

# Bundesgesundheitsblatt

Dear Authors,

In order to ensure a seamless publication process, we would ask you to draft your article according to the following guidelines. In addition, please check that your article fulfils all formal requirements set out by the Bundesgesundheitsblatt using the accompanying Author Checklist prior to submitting your manuscript.

## General Information

The journal „Bundesgesundheitsblatt – Gesundheitsforschung – Gesundheitsschutz“ is published monthly by the federal authorities Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM), Paul Ehrlich Institute (PEI), Robert Koch Institute (RKI), and the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA). The editorial office is located at the RKI in Berlin.

An editorial board is responsible for the conceptual design. Authors are invited to contribute articles to the thematic issues. There is also the possibility to submit unsolicited manuscripts. Original articles, systematic and narrative reviews, reports and discussion articles in German will be published on all issues and aspects relevant to the public health service and the public health sciences.

All submitted articles must not have been previously published or offered for publication simultaneously in other journals. The decision on the acceptance of a manuscript – even for invited contributions – will be made only after peer review by independent experts. As a rule, the manuscript is submitted to two experts in a single-blind review process. The journal may use plagiarism detection software.



## Manuscript submission

Invited manuscripts should be sent by email to the editorial assistant Ulrike Stahr: [StahrU@rki.de](mailto:StahrU@rki.de).

Unsolicited manuscripts should be sent by email directly to the editor Sophia Seidel: [SeidelS@rki.de](mailto:SeidelS@rki.de).

## Correspondence

For the editorial office, the first author is normally considered the corresponding author. The editors contact this person in all matters relating to an article. The corresponding author is authorized to make corrections and is responsible for coordination with the co-authors.

## Structure and organization of articles

### General structure

Essentially, articles are organized as follows:

- Article type (original article, systematic review, narrative review, discussion article or report; for details see following paragraphs)
- Short, meaningful and interesting article title in English (with subtitle, if applicable)
- First and last names of all authors (without their academic titles; additional information available on the checklist on the last page)
- Institution or clinic details of all authors, meaning institution, department, town, (state), country
- Full address (academic title, postal address, telephone, e-mail) of the corresponding author
- Abstract
- 5 keywords
- German title, abstract and keywords
- Number of characters of the manuscript including spaces (without abstracts, reference list and tables).
- Introduction ("Background"), at the end of which the aim or the question of the article is stated and, if applicable, the structure of the article content is outlined
- Main text
- Conclusion
- Declaration of Compliance with Ethics Guidelines and Conflict of Interest (for more information see the paragraph "Ethics")
- Reference list
- Tables, figures, and info boxes

## Further structure depending on article type

The Bundesgesundheitsblatt differentiates between 5 article types, each of which is subject to additional requirements for the structure:

**Original article.** The "original article" is a form of scientific publication. New own research results are presented and discussed. The results must not have been published in other scholarly articles, including those in different languages, or submitted to other journals!

Original articles should be divided into 4 sections: Introduction (Background), Methods, Results and Discussion, if necessary with subheadings up to hierarchy level 3. The introductory section "Background" should introduce the research question and briefly state the objectives of the study at the end. In the methods section, the scientific basis of the investigation must be presented in a reproducible manner. In the results section, the new findings obtained in the study must be presented clearly, comprehensibly and without repetitions. In the discussion, the main results must be commented on, related to other research work and critically evaluated. The discussion should include a conclusion at the end. The structure of the introduction (background), methods, results and discussion can also be found in the abstract.

**Systematic review.** The "systematic review" is a form of scientific publication. It summarizes the current state of research on a specific topic based on existing literature. The literature is systematically selected according to defined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Systematic reviews are structured like "original articles" (see above).

**Narrative (selective) review.** The "narrative review" is a form of scientific publication. It summarizes the current state of research on a specific topic based on existing literature. The literature is not usually searched systematically, but in a manner deemed sufficient for the research question. In narrative reviews, the main text that follows the introduction (background) is logically structured according to the topic. The headings are freely phrased and can be arranged in up to 3 levels of hierarchy. The article ends with a short conclusion. The abstract is usually not structured. It summarizes the most important contents of the article.

