

British Journal of Biomedical Science: statement of editorial policy and full instructions to authors

Editorial policy

The *British Journal of Biomedical Science (BJBS)* is published quarterly for the Institute of Biomedical Science and the Academy of Medical Laboratory Science by Step Publishing. Papers written in English on any aspect of biomedical science will be considered for publication provided they are original and of scientific merit. Normally, evaluations of reagents and equipment will be considered only if the result of a study commissioned by a government health department or agency or concerned with major new developments.

Items submitted for possible publication are subjected to peer review, normally by up to three independent reviewers expert in the subject matter of the submission.

The Editor reserves the right to edit, modify or shorten manuscripts accepted for publication to ensure conformity with the journal's house style and standards of presentation and to avoid ambiguity, unnecessary verbosity or repetition. Alterations of this nature will not affect the substance of the paper and normally will be seen by the author(s) only at the proof stage.

The date of acceptance of each paper will be published. In the event of a submission being rejected, normally the reasons for rejection are not given. However, unless it has been stated that a submission is not appropriate for the journal, authors may request further information from the Editor who, at his discretion, may pass on all or any of the criticisms that have been made of the paper. The Editor's decision on all material submitted for publication is final.

Scope

Contributions will be considered on any aspect of biomedical science. Authors must comply with the 'Instructions to authors', a condensed version of which is published in each issue of the journal.

Types of paper

The following categories of article are published.

Original articles

These are generally reports of original research or of major new developments. Articles should normally be of 2500 to 5000 words and may include a reasonable number of illustrations. The paper should be divided into sections with the following subheadings.

Abstract: Not more than 250 words outlining the purpose of the study and the conclusions. As it may be published separately by abstracting services, the Abstract must be complete and understandable without reference to the text.

Introduction: Stating the reason(s) for the investigation and giving any (brief) historical background.

Materials and methods: Giving sufficient details to enable others to repeat the work.

Results: Selective rather than comprehensive, and in the form of text, tables, graphs or histograms. However, the same data must not be presented in more than one form.

Discussion: A critical review of the results, highlighting any discrepancies and assessing the value of the investigation.

References: Sufficient to substantiate any claims or statements made in the text.

Review articles

These are usually commissioned by the Editor or Associate Editors.

A review article is an up-to-date, comprehensive – and essentially critical – exposition of existing knowledge in a defined subject area. It is preceded by an Abstract of not more than 250 words, is divided into sections with subheadings appropriate to the subject matter, and is supported by extensive references. There are no particular constraints on length but authors contemplating a paper of more than 4500 words (excluding references) should consult the Editor.

Biomedical updates

These are normally commissioned by the Editor and consist of a combined review of a number of recent publications or presentations on related topics. Each *Biomedical Update* briefly reviews each of the cited papers in turn, the citation references of which are given in full, and may include references from within the cited paper or related to it. The author also comments on the papers cited in the context of one another. There is no overall length stipulated for a *Biomedical Update*, although this is normally discussed with the Editor prior to submission.

Biomedical comment

Articles in this category are concise accounts of specific, topical aspects of biomedical science. They are approximately 1500 words in length, cite only 'core' references and contain a readily identifiable element of 'comment' on the current position of the subject. Intending authors should consult relevant issues of *BJBS* to acquaint themselves with the general style used.

Biomedical essays

These are usually commissioned by the Editor from individuals who have submitted structured reading essays as part of the continuing professional development (CPD) programmes of the Institute of Biomedical Science or the Academy of Medical Laboratory Science.

Biomedical Science in Brief

Articles in this category may briefly report new or important observations which either do not merit a fuller report or which will be followed by one later. *Biomedical Science in Brief* submissions should not include an Abstract or Key Words, nor be divided into sections under subheadings, other than that at the beginning of the References section.

Thesis abstracts

The Institute of Biomedical Science retains the right to publish all or any part of any thesis submitted in support of an application for admission to its Fellowship. The Editor of the *British Journal of Biomedical Science* routinely prepares edited or shortened versions of the Abstract of each successful thesis for publication.

