [3]

Research note

Content

Shorter than a research article, a research note may report the outcomes of a pilot study or the first stages of a large complex study or address a theoretical or methodological issue etc. In all instances it is expected to make a substantive contribution to health management knowledge.

Abstract

Structured (Objective, Design, Setting, Main Outcome Measures, Results, Conclusions).

Word count: maximum 200 words.

Main text

Structured (Introduction, Methods, Findings, Discussion and Conclusions).

Word count: general guide 2,000 words.

As with a longer research article the discussion section should address:

- A brief statement of principal findings;
- Strengths and weaknesses of the study in relation to other studies, discussing particularly any differences in findings;
- Meaning of the study (eg implications for health and aged care services managers or policy makers); and
- Unanswered questions and future research.

References: maximum of 25.

NB: Authors of research notes submitted to the APJHM are advised to consult 'Writing a research article: advice to beginners' by Perneger and Hudelson (2004) and available at: <http://intqhc.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/16/3/191> This article contains two very useful tables: 1) 'Typical structure of a research paper' and 2) 'Common mistakes seen in manuscripts submitted to this journal'. [3]

Review article (eg policy review, trends, meta-analysis of management research)

Content

A careful analysis of a management or policy issue of current interest to managers of health and aged care service organisations.

Abstract

Structured appropriately.

Word count: maximum of 300 words.

Main text

Structured appropriately and include information about data sources, inclusion criteria, and data synthesis.

Word count: general guide 3,000 words.

References: maximum of 50.

Viewpoints, interviews, commentaries

Content

A practitioner oriented viewpoint/commentary about a topical and/or controversial health management issue with a view to encouraging discussion and debate among readers.

Abstract

Structured appropriately.

Word count: maximum of 200 words.

Main text

Structured appropriately.

Word count: general guide 2,000 words.

References: maximum of 20.

Book review

Book reviews are organised by the Book Review editors. Please send books for review to: Book Review Editors, APJHM, ACHSE, PO Box 341, NORTH RYDE, NSW 1670. Australia.

Covering Letter and Declarations

The following documents should be submitted separately from your main manuscript:

Covering letter

All submitted manuscripts should have a covering letter with the following information:

- Author/s information, Name(s), Title(s), full contact details and institutional affiliation(s) of each author;
- Reasons for choosing to publish your manuscript in the APJHM;
- Confirmation that the content of the manuscript is original. That is, it has not been published elsewhere or submitted concurrently to another/other journal(s).

Declarations

1. Authorship responsibility statement

Authors are asked to sign an 'Authorship responsibility statement'. This document will be forwarded to the corresponding author by ACHSE on acceptance of the manuscript for publication in the APJHM. This document should be completed and signed by all listed authors and then faxed to: The Editor, APJHM, ACHSE (02 9878 2272).

Criteria for authorship include substantial participation in the conception, design and execution of the work, the contribution of methodological expertise and the analysis and interpretation of the data. All listed authors should approve the final version of the paper, including the order in which multiple authors' names will appear. [4]

2. Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements should be brief (ie not more than 70 words) and include funding sources and individuals who have made a valuable contribution to the project but who do not meet the criteria for authorship as outlined above. The principal author is responsible for obtaining permission to acknowledge individuals.

3. Conflicts of interest

Contributing authors to the APJHM (of all types of manuscripts) are responsible for disclosing any financial or personal relationships that might have biased their work. The corresponding author of an accepted manuscript is requested to sign a 'Conflict of interest disclosure statement'. This document will be forwarded to the corresponding author by ACHSE on acceptance of the manuscript for publication in the APJHM. This document should be completed and signed and then faxed to: The Editor, APJHM, ACHSE (02 9878 2272).

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (2006) maintains that the credibility of a journal and its peer review process may be seriously damaged unless 'conflict of interest' is managed well during writing, peer review and editorial decision making. This committee also states:

A conflict of interest exists when an author (or author's institution), reviewer, or editor has a financial or personal relationships that inappropriately influence (bias) his or her actions (such relationships are also known as dual commitments, competing interests, or competing loyalties)... The potential for conflict of interest can exist whether or not an individual believes that the relationship affects his or scientific judgment. Financial relationships (such as employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expenses and testimony) are the most easily identifiable conflicts of interest and those most likely to undermine the credibility of the journal, authors, and science itself... [4]

References

1. Hayles, J. Citing references: medicine and dentistry, 2003;3-4. Available: <<http://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/leaflets/june/citmed.doc>> (Accessed 28/02/06).
2. Doherty M, Smith R. The case for structuring the discussion of scientific papers. BMJ. 1999;318:1224-1225.
3. Perneger TV, Hudelson PM. Writing a research article: advice to beginners. Int Journal for Quality in Health Care. 2004;191-192. Available: <<http://intqhc.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/16/3/191>> (Accessed 1/03/06).
4. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. ICMJE. 2006. Available: <<http://www.icmje.org/>> (Accessed 28/02/06).

Other references consulted in preparing these Guidelines

Evans MG. Information for contributors. Acad Manage J. Available: <http://aom.pace.edu/amjnew/contributor_information.html> (Accessed 28/02/06).

Health Administration Press. Journal of Healthcare Management submission guidelines. Available: <<http://www.ache.org/pubs/submisjo.cfm>> (Accessed 28/02/06).

International Journal for Quality in Health Care. Instructions to authors, 2005. Available: <http://www.oxfordjournals.org/intqhc/for_authors/general.html> (Accessed 28/02/06).

The Medical Journal of Australia. Advice to authors submitting manuscripts. Available: <<http://www.mja.com.au/public/information.instruc.html>> (Accessed 28/02/06).