

# Journal of Human Lactation

## Call for State of the Science Manuscripts for our August 2020 issue

The aim of state of the science literature reviews that *JHL* features in our August issue is to provide an up-to-date picture of what is well established in a particular aspect of lactation and to suggest possible areas that need further research. These reviews are critical analyses of the body of research about a specific narrowly defined topic, written by researchers have the breadth and depth of knowledge along with the research skills to distill a body of work for the rest of us. It is important that the authors' analysis within state of the science article address a number of very important questions:

- Why is this an important area within lactation?
- What assumptions are being made in the existing literature?
- How rigorous are the study designs within this body of literature?
- Who is and who is not being studied (and why)?
- What do we know, what are we fairly certain about, and what do we not know about this topic?
- Where or what are the disparities?
- What are next steps in moving this knowledge base forward?

We consider state of the science analysis a type of research because it requires much more depth of analysis than a synthesis of existing literature. Therefore, all components of a research paper (i.e., background, study aim, methods [design, sample, data collection, data analysis] results, discussion and limitations) are required in the state of the science papers.

- First, a brief **Background** about the topic of study that includes the significance of this topic is needed.

- A clearly written **Study Aim** that describes the area to be critically analyzed is essential or the reader will be unable to determine if the authors have adequately addressed the issue.
- The methods section begins with the **Design** section statement, in which a design statement is required. A number of ways to conduct an analytical review of the literature (i.e., the design) exist, any of which would be appropriate for a state of the science paper. We have previously published state of the science papers that used the methods of systematic reviews, meta-analyses, scoping reviews, integrated and qualitative synthesis; however, other methodologies also could be used.
- In this type of research, the articles reviewed are the **Sample**, which need to be described using inclusion and exclusion criteria. This section also provides a description of how the literature review was done, including the databases searched, search strategy and search terms. To do an adequate review a minimum of 4 databases need be searched. In addition to the health science databases, many topics relevant to lactation also require a search of humanities (JSTOR) and social science (PsycINFO, social science abstracts & others) literature. It might be helpful to readers if a table of the search strategy was included. Additionally, a PRISMA diagram is required (<http://www.prisma-statement.org>).
- The **Data Collection** section must include how data from each article was abstracted (e.g., using matrices), when and by whom. This section also needs to include which variables were extracted with clear definitions, keeping in mind that breastfeeding variables frequently are ill defined or defined differently by various authors.
- The **Data Analysis** section clearly describes to the reader how variables were analyzed (e.g., descriptive statistics, etc.) and compared.
- It is likely that most of the **Results** will be presented in the form of tables and/or figures.

- It is in the **Discussion** section that the authors will need to distill the meanings within their findings, discuss the gaps in the existing body of literature and identify areas for future research.
- A **Limitation** section is required
- **Conclusions** need to be generalized statements

State of the science articles are the most up-to-date evaluations about the topic analyzed, as textbooks are always out of date, making state of the science articles invaluable resources for researchers, educators and clinicians. It is of great importance that experts in the field publish state of the science papers, which is why we are posting this call for papers. We ask that, if you feel this is something you could do, you consider submitting one for upcoming state of the 2020 science issue (**manuscripts due 1.20.2020**).

**JHL Author Directions:** <https://journals.sagepub.com/pb-assets/cmscontent/JHL/2019%20JHL%20Author%20Directions%20-%20revised%206.17.2019.pdf>

*For examples of state of the science articles, see our August 2019 issue.*