

Manuscript Submission Guidelines: *American Journal of Health Promotion*

This Journal is a member of the [Committee on Publication Ethics](#)

This Journal recommends that authors follow the [Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals](#) formulated by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

Please read the guidelines below then visit the Journal's [submission site](#) to upload your manuscript. Please note that manuscripts not conforming to these guidelines may be returned.

SAGE Publishing disseminates high-quality research and engaged scholarship globally, and we are committed to diversity and inclusion in publishing. We encourage submissions from a diverse range of authors from across all countries and backgrounds.

Only manuscripts of sufficient quality that meet the aims and scope of *American Journal of Health Promotion* will be reviewed.

There are no fees payable to submit or publish in this journal.

As part of the submission process you will be required to warrant that you are submitting your original work, that you have the rights in the work, that you are submitting the work for first publication in the Journal and that it is not being considered for publication elsewhere and has not already been published elsewhere, and that you have obtained and can supply all necessary permissions for the reproduction of any copyright works not owned by you.

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1. What do we publish?

1.1 Aims & Scope

Before submitting your manuscript to *American Journal of Health Promotion*, please ensure you have read the [Aims & Scope](#)

1.2 Presubmission inquiry and article types

Authors MUST first submit a presubmission inquiry abstract to <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajhp>. The abstract will be sent to the editor who determines if it fits the editorial scope of the journal. If the editor accepts a presubmission inquiry, authors are then invited to submit the full manuscript. Responses with a determination of appropriateness are normally sent within 10 days.

The required parameters for presubmission abstracts are set out immediately below.

Quantitative research. Presubmission abstracts (no more than 220 words); please use the following headings: Purpose, Design, Setting, Subjects, Intervention (if appropriate), Measures, Analysis, Results, Conclusion

Qualitative research. Presubmission abstracts (no more than 220 words); please use the following headings: Purpose, Approach or Design, Setting, Participants, Intervention (if appropriate), Method (data collection and analysis strategies), Results, Conclusion

Applied research brief. Presubmission abstracts (no more than 220 words); please use the following headings: Purpose, Design, Setting, Subjects, Intervention (if appropriate), Measures, Analysis, Results, Conclusion

Literature review. Presubmission abstracts (no more than 220 words); please use the following headings: Objective, Data Source, Study Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria, Data Extraction, Data Synthesis, Results, Conclusion

Critical issues and trends. Presubmission abstracts (no more than 100 words); please submit an unstructured synopsis for this manuscript type

Quantitative research

- **Review criteria** - Evaluated based on relevance, the quality of the design and execution of the study, and the quality of the reporting of the study.
- **Abstract** - A structured abstract of no more than 220 words should be divided into the following headings: Purpose, Design, Setting, Sample, Intervention (if appropriate), Measures, Analysis, Results, and Conclusion. Include sample sizes, response rate, statistical tests used, primary results in quantitative form, and critical limitations.
- **Key words and indexing key words** - Immediately follow abstract.
- **Length** - 12 to 15 double-spaced typed pages, or about 2500 to 3500 words. Avoid preparing articles longer than 4000 words, except in unusual situations. Exceptions for submissions over 4000 words will be made by the Editor in Chief on a case by case basis.
- **Manuscript format** - Include the following: abstract, key words, and indexing key words; the following headings and subheadings: Purpose, Methods (Design, Sample, Measures, Intervention [if appropriate], and

Analysis), Results, Discussion, "SO WHAT?" section, and References; and tables (if applicable) and figure captions(if applicable).

Qualitative research

- **Review criteria** - Evaluated based on relevance, the quality of the design and execution of the study, and the quality of the reporting of the study.
- **Abstract** - A structured abstract of no more than 220 words should be divided into the following headings: Purpose, Approach or Design, Setting, Participants, Intervention (if appropriate), Method (data collection and analysis strategies), Results, and Conclusion. Include sample sizes, response rate, statistical tests used, primary results in quantitative form, and critical limitations.
- **Key words and indexing key words** - Immediately follow abstract.
- **Length** - 12 to 15 double-spaced typed pages, or about 3000 to 4000 words. Avoid preparing articles longer than 4500 words, except in unusual situations. Exceptions for submissions over 4500 words will be made by the Editor in Chief and/or Associate Editor in Chief on a case by case basis.
- **Manuscript format** - Include the following: abstract, key words, and indexing key words; the following headings and subheadings: Purpose, Approach or Design, Setting, Participants, Intervention (if appropriate), Method (data collection and analysis strategies), Results, Conclusion, and "SO What?" section, and References; and Tables (if applicable) and Figure captions (if applicable).

