

Manuscript Submission Guidelines: *Qualitative Health Research*

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 <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/qhr> to upload your manuscript. Please note that manuscripts not conforming to these guidelines may be returned. Remember you can log in to the submission site at any time to check on the progress of your paper through the peer review process.

Only manuscripts of sufficient quality that meet the aims and scope of *Qualitative Health Research* 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, and that you have obtained and can supply all necessary permissions for the reproduction of any copyright works not owned by you, 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. Please see our guidelines on [prior publication](#) and note that ***Qualitative Health Research* may accept submissions of papers that have been posted on pre-print servers**; please alert the Editorial Office when submitting (contact details are at the end of these guidelines) and include the DOI for the preprint in the designated field in the manuscript submission system. Authors should not post an updated version of their paper on the preprint server while it is being peer reviewed for possible publication in the journal. If the article is accepted for publication, the author may re-use their work according to the journal's author archiving policy. If your paper is accepted, you must include a link on your preprint to the final version of your paper.

1. What do we publish?

- 1.1 Aims & Scope**
- 1.2 Article types**
- 1.3 Writing your paper**

2. Editorial policies

- 2.1 Peer review policy**
- 2.2 Authorship**
- 2.3 Acknowledgements**
- 2.4 Funding**
- 2.5 Declaration of conflicting interests**
- 2.6 Research ethics and patient consent**
- 2.7 Clinical trials**
- 2.8 Reporting guidelines**
- 2.9 Research Data**

3. Publishing policies

- 3.1 Publication ethics**
- 3.2 Contributor's publishing agreement**
- 3.3 Open access and author archiving**

4. Preparing your manuscript

- 4.1 Formatting**
- 4.2 Artwork, figures and other graphics**

- 4.3 Supplemental material
- 4.4 Reference style
- 4.5 English language editing services
- 4.6 Review Criteria

5. Submitting your manuscript

- 5.1 ORCID
- 5.2 Information required for completing your submission
- 5.3 Permissions

6. On acceptance and publication

- 6.1 SAGE Production
- 6.2 Online First publication
- 6.3 Access to your published article
- 6.4 Promoting your article

7. Further information

1. What do we publish?

1.1 Aims & Scope

Before submitting your manuscript to *Qualitative Health Research*, please ensure you have read the [Aims & Scope](#).

1.2 Article types

Each issue of *Qualitative Health Research* provides readers with a wealth of information —, commentaries on conceptual, theoretical, methodological and ethical issues pertaining to qualitative inquiry as well as articles covering research, theory and methods.

1.2.1 What types of articles will QHR accept?

QHR asks authors to make their own decision regarding the fit of their article to the journal. Do not send query letters regarding article fit.

- Read the Mission Statement on main *QHR* webpage.
- Search the *QHR* journal for articles that address your topic. Do we publish in your area of expertise?
- Ask these questions: Does it make a meaningful and strong contribution to qualitative health research literature? Is it original? Relevant? In depth? Insightful? Significant? Is it useful to reader and/or practitioner?
- Note the sections: General articles, critical reviews, articles addressing qualitative methods, commentaries on conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and ethical issues pertaining to qualitative inquiry.
- *QHR* accepts qualitative methods and qualitatively-driven mixed-methods, qualitative meta-analyses, and articles addressing all qualitative methods.
- *QHR* is a multi-disciplinary journal and accepts articles written from a variety of perspectives including: cross-cultural health, family medicine, health psychology, health social work, medical anthropology, medical sociology, nursing, pediatric health, physical education, public health, and rehabilitation.
- Articles in *QHR* provide an array of timely topics such as: experiencing illness, giving care, institutionalization, substance abuse, food, feeding and nutrition, living with disabilities, milestones and maturation, monitoring health, and children's perspectives on health and illness.
- *QHR* does NOT publish pilot studies.

Look Out for These Regular Special Features

Pearls, Pith and Provocation: This section fosters debate about significant issues, enhances communication of methodological advances and encourages the discussion of provocative ideas.

Mixed Methods: This section includes qualitatively-driven mixed-methods research, and qualitative contributions to quantitative research.

Advancing Qualitative Methods: Qualitative inquiry that has used qualitative methods in an innovative way.

Evidence of Practice: Theoretical or empirical articles addressing research integration and the translation of qualitatively derived insights into clinical decision-making and health service policy planning.

Ethics: Quandaries or issues that are particular to qualitative inquiry are discussed.

Teaching Matters: Articles that promote and discuss issues related to the teaching of qualitative methods and methodology.

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

For information and guidance on how to make your article more discoverable, visit our Gateway page on [How to Help Readers Find Your Article Online](#)

2. Editorial policies

2.1 Peer review policy

Qualitative Health Research strongly endorses the value and importance of peer review in scholarly journals publishing. All papers submitted to the journal will be subject to comment and external review. All manuscripts are initially reviewed by the Editors and only those papers that meet the scientific and editorial standards of the journal, and fit within the aims and scope of the journal, will be sent for outside review.

QHR adheres to a rigorous double-blind reviewing policy in which the identity of both the reviewer and author are always concealed from both parties. Ensure your manuscript does not contain any author identifying information. Please refer to the editorial on blinding found in the Nov 2014 issue: <http://qhr.sagepub.com/content/24/11/1467.full>.

