

ESSENTIAL MEDICINES MONITOR

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

The Essential Medicines Monitor is willing to consider for publication short articles (usually a maximum of 1300 words) on any subject related to the development and implementation of national pharmaceutical policies, essential medicines programmes, research, training and other activities related to the appropriate use of medicines. In general we are interested in material which meets most of the following criteria:

- is concise, well structured and well written;
- is of potential interest to an **international** readership;
- is newsworthy;
- describes an innovative activity/approach and explains the context, problem targeted, reasons for success/failure, and evaluation process;
- is not overly technical from a pharmaceutical or therapeutic perspective (our readership is very broad and covers a very wide range of disciplines).

If you decide to prepare an article for submission to the Monitor please read the following guidelines carefully before you start to write your article. The guidelines are intended to:

- give guidance to you as authors and to make your job easier;
- ensure that what you write is written in such a way that it will be easy for the target audience to read and appropriate to their needs;
- help those involved in putting the journal together and editing it by ensuring some consistency in approach and style.

A few specific points on language and style....

The Monitor aims to be readable, attractive, accessible and practical. People reading it should be able to understand it easily. Articles are intended to share ideas and approaches. They should enthuse people, encourage them and help them to get organized. At the same time they should be realistic and should make them aware of potential constraints and pitfalls.

Keep your language simple

The Monitor is read all over the world and many readers will not be native speakers of the language of publication. Indeed many of the authors are not. For this reason please make the text as straightforward as possible. Sentences should be short and simply structured. In general, sentences should be no longer than 20 words. Wherever possible try to avoid unnecessarily difficult language or technical jargon.

Keep your language direct

Use active sentences and simple tenses where possible.

Example - Don't say: The readership of the bulletin consists of numerous doctors and nurses. Instead say: Many doctors and nurses read the bulletin.

Keep your language positive

Try to avoid unnecessary use of negatives. Positive sentences are often easier to understand.

Also try to use positive rather than negative examples. The tone should be encouraging not discouraging.

Structure your article clearly

Readers should be able to follow the thread of the argument and the timeframe.

Use the first paragraph to tell the reader what the article is about.

Use section headings as if they were “road signs” to tell the reader what each section is about.

Summarize really important points in boxes

Consider also having a box of take-home or key messages, if relevant.

Use bullets or checklists, where helpful.

Use examples and case studies

Well chosen examples and case studies help to illustrate and highlight experience gained.

Data

Wherever possible present data in graphic form. An illustrative figure is much easier for the reader to grasp than text which is dense with numbers and percentages.

Abbreviations

Limit the use of abbreviations. The first time you use one you should spell it out in full.

For example: International Network for Rational Use of Drugs (INRUD).

Gender neutral language

Avoid gender specific words which are used to mean both men and women.

For example use: human resources; avoid: manpower. Avoid masculine personal pronouns (he/his) when your text refers to both men and women. Replace by his/her or alternate use of his and her. Often it is easy just to turn the subject of the sentence into plural (patients instead of patient) enabling use of a gender neutral "their" as a personal pronoun.

Copyright

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References

Keep references to a minimum. Many of our readers will not have easy access to referenced material or it will appear in a language that they may not be able to read. Where you do need to use references please check them and make sure that they are complete. Feel free to add resource materials if these are relatively easily available and either free of charge or not too costly.

Follow-up

State clearly where follow up information can be obtained. If your article is backed by a publication state whether this is available, from whom, and at what price (including any rebate for developing countries) and postage.

How to submit your draft

Please email your draft article to: Dr Richard Laing, Email: laingr@who.int and to Kathleen Hurst: hurstk@who.int)

Tel.: +41 22 791 4533 (if no reply contact Kath Hurst + 41 22 791 4826)

Keep formatting as simple as possible as most codes will have to be taken out during layout.

Acceptance/refusal of article

We will send you an acceptance or refusal of the article as soon as possible but be prepared for some delay. We often request preliminary comments on an article by other staff members who may not be able to give this review first priority or may be away on mission.

Please note that it is unusual for an article to be accepted without a request for editorial amendments and clarifications. This does not mean general language editing, which is done by the Monitor team. Areas where clarifications are frequently requested include:

- unclear sequence of events
- justification for statements, particularly impact of activities (references or data)
- tabulated data that doesn't match text
- tabulated data without dates and/or with unclear headings

Clearance of edited text

We will send the full edited text of articles longer than 1000 words to authors for final approval. We reserve the right to edit/condense shorter articles/letters to the editor without further reference to authors.

We may request government or other official clearance of articles which describe government/MOH programmes and activities, e.g. national medicine policy development. This clearance is the responsibility of authors and we will notify you at an early stage if it is needed.