Systematic literature reviews

- **Review criteria** - Evaluated based on relevance, scope and design of the review process, accuracy and astuteness in recognizing trends, and presentation quality of the review.
- **Abstract** - A structured abstract of no more than 220 words should be divided into the following headings: Objective, Data Source, Study Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria, Data Extraction, Data Synthesis, Results, and Conclusions.
- **Key words and indexing key words** - Immediately follow abstract.
- **Length** - 12 to 18 double-spaced typed pages, or about 3000 to 4500 words. Avoid preparing articles longer than 5000 words.
- **Manuscript format** - Include the following: abstract, key words, and indexing key words; the following headings and subheadings: Objective, Methods (Data Sources, Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria, Data Extraction, and Data Synthesis), Results, Conclusions, "SO WHAT?" section, and References; and tables (if applicable) and figure captions (if applicable)

Critical issues and trends

- **Types of articles** - Articles published in this section describe events and constructs that are having or will have a major impact on health promotion practice or research. Articles might describe important legislation, research breakthroughs, emerging trends, paradigm shifts, emerging policy, or a wide range of other topics.
- **Selection criteria** - The following criteria are considered in the review process: overall importance (A topic of critical importance to the field of health promotion is addressed; the topic is of interest to readers; and the author has sufficient credentials to be perceived as credible) and presentation quality (Length is within the Instructions to Authors guidelines; the writing is clear; the structure and organization are clear; and sufficient documentation of controversial claims is presented).
- **Synopsis** - Unstructured synopsis; no more than 100 words.
- **Length** - No more than 1500 words, including up to 15 references. Figures and tables are not encouraged; if included, the number of words in the body of the article must be reduced to account for the space consumed by these items. To determine a table's word count equivalent, multiply the number of columns by the number of rows by 10. Subtract this number from the allowed 1500 words. For example, if a table has 4 rows and 8 columns, the table equals approximately 320 words, leaving 1280 words available for the rest of the article. Authors should use their best judgment to estimate the number of word spaces consumed by figures.
- **Manuscript format** – At the author's discretion.

Applied research briefs

- **Types of articles** - Applied research briefs are designed to provide readers with pertinent research findings in a condensed format. These include original studies that are not appropriate for full-length manuscripts but that are relevant to the practice of health promotion. These articles highlight work that can influence how, where, when, what, and for whom health promotion services are provided. The study findings should be succinct and focused and provide a clear message about how they apply to the practitioner. The applied

research brief format is appropriate for studies that fall into the following categories: preliminary studies; simple comparisons between two or more program alternatives; and studies that have methodologic flaws, such as small sample sizes or lack of a control group, yet convey important findings.

- **Review criteria** - The review process similar to but less rigorous than that for quantitative research and qualitative research manuscripts. All external reviews are blind and anonymous. For acceptance, the manuscript should address an important issue, be of interest to practitioners, illustrate good research in a practice setting, clearly describe the implications of methodological limitations, be well written and presented, and be within length guidelines.
- **Abstract** - A structured abstract of no more than 220 words should be divided into the following headings: Purpose, Design, Setting, Sample, Intervention (if appropriate), Measures, Analysis, Results, and Conclusion. Include sample sizes, response rate, statistical tests used, primary results in quantitative form, and critical limitations.
- **Key words and indexing key words** - Immediately follow abstract.
- **Length** - No more than 1800 words of text including the abstract, references, and tables. Please limit these manuscripts to no more than 15 references and two tables or figures. To determine a table's word count equivalent, multiply the number of columns by the number of rows by 10. Subtract this number from the allowed 1800 words. For example, if a table has 4 rows and 8 columns, the table equals approximately 320 words, leaving 1480 words available for the rest of the article. Authors should use their best judgment to estimate the number of word spaces consumed by figures.
- **Manuscript format** - After the abstract, key words, and indexing key words, include the following headings, subheadings, and word counts: Purpose (100 to 200 words), Methods (250 to 600 words: Design, Sample, Measures, Intervention [if appropriate], and Analysis), Results (250 to 550 words), Discussion (250 to 450 words: Summary, Limitations, Significance), "SO WHAT?" section, References, tables (if applicable), and figure captions (if applicable)

So What? (Implications for Health Promotion Practitioners and Researchers)

The So What? section should be between 100-150 words. Individually list and answer the following questions:

- **What is already known on this topic?**
Text, text, text...
- **What does this article add?**
Text, text, text...
- **What are the implications for health promotion practice or research?.**
Text, text, text...