QHR maintains a transparent review system, meaning that all reviews, once received, are then forwarded to the author(s) as well as to ALL reviewers.

Peer review takes an average of 6–8 weeks, depending on reviewer response.

As part of the submission process you may provide the names of 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.

Qualitative Health Research is committed to delivering high quality, fast peer-review for your paper, and as such has partnered with Publons. Publons is a third party service that seeks to track, verify and give credit for peer review. Reviewers for *QHR* can opt in to Publons in order to claim their reviews or have them automatically verified and added to their reviewer profile. Reviewers claiming credit for their review will be associated with the relevant journal, but the article name, reviewer's decision and the content of their review is not published on the site. For more information visit the [Publons](#) website.

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.

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 do not upload or include the acknowledgments during the initial submission and review. If your article is going to be accepted, you will be instructed to "unblind" the manuscript, and then you may add this section to your document.

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

Qualitative Health Research 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 *Qualitative Health Research* 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](#):

- 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 blinded the name and institution of the review committee until such time as your article has been accepted. The Editor will request authors to replace the name and add the approval number once the article review has been completed
- **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 do not submit the patient's actual written informed consent with your article, as this in itself breaches the patient's confidentiality. The Journal requests that you confirm to us, in writing, that you have obtained written informed consent but the written consent itself should be held by the authors/investigators themselves, for example in a patient's hospital record.

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

2.7 Clinical trials

Qualitative Health Research conforms to the [ICMJE requirement](#) that clinical trials are registered in a WHO-approved public trials registry at or before the time of first patient enrolment as a condition of consideration for publication. The trial registry name and URL, and registration number must be included at the end of the abstract.

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](#)

2.9. Research Data

At SAGE we are committed to facilitating openness, transparency and reproducibility of research. Where relevant, The Journal **encourages** authors to share their research data in a suitable public repository subject to ethical considerations and where data is included, to add a data accessibility statement in their manuscript file. Authors should also follow data citation principles. For more information please visit the [SAGE Author](#)

[Gateway](#), which includes information about SAGE's partnership with the data repository Figshare.

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

Qualitative Health Research 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 plagiarized 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](#)

3.4 Open access and author archiving

Qualitative Health Research 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

4.1 Article Format (see previously published articles in QHR for style):

- Title page: Title should be succinct; list all authors and their affiliation; keywords. Please upload the title page separately from the main document.
- Blinding: Do not include any author identifying information in your manuscript, including author's own citations. Do not include acknowledgements until your article is accepted and unblinded.
- Abstract: Unstructured, 150 words. This should be the first page of the main manuscript, and it should be on its own page.
- Length: QHR does not have a word or page count limit. Manuscripts should be as tight as possible, preferably less than 30 pages including references. Longer manuscripts, if exceptional, will be considered.
- Methods: QHR readership is sophisticated; excessive details not required.

- Ethics: Include a statement of IRB approval and participant consent. Present demographics as a group, not listed as individuals. Do not link quotations to particular individuals unless essential (as in case studies) as this threatens anonymity.
- Results: Rich and descriptive; theoretical; linked to practice if possible.
- Discussion: Link your findings with research and theory in literature, including other geographical areas and quantitative research.
- References: APA format. Use pertinent references only. References should be on a separate page.

Additional Editor's Preferences:

- Please do not refer to your manuscript as a "paper;" you are submitting an "article."
- The word "data" is plural.

4.2 Word processing formats

Preferred formats for the text and tables of your manuscript are Word DOC or PDF. The text should be double-spaced throughout with standard 1 inch margins (APA formatting). Text should be standard font (i.e., Times New Roman) 12 point.

4.3 Artwork, figures and other graphics

- Figures: Should clarify text.
- Include figures, charts, and tables created in MS Word in the main text rather than at the end of the document.
- Figures, tables, and other files created outside of Word should be submitted separately. Indicate where table should be inserted within manuscript (i.e. INSERT TABLE 1 HERE).
- Photographs: Should have permission to reprint and faces should be concealed using mosaic patches – unless permission has been given by the individual to use their identity. This permission must be forwarded to QHR's Managing Editor.
 - TIFF, JPED, or common picture formats accepted. The preferred format for graphs and line art is EPS.
 - Resolution: Rasterized based files (i.e. with .tiff or .jpeg extension) require a resolution of at least 300 dpi (dots per inch). Line art should be supplied with a minimum resolution of 800 dpi.
 - Dimension: Check that the artworks supplied match or exceed the dimensions of the journal. Images cannot be scaled up after origination.
- Figures supplied in color will appear in color online regardless of whether or not these illustrations are reproduced in color in the printed version. For specifically requested color reproduction in print, you will receive information regarding the costs from SAGE after receipt of your accepted article.

5. Submitting your manuscript

Qualitative Health Research is hosted on SAGE Track, a web based online submission and peer review system powered by ScholarOne™ Manuscripts. Visit <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/qhr> 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](https://orcid.org/). 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. The affiliation listed in the manuscript should be the institution where the research was conducted. If an author has moved to a new institution since completing the research, the new affiliation can be included in a manuscript note at the end of the paper. 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 made available to the corresponding author via our editing portal SAGE Edit or by email, and corrections should be made directly or notified to us 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 authorizing 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 *Qualitative Health Research* editorial office as follows:

Vanessa Shannon, Managing Editor

Email: vshannonqhr@gmail.com