Letters to the Editor

Letters for publication may offer comment, criticism or supplementary information relating to any item already published in the journal. Criticism must always be objective and supported by experimental or other evidence. Personal criticism of an author or of his or her work is not allowed.

All letters intended for publication are subject to the usual process of peer review and any letter which is accepted for publication and which offers comment upon any item which has been published in the journal will be shown to the author of the original item, who will be invited to offer a reply for publication in the same issue.

Letters should follow the style of presentation of those in the current issue of the journal and may include reference citations but not usually tables or illustrations.

Book reviews

Reviews of new books, or new editions, are commissioned by or on behalf of the Editor. Under no circumstances will an unsolicited review be considered for publication. Separate guidance for the preparation of book reviews is supplied to those requested to undertake this task.

Instructions to Authors

Manuscripts (three copies) plus an electronic version (PC compatible) on floppy disk or CD sent by first-class or air mail should be addressed to the Editor, *British Journal of Biomedical Science*, IBMS, 12 Coldbath Square, London EC1R 5HL, England, or, if from the Republic of Ireland, c/o The Academy of Medical Laboratory Science, 31 Old Kilmainham, Dublin 8.

The submission should include a letter stating the position and qualifications of all authors, signed by each of them, and stating (i) that the work is original and is not concurrently under consideration for publication elsewhere without the permission of the Institute of Biomedical Science and Step Publishing, and (ii) in the case of multi-author papers that all the authors have contributed directly to the planning, execution or analysis of the work reported or to the writing of the paper.

Copy

Papers should conform to the uniform Vancouver style of presentation (*JAMA* 1993; **269**: 2282-6) and should be typed, in double spacing throughout (including figure and table legends and literature references), on one side of A4 paper.

The manuscript must be produced on a laser or letter-quality printer.

A separate title page should indicate the title of the work, followed on a separate line by the initials and surname(s) of the author(s) in upper case type, and the address of the institution where the work was carried out, in lower case type; all aligned to the left.

All pages must be numbered consecutively and the position of all illustrations and tables should be indicated in the text; all tables and all legends for illustrations should be typed on separate pages placed at the end of the manuscript. Immediately following the Abstract, authors should provide up to four Key Words, which must be taken from the current edition of Medical Subject Headings of *Index Medicus*.

To aid reviewing and the editorial process, three printed copies and an electronic copy (produced in Microsoft Word) saved on a floppy disk or CD must be submitted.

Writing

Authors should follow accepted English usage and be consistent in the use of either first or third person. The past tense of verbs should be used when narrating the procedures, observations, etc. of the work being reported and the present tense for statements of conclusions, generally accepted facts, and for discussion of results. Care should be taken with plural words (e.g., 'the data are...').

Foreign language words (e.g., *in vivo* and *in vitro*), together with the Latin names of microorganisms etc., must be underlined to indicate that they will be printed in italic script.

The standard used for spelling in the *British Journal of Biomedical Science* is that of *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

Titles and by-lines

Titles should be kept short – preferably not more than 12, and in any case not more than 24 words – and in the case of reports of original research should not be written either in the form of a definitive statement of the perceived results or of a question; nor should they be effectively a short abstract of the paper. The first six words of a title should include the significant terms that would be used to retrieve the article from the indexing and abstracting services, with the most important words coming first. For example, a title such as 'Development of a new method to demonstrate Klinefelter's syndrome in the newborn by karyotyping' would not be acceptable; this should be written as (e.g.) 'Karyotyping for Klinefelter's syndrome in newborn infants: a new method'. The Editor reserves the right to amend titles that do not conform to these requirements or which appear to be misleading, vague or ambiguous.

Not more than six authors should normally be listed in the by-line, and only those individuals who have played a positive part in the research should be included as authors. Technical assistance, statistical collaboration, data collection, secretarial support or support from a departmental head or chairman or dean does not warrant co-authorship unless the activity has also contributed creatively to the project. The names of those who have contributed with advice, support, provision of materials for investigation, etc. should be included in the acknowledgements at the end of the paper. If special circumstances appear to warrant the inclusion of more than six named authors these will be considered by the Editor if a stated case for this, signed by all the potential named authors, is included with the letter of submission.