**Discussion.** The discussion article looks at a topic from a certain point of view or evaluates different points of view. An opinion is represented. The literature does not need to be systematically selected.

Discussion articles are structured similarly to "narrative reviews" (see above).

**Report.** Various descriptive article types are summarized under the article type "report": Project descriptions (possibly including a brief evaluation); presentations from institutions, guidelines, concepts, curricula, online tools (or sim-

ilar); conference reports. A report describes a fact or an action without valuation. It provides detailed and descriptive information.

Reports are structured similarly to "narrative reviews" (see above).

## Guidelines for the preparation of scientific articles

There are several guidelines for the preparation of scientific articles that can be applied. Examples of such standards are:

- [www.strobe-statement.org](http://www.strobe-statement.org) (observational studies)
- [www.prisma-statement.org](http://www.prisma-statement.org) (systematic overviews and meta-analysis)
- [www.consort-statement.org](http://www.consort-statement.org) (randomized studies)
- STARD statement (diagnostic studies)
- „Good epidemiological practice“ (conducting and publishing epidemiological studies)
- „Good practice secondary data analysis“ (analysis and publication of secondary data)

## Requirements for the text

**Text length.** The manuscript (excluding abstracts, reference list and tables) must not exceed *28,000 characters including spaces*. The length of the abstract must be limited to *1,800 characters, including spaces*.

**Text formatting.** Manuscripts should be submitted in MS Word.

The following additional requirements apply:

- The pages are to be numbered using the "Insert page numbers" function.
- The lines are to be numbered consecutively using the layout function "Line numbers".
- A basic font (e.g. Calibri 11 pt) should be used for the entire text.
- Words and parts of sentences highlighted in the running text should be italicized.
- Formulas should be created with the Equation Editor or with MathType.

**Language/Spelling.** All texts must be submitted in German. A contribution in English is only possible in exceptional cases.

It is the responsibility of the authors to ensure that the text reads pleasantly and easily, i.e. that it is formulated in an objective, comprehensible and linguistically and stylistically correct manner. Lengthy remarks and commentaries, sentence constructions that are difficult to understand and unclear formulations should be avoided. Technical terms and abbreviations must be explained the first time they are mentioned in the text.

**Display of numbers.** Numbers are written in numerals within the text, e.g. if the number has a high information

value in statistics, or in technical or scientific texts (e.g. "12 respondents from 3 institutes"). In general texts, one- and two-syllable numbers are written out. Millions are abbreviated with mil., billions with bil.

Numbers above 1,000 should be separated by commas. Decimals are separated from whole numbers by a point (e.g. 10.5 %), a 0 before the point is not written out ( $p < .001$ ).

**Gender-neutral writing.** The journal's publishing institutes recommend a gender-neutral style of writing. Different spellings are possible. Consistent implementation in the text and good readability should be ensured.

**Using the names of drugs and active ingredients.** Please always use the generic names of active ingredients and not their trade names. Within a group of active ingredients, make sure there is a balance in the use of the individual names of active ingredients. If your article makes reference to medicinal agents or drug products, we would ask you to check and update the compositions, dosages, and spelling.

**Footnotes.** For additional information that disrupts the flow of the text, numbered footnotes can be inserted consecutively. This may include literature citations - however, the footnotes should not consist solely of a reference to literature. Bibliographic references should always be included in the reference list. The number and length of footnotes should be limited.

## Ethics

In the manuscript, various statements on ethics must be inserted under the heading "Compliance with ethical guidelines" at the end of the actual article. These concern conflicts of interest, the Declaration of Helsinki, patients' rights and animal welfare regulations.

**Conflict of interest.** A conflict of interest exists whenever an author has a financial or personal relationship with a third party whose interests could be positively or negatively influenced by the article's contents:

- Financial relationships with companies whose products are directly or indirectly involved in the article. Example: A pharmaceutical company making or distributing a drug mentioned in the article or making or distributing a competitive product,
- Research grants from funding institutions (specify the funding body and grant number) and/or research support (including salaries, equipment, materials, reimbursement for participation in symposia, and other expenses) from organizations that may financially gain or lose through the publication of this manuscript.
- Contracts of employment
- Consultancies
- Shareholdings
- Speaker's fees
- Reimbursements of travel expenses
- Study sponsorships or other types of third party funding

- Links to health insurance funds, politicians or other interest groups
- Personal conflicts of interest exist, for example, if the author has a close relationship with someone whose economic or non-material interests are affected by the article (partnership, family relations etc.)