Number of References

Though we do not have a specific limitation on the number of references for full manuscripts, we recommend that the number of citations used remain commensurate with the length of the paper. Specifically, we find that up to 30-40 references are sufficient for most papers that are within our 4000 word limit. Literature reviews are a common exception and often have considerably more references. As above, "Briefs" and "Critical Issues" papers are limited to 15 references. Sizable exceptions for full length quantitative and qualitative studies, i.e. more than 60 references, will be made by the Editor in Chief and/or Associate Editor in Chief on a case by case basis.

1.3 Writing your paper

The SAGE Author Gateway has some general advice and on [how to get published](#), plus links to further resources.

1.3.1 Make your article discoverable

When writing up your paper, think about how you can make it discoverable. The title, keywords and abstract are key to ensuring readers find your article through search engines such as Google. For information and

guidance on how best to title your article, write your abstract and select your keywords, have a look at this page on the Gateway: [How to Help Readers Find Your Article Online](#)

2. Editorial policies

2.1 Peer review policy

The initial review process normally takes 3 months. Reviews of subsequent revisions take about 2 months. Acknowledgment of articles received is sent to authors once the editor has decided to send the manuscript out for review.

External reviews of all manuscripts, except Critical Issues and Trends, are blind and anonymous. Internal reviews of manuscripts by the Editor are not blind or anonymous. Manuscripts are reviewed by two to three reviewers who include a subject matter expert, a practitioner, and a research methodologist, as appropriate. Reviewers consider the following criteria: relevance and importance to practice or research, scientific quality, presentation quality, and conformity to format guidelines.

Manuscripts are reviewed with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not under consideration by another publication. A complete report after publication of preliminary findings elsewhere is normally acceptable. Copies of preliminary reports and duplicative materials published elsewhere or being considered by other publications should be submitted with the manuscript and referred to in the cover letter.

As an occasional part of the submission process, authors submitting highly specialized studies may be asked to provide the names of 3 peers who could be called upon to review your manuscript. Recommended reviewers should be experts in their fields and should be able to provide an objective assessment of the manuscript. Please be aware of any conflicts of interest when recommending reviewers. Examples of conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to) the below:

- The reviewer should have no prior knowledge of your submission
- The reviewer should not have recently collaborated with any of the authors
- Reviewer nominees from the same institution as any of the authors are not permitted

You will also be asked to nominate peers who you do not wish to review your manuscript (opposed reviewers).

Please note that the Editors are not obliged to invite/reject any recommended/opposed reviewers to assess your manuscript.

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The Editor or members of the Editorial Board may occasionally submit their own manuscripts for possible publication in the journal. In these cases, the peer review process will be managed by alternative members of the Board and the submitting Editor/Board member will have no involvement in the decision-making process.

2.2 Authorship

Papers should only be submitted for consideration once consent is given by all contributing authors. Those submitting papers should carefully check that all those whose work contributed to the paper are acknowledged as contributing authors.

The list of authors should include all those who can legitimately claim authorship. This is all those who:

- (i) Made a substantial contribution to the concept or design of the work; or acquisition, analysis or interpretation of data,
- (ii) Drafted the article or revised it critically for important intellectual content,
- (iii) Approved the version to be published,
- (iv) Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content.

Authors should meet the conditions of all of the points above. When a large, multicentre group has conducted the work, the group should identify the individuals who accept direct responsibility for the manuscript. These individuals should fully meet the criteria for authorship. For manuscripts with more than 10 authors, the submitting author should include an attachment with the submission that names each author and specifies the role each author performed in the conduct of the study and the drafting of the manuscript.

Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of the research group alone does not constitute authorship, although all contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in the Acknowledgments section. Please refer to the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\) authorship guidelines](#) for more information on authorship.

2.3 Acknowledgements

All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in an Acknowledgements section. Examples of those who might be acknowledged include a person who provided purely technical help, or a department chair who provided only general support.

Please supply any personal acknowledgements separately to the main text to facilitate anonymous peer review.

2.3.1 Writing assistance

Individuals who provided writing assistance, e.g. from a specialist communications company, do not qualify as authors and so should be included in the Acknowledgements section. Authors must disclose any writing assistance – including the individual's name, company and level of input – and identify the entity that paid for this assistance. It is not necessary to disclose use of language polishing services.

