

International Journal of Palliative Nursing

Instructions for authors

IJPN is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes articles, original research and reviews on all aspects of palliative nursing – including clinical practice, education and management. IJPN endorses and values interprofessional working and welcomes articles and correspondence from all professional groups. It also publishes short research reports, case studies, comment pieces, guest editorials, and book and website reviews. Readers include specialist palliative care nurses, district nurses, hospice- and hospital-based nurses, occupational therapists, complementary therapists and social workers.

The journal welcomes submissions from both experienced and first time authors. The supportive review process will provide inexperienced authors with constructive advice on how to improve their articles.

Submissions are also encouraged from authors all over the world including those from non-English speaking countries and those who do not speak English as their first language. Although clarity of meaning is important for the review process, much can be done editorially to improve style and syntax.

Before you start

Before starting to write an article for IJPN, especially if you have not written for publication before, it is best to submit a brief outline or abstract of your proposed article to the Editor, Laura Dean-Osgood, at laura.dean-osgood@markallengroup.com

General advice

Here are some general points to keep in mind when writing an article for the journal.

IJPN aims to present all articles, including basic research, in an easy-to-read informative style. Simplicity is key, so avoid jargon and remember readers may not speak English as their first language.

Consider the key take home message from your article. It may be helpful to distil the essence of your article into four or five key points (see below) before you start and use these to guide your writing.

Be very clear about what your article adds to the literature. If this is obvious, your article is more likely to be accepted.

A key aim of IJPN is to be of practical use to its readers, so take care to outline the implications for practice.

Read other articles from IJPN for ideas on style and layout.

IJPN aims to provide an international perspective on palliative nursing and to promote good practice and innovation worldwide. It is therefore important that you clearly set the context of the article, as health services and cultures vary.

Organize your article in a logical manner. Subheadings, pictures and boxes all help break up the text for readers and help maintain interest in the article.

If you have not written for publication before, it can be helpful to take advice from colleagues. Always proof read and check spellings carefully.

Advice on submitting original research

Many of the articles published in IJPN report original research. Reviewers will be looking at the originality of your research, whether the methods are appropriate, and the overall strength and rigour of the work.

Your introduction should include relevant, up-to-date literature and support the need for the study. The aims of the study should be clearly stated.

It is important to describe the theoretical underpinning of the methods used and explain why they are appropriate to answer the research question. Please provide power calculations if appropriate.

Data analysis steps should be clearly described, with supporting references if appropriate.

Give a full description of the sample, including how it was obtained and how the appropriate sample size was determined. Give the context of the research so that readers can judge its applicability to their work. Also remember that the reader of your article may come from a country with a different health-care system.

The discussion should provide critical analysis of the relevant literature and relate this to the findings of your study. Return to the aims and discuss the extent to which these have been met. Avoid overly descriptive articles and do not generalize where this is inappropriate. Relate the work to practice and make suggestions for further research.

The limitations section is a key part of the article and should be considered carefully.

A typical layout for a research piece would be: introduction, background, methods, results, discussion, limitations and conclusion, although this may not be appropriate for all types of research.

IJPN has introduced structured abstracts with headings for research articles. The abstract should not give detailed background information but instead: give the aim of the article; provide details of the study design, sample and setting; describe the methods, including interventions, measures and analysis; briefly give the findings; and outline the main conclusions.

Guidance on statistics

Statistical advice should be sought before data collection. Please provide full results of any tests used, giving complete test results (test statistic, degrees of freedom, *P* value). Appropriate indicators of error or uncertainty, such as confidence intervals, should also be given. Include power calculations if appropriate and give the name and version of any software used.

Ethical approval

You should provide a statement to indicate that appropriate ethical committee approval has been obtained.

Key points

Please supply four or five sentences that summarize the key points of the article. Be aware that many readers will look at this first to help them decide whether to read further.

Word length and number of references

Review articles should generally be approximately 2000–3000 words, although this can be exceeded slightly in special cases when agreed with the Editor. If you have any difficulties keeping to the title, length or other specifications of the article, as set down in the commissioning letter or these instructions, please discuss this with the Editor. Although it is important that review articles are fully referenced, references no more than 30 should normally be used.

Permissions

You should gain the necessary permission to reproduce figures/tables/artwork from other journals or books before submitting your document. Permissions can then be acknowledged at the end of the document.

Conflict of interest statements

Please also declare any conflicts of interest at the end of your article. These are any possible interests, financial or otherwise, which may embarrass the author or the journal if highlighted at a later date.

Copyright

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Submission

All manuscripts should be submitted ONLINE at <http://www.epress.ac.uk/ijpn/webforms/author.php>
The procedure is quite clear, but there are specific requirements that should be followed as closely as possible. If you have any difficulty, email the Editor, laura.dean-osgood@markallengroup.com.

Documents

1. Documents should be double-spaced (including references) and formatted for A4 paper and all pages should be numbered.
2. For purposes of confidentiality, author identification should appear only on the first page title page.
3. When you have submitted your article you will receive an acknowledgement.

All articles submitted for publication in IJPN are peer reviewed before publication. The review process will take about 8–12 weeks. When the reviews are complete you will be contacted regarding the suitability of your article for publication.

Decisions regarding peer-reviewed articles fall into the following categories: accept; accept subject to amendment; requires amendment before a second review; and reject. Authors of rejected article may be invited to extensively revise their article and resubmit. Queries regarding progress of article reviews should be directed to the Editor via email or at the address given above.