References

These must be typed in double-spacing, separately from the main body of the manuscript. Reference to them in the text should be by consecutive numbers typed as superscripts (i.e., raised half a space) running through the whole paper. Reference citation numbers must not be enclosed in brackets nor printed in half-height characters. Literature references (which should be restricted to those strictly necessary to the point being made) should follow the style adopted by the US National Library of Medicine and used in *Index Medicus*. Authors' names must not be typed in capital letters and references that include a list of more than six authors' names should be limited to the first three names, followed by *et al.* For example, Jones AB, Smith CD, Brown EF *et al.* Measurement of serum enzymes: a review of laboratory methods. *J Med Prog* 2003; **19**: 113-8. Examples of the style to be used are:

In text: It has been shown¹ that the work of Jones and Smith² with the Autosquirt (T. Shandy Ltd, South Ham, Surrey SU1 2UK, England, UK) was based upon faulty sample preparation.³

In references:

- 1 Falstaff J. Measurement of serum enzymes: an update. *J Med Prog* 2004; **20**: 124-9.
- 2 Jones AB, Smith CD. *Liquid measurement* Vol. 1, 4th edn. London: Interprint, 2002: 259-60.
- 3 Regina V. Sample collection and preparation. In: Disraeli B, Maughan WS, eds. *Laboratory procedures*. London: Gladstone, 2001: 291-311.

References cited only, or at their first mention, in tables or in legends to figures should be numbered in sequence according to the first mention of that table or figure in the text.

Papers accepted but not yet published should be included in the references followed by '(in press)'. Those in preparation (including any submitted for publication), and unpublished observations, should be referred to as such in the text only.

Authors are responsible for checking the accuracy of all references, and that all references in the text agree with those in the list of references and notes.

Tables and illustrations

Data must not be presented in both tabular and graphic form, and should not duplicate information given in the text. Three sets of tables and illustrations should be submitted: they should be separate from the text, and be numbered in two separate sequences in the order in which they are mentioned in the text. Any tables or illustrations previously published should be accompanied by the written consent of the copyright holder to republication, an acknowledgement included in the caption, and the full reference included in the list.

Tables should each be typed in double-spacing on a separate sheet and include a title. Each column of the table should have a short heading, and footnotes should be used for explanatory matter (e.g., abbreviations). Vertical and horizontal rules should not be used to separate items within the table.

Illustrations (Figures) must be provided in camera-ready

form, with redundant areas trimmed; the figure number, author's name and the top/bottom should be marked on the back. Line drawings should be professionally drawn and labelled (freehand lettering is not acceptable); they may be submitted as photographic prints or high-quality laser printouts.

All other illustrations should be black and white photographic prints. Photomicrographs must either have internal scale markers or alternatively their legends must include the degree of magnification. Any lettering/numbering on illustrations should be sufficiently large to ensure legibility after reduction for publication. All figures should be included as separate high-resolution (300 dpi) jpeg files on floppy disk or CD, and not embedded in the Microsoft Word document. The legends for illustrations should identify the subject matter and be typed on a separate sheet; staining techniques and the magnification of micrographs should be stated, and arrows/abbreviations explained.

Nomenclature

Bacterial nomenclature should conform to the Approved Lists of Bacterial Names in *J System Bacteriol* 1980; **30**: 255-420. In the title, abstract, key words and first mention in the text, each microorganism should be given its full binomial Latin name, underlined. Subsequently, the genus should be abbreviated, but the species name should be given in full. Trivial names should be typed in lower case throughout (e.g., staphylococci, etc).

Chemical nomenclature and physical units: Where appropriate, authors should adhere to the system formulated by the IUPAC-IUB Commission on Biochemical Nomenclature (see *Biochem J* 1972; **126**: 1-91). It is editorial policy to use SI (*Système Internationale*) symbols for physical units (see Baron DN, ed. *Units, symbols, and abbreviations: a guide for medical and scientific editors and authors*, 5th edn. London: Royal Society of Medicine Press, 1994). The units mL is used rather than cm³, and the symbol used for litre is an uppercase L. The abbreviation for molar is mol/L rather than M.