2.4 Funding

American Journal of Health Promotion requires all authors to acknowledge their funding in a consistent fashion under a separate heading. Please visit the [Funding Acknowledgements](#) page on the SAGE Journal Author Gateway to confirm the format of the acknowledgment text in the event of funding, or state that: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

2.5 Declaration of conflicting interests

It is the policy of *American Journal of Health Promotion* to require a declaration of conflicting interests from all authors enabling a statement to be carried within the paginated pages of all published articles.

Please ensure that a 'Declaration of Conflicting Interests' statement is included at the end of your manuscript, after any acknowledgements and prior to the references. If no conflict exists, please state that 'The Author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest'. For guidance on conflict of interest statements, please see the ICMJE recommendations [here](#)

2.6 Research ethics and patient consent

Medical research involving human subjects must be conducted according to the [World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki](#)

Submitted manuscripts should conform to the [ICMJE Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals](#), and all papers reporting animal and/or human studies must state in the methods section that the relevant Ethics Committee or Institutional Review Board provided

(or waived) approval. Please ensure that you have provided the full name and institution of the review committee, in addition to the approval number.

For research articles, authors are also required to state in the methods section whether participants provided informed consent and whether the consent was written or verbal.

Information on informed consent to report individual cases or case series should be included in the manuscript text. A statement is required regarding whether written informed consent for patient information and images to be published was provided by the patient(s) or a legally authorized representative.

Please also refer to the [ICMJE Recommendations for the Protection of Research Participants](#)

2.8 Reporting guidelines

The relevant [EQUATOR Network](#) reporting guidelines should be followed depending on the type of study. For example, all randomized controlled trials submitted for publication should include a completed [CONSORT](#) flow chart as a cited figure and the completed CONSORT checklist should be uploaded with your submission as a supplementary file. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses should include the completed [PRISMA](#) flow chart as a cited figure and the completed PRISMA checklist should be uploaded with your submission as a supplementary file. The [EQUATOR wizard](#) can help you identify the appropriate guideline.

Other resources can be found at [NLM's Research Reporting Guidelines and Initiatives](#)

3. Publishing Policies

3.1 Publication ethics

SAGE is committed to upholding the integrity of the academic record. We encourage authors to refer to the Committee on Publication Ethics' [International Standards for Authors](#) and view the Publication Ethics page on the [SAGE Author Gateway](#)

3.1.1 Plagiarism

American Journal of Health Promotion and SAGE take issues of copyright infringement, plagiarism or other breaches of best practice in publication very seriously. We seek to protect the rights of our authors and we always investigate claims of plagiarism or misuse of published articles. Equally, we seek to protect the reputation of the journal against malpractice. Submitted articles may be checked with duplication-checking software. Where an article, for example, is found to have plagiarised other work or included third-party copyright material without permission or with insufficient acknowledgement, or where the authorship of the article is contested, we reserve the right to take action including, but not limited to: publishing an erratum or corrigendum (correction); retracting the article; taking up the matter with the head of department or dean of the author's institution and/or relevant academic bodies or societies; or taking appropriate legal action.

3.1.2 Prior publication

If material has been previously published it is not generally acceptable for publication in a SAGE journal. However, there are certain circumstances where previously published material can be considered for publication. Please refer to the guidance on the [SAGE Author Gateway](#) or if in doubt, contact the Editor at the address given below.

3.2 Contributor's publishing agreement

Before publication, SAGE requires the author as the rights holder to sign a Journal Contributor's Publishing Agreement. SAGE's Journal Contributor's Publishing Agreement is an exclusive licence agreement which means that the author retains copyright in the work but grants SAGE the sole and exclusive right and licence to publish for the full legal term of copyright. Exceptions may exist where an assignment of copyright is required or preferred by a proprietor other than SAGE. In this case copyright in the work will be assigned from the author to the society. For more information please visit the [SAGE Author Gateway](#)

3.3 Open access and author archiving

American Journal of Health Promotion offers optional open access publishing via the SAGE Choice programme. For more information please visit the [SAGE Choice website](#). For information on funding body compliance, and depositing your article in repositories, please visit [SAGE Publishing Policies](#) on our Journal Author Gateway.

4. Preparing your manuscript for submission

4.1 Formatting

The preferred format for your manuscript is Word. LaTeX files are also accepted. Word and (La)Tex templates are available on the [Manuscript Submission Guidelines](#) page of our Author Gateway.