If your paper is accepted for publication you will receive proofs for correction at a later date before the article is published, these will generally need to be checked at short notice.

Document lay out

Title page

This should include:

1. Title of article.
2. The names of the authors (with first names).
3. Institutional affiliation of each author.
4. Full details of each author's current appointment and work address.
5. Name, and full contact details (address, telephone and fax numbers, email address) of the author responsible for correspondence.

Please indicate whether you are happy for your email address to be published.

Abstract

An abstract of between 100 and 150 words should be submitted on a separate page giving a brief outline of the content of the article. This should be structured for research articles.

Headings

Please use headings where relevant and appropriate as this makes the text easier to read and enhances clarity. Please indicate the relative 'weight' you give each one, i.e. main headings, sub headings etc.

Conclusions

Your conclusions should be succinct and logically ordered. Identify gaps in present knowledge and suggest future initiatives. Take care not to introduce new points here!

Key words

Please supply 5–6 key words that adequately summarize the major themes of your article. The key words will be used in database searches, so consider your choice carefully. They will appear in a box at the end of your article.

Illustrations and tables

Illustrations and tables are encouraged and are popular with readers. Remember, your article has to compete with other articles in the journal to catch the eye of the reader. An interesting item can turn a browser into a reader. As a rough guide, there should be a table or illustration every 600 words. However a graph or chart should only be included if it enhances understanding or clarity or makes comparison easier. It is helpful if authors can provide digital images they think suitable for their article (see note about resolution below). Most graphs and line drawings will be redrawn by our art team so make sure any necessary data and/or detail is included. Please clearly indicate the number of the figure or table in the text of the article as well as on the illustration. Please ensure that all tables and figures are cited in the text and that permission has been granted to use them where necessary (nb graphics and digital photographs downloaded from internet sites cannot be used without permission and are, in any event, not high enough resolution to be of print quality).

Illustrations

- a) Colour pictures are encouraged, black-and-white photographs are acceptable. When submitting your article in the first instance, low resolution digital pictures are acceptable and may be embedded within the document. Bear in mind however, that each image will have to be resubmitted before publication as a separate JPEG or TIF file at a resolution of 300dpi at the size you wish the picture to be published.
- b) Radiographs should be submitted as good quality digital photographs.
- c) Authors must gain the necessary permission to reproduce figures/tables/artwork from other journals or books BEFORE submitting their manuscripts.
- d) Figures should be numbered consecutively in order of their first citation in the text.

Tables

- a) Type each table double-spaced on a separate sheet.
- b) Place references and explanatory matter in footnotes, not in the heading.
- c) Explain in footnotes all non-standard abbreviations that are used in each table.
- d) If you use data from another published or unpublished source, obtain permission and acknowledge source fully.
- e) Number tables consecutively in order of citation in the text.
- f) Authors are responsible for checking the accuracy of number tables, statistical presentations, etc.

References

Check all references carefully

The Harvard System must be used. Provide full details of the original source of the material used (do not use 'cited in...').

In the text

- a) Use the name and year (Harvard) system for references in the text:
As Black and White (1987) have shown...
As already reported (Black and White, 1987)...
- b) For 3 or more authors, put the first author's name followed by et al:
e.g. As Black et al (1987) have shown...
Note: 'et al' should never be used to represent just one name – Black et al is acceptable for Black, White and Green but not for Black and White.
- c) When several references are cited simultaneously the order should be chronological (e.g. Ross, 1990; James, 1997; Levi, 1998).

In the reference list

- a) Arrange references alphabetically by first author's name and chronologically.
Black B (1987)...
Black B (1989)...
- b) Print the names and initials of all authors for references with six or less authors.
Black B, Green G (1975)...

Black B, White W (1963)...
Black B, White W, Green G, Brown B, Tan T (1973)...
Black B, Green G, Tan T (1974)...
Black B, Abel C, Tan T (1975)...

The last three references in the above list are in chronological order as they are all cited as Black et al in the text.

For seven or more authors print the first three and add 'et al' – these references are arranged chronologically:

Black B, White W, Green G et al (1973)...
Black B, Green G, Tan T et al (1974)...
Black B, Abel C, Tan T et al (1975)...

The references in the above list are also in chronological order as they are cited as Black et al in the text.

- c) The sequence for a standard journal article is: author(s); year; title; journal (abbreviated as in Index Medicus/Medline); volume; issue; first and last page numbers.
The layout and punctuation are: Smith B, Abel CH (1987) Sexual hypersensitivity. Br J Nurs 1: 40–6
- d) The sequence, layout and punctuation for books are:
Author
Ellis H (1980) Lecture Notes on Psychiatry. 5th edn. Blackwell, Oxford
Editor
Scott H, Brown B, eds (1973) Histocompatibility Testing. Vol 5. Raven Press, New York
Chapter in Book
Samuels B (1979) Pulmonary complications of AIDS. In: Rand A, Long B, eds. Management of AIDS. Butterworth, London: 387–95
- e) Papers that have been submitted for publication but not yet accepted are not acceptable as references. They should be cited in the text as 'unpublished observations'. (Smith XY, unpublished observations, with or without a date). Similarly, 'personal communication' should be inserted in the text in parentheses.
- f) Papers that have been accepted for publication but not yet published may be included in the reference list:
Abel HL (in press) Endometriosis. Br J Nurs
- g) Reference lists must be typed double-spaced.

Abbreviations and units

1. Abbreviations are acceptable as long as they are defined at first mention.
2. SI units should be used, except for measurement of blood pressure (mmHg) and haemoglobin (g/dl).