

West Indian Medical Journal
Instructions for Authors

The West Indian Medical Journal is published quarterly by the University of the West Indies. Its purpose is to provide information of relevance to the Caribbean in a wide range of disciplines in or related to the health sciences, thereby facilitating communication between workers in these fields, and contributing to improved health care. The Journal therefore publishes original scientific evidence, reviews, debates, case reports, brief communications, letters and commentaries. Most of the articles are submitted at the authors' initiative, but some are solicited by the Editor-In-Chief.

All papers submitted to the Journal are reviewed by an Editorial Committee and at least one referee.

Unless expressly stated, the Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for authors' opinions.

Authors' professional and ethical responsibilities

Authorship

Only those persons who contributed directly to the intellectual content of the paper should be cited as authors. They should meet all of the following criteria:

- (a) conceived and planned the work that led to the paper or interpreted the evidence it presents, or both;
- (b) wrote the paper or reviewed successive versions and took part in the revision process;
- (c) approved the final version.

Authors submitting papers for the publication must confirm that all of the authors have met these criteria.

Ethical responsibilities

The Methods section must include a statement confirming review of the study by the appropriate local Ethics Committee or Institutional Review Board, and indicating that material relating to human investigations and animal experiments conforms to standards currently applied in the country where the study is based. Where appropriate, this statement should also indicate the procedure used to ensure adherence to ethical guidelines on informed consent and should affirm that such consent was obtained. Written consent must be obtained from the patient, legal guardian or executor for publication of any details or photographs that may identify an individual. Evidence of such consent must be submitted with the manuscript. The Journal reserves the right not to publish an article on the grounds that ethical or experimental standards have not been reached.

Covering Letters

Each manuscript should be accompanied by a covering letter which includes statements concerning authorship and informed consent (see above); confirms that the contents of the manuscripts have not been published or are not being submitted for publication elsewhere; and by a disclosure of financial interests or other dual commitments that represent potential conflicts of interest for any of the authors. The name, full mailing address, telephone, fax number and email address of the author responsible for correspondence on the paper should also be included. Unless otherwise requested by the corresponding author, his or her telephone, fax number and email address will be published.

Copyright

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Assembling and submitting the manuscript

Manuscript format and style

Manuscripts should be arranged as follows: title page, abstract, text, list of references, tables, figures, figure legends, and acknowledgements. Each component should begin on a separate page and all pages should be numbered sequentially starting with the title page. Authors are urged to seek guidance on grammar, punctuation and scientific writing.

Manuscripts should not exceed 12 typed pages (including abstracts and references) and be double spaced throughout with left and right margins of 2.5cm. The original and three copies of the manuscript must be submitted with a diskette in Microsoft Word. Guidance for the length of articles is as follows: book reviews, 450 words; case reports, 1500 words; editorials (including references), 1000 words; letters, 450 words; reviews (including abstract and references), 2500 words; special articles, 2000 words; viewpoint 2000 words.

Headings should be short (three or four words), positioned flush with the left margin with initial capital letters. First level headings are **boldface**; second level headings, regular type; and third level headings, *italics*.

Use SI units throughout, generic names for all drugs, and limit abbreviations to those that are absolutely necessary. The proprietary name for a drug is included if it is better known than the generic name, to differentiate among drug forms, or if a specific trade preparation was used in a study or involved in an adverse effect. The explanations for the abbreviations must be given when they first appear in the text, but are not necessary for units of measurements or standard specific symbols. The name and location of manufactures of equipment and instruments must be given in parentheses in the text.

Title page

The title page should include

- the main title (and subtitle, if any), which should be as brief as possible while conveying the essential features of the article's contents;
- the authors listed (without their qualifications) in the order in which they will appear in the published article;
- institutional affiliation of each author;
- a short title (to be used on the continuing pages of the published article);
- a brief synopsis (limit: 30 words) for editorials, original articles, reviews and special articles, to be used on the front cover to describe the title.

Abstract

This should not be more than 250 words.

Text

Papers reporting original specific scientific evidence would usually be divided into the following sections: introduction, methods, results, discussion, list of references. All studies that include numerical data and use statistical inference must include, in the **Methods** section, detailed descriptions of methods used for statistical analysis, including the statistical software. It is suggested that the *discussion* include: a brief synopsis of the key findings; consideration of

possible mechanisms and explanations; comparison with relevant findings from other published studies; and limitations of the present study and methods used to minimise or compensate for these limitations. The paper should conclude with a brief summary of the implications of the work.

References should be numbered in the order in which they are first cited in the text, using Arabic numerals in parentheses. In the **list of references** the reference style of the Index Medicus should be used (see examples below), including the abbreviations of journal titles. References to personal communications and to papers in preparation are included in parentheses in the text, and are accompanied by letters of permission from the cited persons. List of all authors when six or fewer; when seven or more, list of only the first six and add et al.

Examples of references follow (for details and additional examples see reference 4):

Journals

1. *Standard article*
Edwards CN, Douglin CP, Prussia PR, Garriques SA, Levett PN. Epidemiology of Helicobacter pylori infection in Barbados. West Indian Med J 1997; 46: 3-7.
2. *Editorials, abstracts, letters*
Alert CV, Fraser HS, Taylor J. Quality of blood pressure monitoring and control in primary care in Barbados [Abstract]. West Indian Med J 1996; 45 (suppl 2): 24. Besdine RW, Rubenstein RZ, Cassel C. Nursing home residents need physicians' services [Editorial]. Ann Intern Med. 1994; 120: 616-8.

Books

1. *Author*
Byrne JH, Schultz SG. An introduction to membrane transport and bioelectricity. 2d ed, New York, NY: Raven Press; 1994
2. *Editors*
Freeman WK, Seward JB, Khanderia BK, Tajik AJ, eds. Transesophageal Echocardiography. New York: Little, Brown and Company; 1994.
3. *Chapter in a book*
McCusker RH, Clemmons DR. The insulin-like growth factor binding proteins: structure and biological functions. In: Schofield PN, ed. The Insulinlike Growth Factors: Structure and Biological Functions. New York: Oxford University Press; 1992: 110-150.

Tables

Double space all tables and number with Arabic numerals in the order which they are cited in the text.

Figures

Figures should be professionally drawn or prepared using a computer and high resolution printer. Submit three glossy prints of each figure or laser quality proofs for black and white figures (7.5x8.75cm).

1. Figures should be identified by writing in pencil on the back of each figure the number, the author's name and orientation (top).

2. Legends to figures should be typed on a separate sheet of paper. Begin each legend with a short title. Explain all abbreviations and symbols used in the figure, even if they are explained in the text.
3. Authors must pay the full cost for reproduction of colour figures and prints.

Acknowledgements

Financial support information, including the name of the granting agency and grant number (if any), persons who have provided technical support and those who have contributed to the scientific content, should be included in this section.

Proofs

Proofs will be sent to the local authors for correction. If reprints are required, they must be requested in writing on receipt of the letter of acceptance at which time an appropriate cost of the reprints will be furnished. No reprints will be provided when they are requested after this.

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