4.2 Artwork, figures and other graphics

For guidance on the preparation of illustrations, pictures and graphs in electronic format, please visit SAGE's [Manuscript Submission Guidelines](#)

Figures supplied in colour will appear in colour online regardless of whether or not these illustrations are reproduced in colour in the printed version. For specifically requested colour reproduction in print, you will receive information regarding the costs from SAGE after receipt of your accepted article.

4.3 Supplementary material

This journal is able to host additional materials online (e.g. datasets, podcasts, videos, images etc.) alongside the full-text of the article. For more information please refer to our [guidelines on submitting supplementary files](#)

4.4 Reference style

American Journal of Health Promotion adheres to the AMA reference style. View the [AMA](#) guidelines to ensure your manuscript conforms to this reference style.

4.5 English language editing services

Authors seeking assistance with English language editing, translation, or figure and manuscript formatting to fit the journal's specifications should consider using SAGE Language Services. Visit [SAGE Language Services](#) on our Journal Author Gateway for further information.

5. Submitting your manuscript

American Journal of Health Promotion is hosted on SAGE Track, a web based online submission and peer review system powered by ScholarOne™ Manuscripts. Visit <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajhp> to login and submit your article online.

IMPORTANT: Please check whether you already have an account in the system before trying to create a new one. If you have reviewed or authored for the journal in the past year it is likely that you will have had an account created. For further guidance on submitting your manuscript online please visit [ScholarOne Online Help](#).

5.1 ORCID

As part of our commitment to ensuring an ethical, transparent and fair peer review process SAGE is a supporting member of [ORCID, the Open Researcher and Contributor ID](#). ORCID provides a unique and

persistent digital identifier that distinguishes researchers from every other researcher, even those who share the same name, and, through integration in key research workflows such as manuscript and grant submission, supports automated linkages between researchers and their professional activities, ensuring that their work is recognized.

The collection of ORCID IDs from corresponding authors is now part of the submission process of this journal. If you already have an ORCID ID you will be asked to associate that to your submission during the online submission process. We also strongly encourage all co-authors to link their ORCID ID to their accounts in our online peer review platforms. It takes seconds to do: click the link when prompted, sign into your ORCID account and our systems are automatically updated. Your ORCID ID will become part of your accepted publication's metadata, making your work attributable to you and only you. Your ORCID ID is published with your article so that fellow researchers reading your work can link to your ORCID profile and from there link to your other publications.

If you do not already have an ORCID ID please follow this [link](#) to create one or visit our [ORCID homepage](#) to learn more.

5.2 Information required for completing your submission

You will be asked to provide contact details and academic affiliations for all co-authors via the submission system and identify who is to be the corresponding author. These details must match what appears on your manuscript. At this stage please ensure you have included all the required statements and declarations and uploaded any additional supplementary files (including reporting guidelines where relevant).

5.3 Permissions

Please also ensure that you have obtained any necessary permission from copyright holders for reproducing any illustrations, tables, figures or lengthy quotations previously published elsewhere. For further information including guidance on fair dealing for criticism and review, please see the Copyright and Permissions page on the [SAGE Author Gateway](#).

6. On acceptance and publication

6.1 SAGE Production

Your SAGE Production Editor will keep you informed as to your article's progress throughout the production process. Proofs will be sent by PDF to the corresponding author and should be returned promptly. Authors are reminded to check their proofs carefully to confirm that all author information, including names, affiliations, sequence and contact details are correct, and that Funding and Conflict of Interest statements, if any, are accurate. Please note that if there are any changes to the author list at this stage all authors will be required to complete and sign a form authorising the change.

6.2 Online First publication

Online First allows final articles (completed and approved articles awaiting assignment to a future issue) to be published online prior to their inclusion in a journal issue, which significantly reduces the lead time between submission and publication. Visit the [SAGE Journals help page](#) for more details, including how to cite Online First articles.

6.3 Access to your published article

SAGE provides authors with online access to their final article.

6.4 Promoting your article

Publication is not the end of the process! You can help disseminate your paper and ensure it is as widely read and cited as possible. The SAGE Author Gateway has numerous resources to help you promote your work. Visit the [Promote Your Article](#) page on the Gateway for tips and advice.

7. Further information

Any correspondence, queries or additional requests for information on the manuscript submission process should be sent to the *American Journal of Health Promotion* editorial office as follows:

ajhp@editorialoffice.co.uk