Histopathology: Note that 'formalin' denotes a 40% aqueous solution of the gas formaldehyde. In saline solution, reference should be made to 'formalin saline', and not the short forms 'formal' or 'formol' saline.

Isotopically labelled compounds: For simple molecules, labelling is indicated in the chemical formula (e.g., ¹²⁵I). For specific chemicals the symbol for the isotope is placed in square brackets directly preceding the name of the labeled material (e.g., [¹⁴C] urea). Brackets are not employed when the isotopic symbol is attached to a word that is not a specific chemical name (e.g., ¹³¹I-labelled protein).

Blood group nomenclature should follow the conventions and style given in Daniels G. *Human blood groups*. 2nd edn. London: Blackwell Science, 2002: 1-6.

Human leucocyte differentiation antigens. The nomenclature used should be that currently recommended by the Committee of the IUIS-WHO Nomenclature Sub-Committee (see Bernard A *et al.* *Bull World Health Organ* 1984; **62**: 809-11, or Schlossman SF *et al.* CD antigens 1993. *Immunol Today* 1994; **15**: 98-9).

Statistics

When dealing with statistical elements of their paper authors should follow the Guidelines for Statistical Reporting in Articles for Medical Journals (Blair JC, Mosteller F. *Ann Intern Med* 1988; **108**: 266-73) and preferably should have their calculations checked and confirmed by an independent statistician prior to submission

Proof, offprints and assignment of copyright

Authors are provided with page proofs electronically as pdf files (by email) for correction prior to publication. Corrections of typographical errors should be marked clearly on a printed copy of the pdf proof, which should then be returned by post to the Editor without delay. 'In press' references for which page numbers have become available should be inserted at this stage. Additions, deletions, alterations or amendments to the paper must not be made at the proof stage, which is purely for the correction of essential typographical errors only.

A form for ordering offprints is supplied with the pdf proof and in each case this should be completed and returned, with the corrected proof, to the Editor. Authors submitting a manuscript do so on the understanding that if it is accepted for publication exclusive copyright in the paper shall be assigned to the Institute of Biomedical Science. This assignment is in order to comply with copyright practice and the Institute will not put any limitation on the personal freedom of authors to use material contained in their papers in any other works which they may wish to publish. In consideration for the assignment of copyright, the Institute will supply 50 offprints of each paper. Further offprints may be ordered at extra cost.

General notes

Submission of any item for possible publication implies that the material has not been published, and is not under simultaneous consideration, elsewhere. Nevertheless, a statement to this effect – signed by all the named authors of the piece – must be included with the covering letter. Authors must also disclose in their covering letter any financial or other interest in any materials or facilities used or referred to

in their text. The *British Journal of Biomedical Science* conforms to the policy on multiple publication of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (*Med Lab Sci* 1984; **41**:97). Briefly, under certain conditions parallel dual language publication may be acceptable, but repetitive dual publication directed towards substantially identical groups of readers is not. The *British Journal of Biomedical Science* is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

All material submitted must be accompanied by a typewritten covering letter stating clearly that the material is being offered for publication in the *British Journal of Biomedical Science*, and indicating a name and full postal address for correspondence.

The covering letter must also provide details of any other work which has been submitted, published or presented elsewhere, or is in preparation, and which is based on the same data set as the accompanying submission – **whether or not in the same language and/or directed at the same, or an essentially similar, audience.**

All authors of a manuscript are responsible for the entire contents of their manuscript and all named authors of a multi-author paper must have participated directly in the planning, execution or analysis of the work reported or in writing the paper, and a statement to this effect – signed by all the authors and specifying the contribution of each author – must be included with the covering letter. **Authors should keep a copy of everything submitted.**

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If any patients or live animals have been used in any experiments reported in a paper a written statement confirming that relevant rules and procedures have been followed must be obtained by the author(s) from the appropriate ethical committee or Home Office licence holder, and attached to the covering letter which accompanies the submission