

Research Ethics Review

Scope of the journal and editorial policy

Research Ethics Review (RER) is the official journal of The Association of Research Ethics Committees. The journal is designed for all readers interested in research ethics and the procedures and process of ethical review whether aligned to the NHS or within the university or independent sector. RER will publish original papers and review articles as well as informative case studies. The quality of submitted articles will be evaluated independently by double-blind peer-review.

The editors encourage the submission of:

- *Original papers* addressing issues which relate either to the process of ethical review in research or to the procedures that underpin ethics committee activity (up to 3000 words, but longer articles are not excluded).
- *Case studies* that provide examples of ethical review highlighting the practicalities and issues that engender committee discussion and debate (1500 words).
- *Short reports* about specific initiatives to improve practice (500–600 words).
- *Review articles* that address key issues in research ethics or which focus on under-researched topics (3000 words) are also of interest.

A correspondence column (letters should normally consist of up to 500–600 words) will allow continuing discussion of issues raised and enhance the usefulness of the journal in contributing to the ongoing education and training of research ethics committee members.

RER will support and present the activities of The Association of Research Ethics Committees (AREC) and this will be done through brief reports of AREC activities.

The instructions below give some information about how contributions should be presented. If any of these need clarification or amplification please contact the editors.

Submission of papers for publication and peer review

The manuscript. Papers should be sent electronically as a word document to the editor (see box at end of these notes). If papers are sent by post, submission needs to take the form of a diskette comprising a word document and an identical printed copy. An acknowledgement of receipt will be sent to the corresponding author.

Copyright and good practice. Papers are assumed to be submitted exclusively to the journal unless otherwise stated and, on acceptance, they become the copyright of The Association of Research Ethics Committees. Papers based on primary research must comply with appropriate research governance and ethical approval.

Authorship. In line with the uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to bio-medical journals authorship credit should be based only on substantial contribution to the following: Conception and design, or data acquisition, or analysis and interpretation of data, and Drafting the paper or revising it critically for important intellectual content, and Final approval of the submitted manuscript. All three of these conditions must be met. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content.

Review process. All research papers submitted for publication will be subject to peer review. The turnaround time for papers will be up to six to eight weeks from submission to decision and up to 12 weeks from decision to publication, with a *fast-track process also available*. This will be an audited process. The editor reserves the right to make minor adjustments and, if necessary, to shorten the article without changing the meaning.

Permission to reproduce previously published material must be obtained in writing from the copyright holder and the original source should be acknowledged in the manuscript.

Presentation of contributions

General. Topics within the remit of the journal should be presented clearly and concisely and must be written in a gender-free, non-discriminatory style.

The manuscript layout must be presented in the following order: Title page must contain, Abstract (or summary for case reports) max 300 words, Text, Acknowledgments, Competing interests etc, References, Tables, Figures, and Appendices.

The title page must contain the following information. The title should be clearly listed in upper and lower-case characters without unnecessary capital letters. Give name, postal address, e-mail, telephone and fax numbers of the corresponding author. The full names, institutions, city, and country of all co-authors should be listed.

Headings and subheadings. These should be sufficient but not excessive. Principal headings should range left above following text and in bold type (**Methods**) and subheadings range left above text in italic (*Statistics*). Third-order headings should be typed in italic at the beginning of the relevant paragraph (examples above in the text of these guidelines). Third-order headings may follow principal headings with or without interposition of subheadings.

Useful points of style

Bullet points and abbreviations. Begin items with a capital letter and follow normal syntax and sentence construction. When first using abbreviations in the text, the term the author wishes to abbreviate should be spelt out in full with its abbreviation in brackets. Thereafter the abbreviation can and should be used. Abbreviations should normally be in capital letters and unpunctuated.

Spelling should be consistent and follow either, but not both, standard UK and American dictionaries. We use the -ize form rather than -ise for verbs (-yse remains -yse).

Numbers are spelt out up to and including ten and should be typed as follows: 1001, 10 001, 123 456 001. However SI units are always numbers eg 7 g not seven g.

Punctuation. Avoid capital (upper case) letters at all times except for proper names, ie government, university but Durham University. Avoid punctuation of abbreviations and acronyms, ie and eg, not i.e. and e.g., USA not U.S.A. Do not use italics for common Latin or other foreign words, eg in vitro not *in vitro*.

It is of further assistance if authors double check comma use especially hanging parentheses. Do not underline in text and do not use hard carriage returns at end of lines except at end of paragraphs.

References

Cite in numerical order in text inside square brackets, eg [1, 17–24, 77]. List references by number at end of text (more than three authors may be cited as Jones, Howe, Lee et al). Unpublished and personal references appear only in text.

For journals use:

- 1 Wagner DR, Heyward DH. Measures of body composition in blacks and whites: a comparative review. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2000; 71: 1392–1402.

For books:

- 2 Forbes GB. *Human body composition*. New York: Springer Verlag, 1987.

Book chapter:

3 Willet WC. Use of biomarkers in nutrition. In Kok FJ, Veer PV, eds. Biomarkers of dietary exposure. London: Smith-Gordon, 1991: 9–14.

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Web-based references should contain the year or full date of access.

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Tables should be set out on separate pages, with their legend above, and numbered in sequence in which they appear (Table 1, 2 etc). Do not duplicate text. Place supporting information in title. Define units in footnotes using ^{a,b,c}, Use * ** for probability.

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Make sure that large Figures will be satisfactory when reduced to print. Examine especially lettering and scales for size. If supplied electronically graphics should be saved as high resolution (at least 300 dpi) files saved as .eps or .tif format. Do not submit colour figures. List Figure titles on a separate sheet. Indicate abbreviations and units. Acknowledge sources of published figures. Permission to reproduce the work of others is the author's responsibility. Make sure lettering is both correct and consistent with text.

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Proofs will be sent as PDF (Adobe Acrobat®) to the author submitting the paper and must be returned promptly. This will allow for correction of essential and typographical errors. Major changes will not be entertained and the journal may publish the uncorrected paper if the author does not comply.

There are no page charges. Free offprints are not supplied. An order-form (minimum 50 copies) and price list will be supplied with proofs

Correspondence and enquiries

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