All relevant financial or personal relationships must be disclosed, even if there is no influence from the authors' point of view. The declaration refers to the present and the past five years. The information on the conflict of interest must already be available at the time of manuscript submission and will be published with the article.

The declaration of conflicts of interest is a serious publication practice according to the "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals" of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and serves scientific transparency. Of course, conflicts of interest alone do not generally contradict the scientific statements of an article. Springer journals are geared to the ICMJE guidelines. Below are a few examples illustrating the implementation of conflicts of interest:

*Conflict of interest: J. Q. Public, A. Smith and E. Example state that there are no conflicts of interest.*

*Conflict of interest: J. Q. Public is a consultant for the company X / receives a consultancy fee from the company Y. Until recently, A. Smith was in an employment relationship with the company Z. E. Example states that there are no conflicts of interest.*

**Declaration of Helsinki.** In the case of studies on humans, samples derived from humans, and research with personal data, the Declaration of Helsinki in its current version and the opinion issued by the regional or institutional ethical committee must be observed. The corresponding statement is usually integrated into the further information on the protection of patients' rights (see first example below). You should state how these general rules have been obeyed in the *Methods part* of the manuscript.

**Patients' rights and animal protection statements.** Medical research is subject to ethical standards, which promote the respect of all humans and protect their health and rights. Authors should take into consideration the ethical, legal and regulatory norms and standards for research on humans and animals in their respective countries as well as the respective international norms and standards. Statements concerning having received approval by the appropriate ethics commission (incl. verification number) and having obtained informed consent from the participating patients should already be made at the time of submission of your manuscript. In the case of use of laboratory animals, please confirm that all national guidelines for the care and use of laboratory animals have been complied with and approval has been obtained from the responsible authorities. The methods used in the study to comply with the norms

and standards are described in the methods section of the manuscript.

Examples:

*All described studies in humans were performed with the approval of the responsible ethics committee (name, verification number), in accordance with national law and in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki of 1975 (in the current, revised version). Informed consent has been obtained from all patients involved.*

*Written informed consent has been obtained from all patients who are identifiable by image or other means within the manuscript.*

*All national guidelines for the care and use of laboratory animals have been followed, and the necessary consents from the relevant authorities have been obtained.*

*No studies on humans or animals were performed by the authors for this article. For the studies listed, the ethical guidelines given in each case apply.*

**Use of artificial intelligence (AI).** Large language models (LLMs), such as those employed by ChatGPT, currently do not meet our criteria for authorship. Specifically, the attribution of authorship entails a responsibility for the work that cannot effectively be applied to LLMs. The use of an LLM should be appropriately documented in the methods section or in a suitable alternative section of the manuscript.

## References

The limit of 50 references per article should not be exceeded. Exceptions for very large review articles must be discussed with the editorial office. References should be cited within the text using consecutive numbering (Arabic numerals). The citation number appears in the text in square brackets, hence numbering begins with [1].

Personal communications and unpublished works should only be mentioned in the text.

When using the literature management program End-Note, the literature style is available for download on the journal homepage (menu item "Submission guidelines"). Citation freeware may not accurately reflect the style.

Citations are listed numerically in the reference list according to the following sample (up to six authors: give all; from seven authors upwards: give only the first three followed by "et al.").

Journal names are abbreviated. Use the standard abbreviations for journal names (in medicine according to National Library of Medicine NLM,

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/journals>, otherwise according to ISSN rules, see "List of Title Word Abbreviations" LTWA:

<http://www.issn.org/services/online-services/access-to-the-ltwa/> )

If the literature source is a website, a citation in the text or in a footnote with indication of the access date is sufficient. Examples of citation for different types of publications:

### • Journal article

Zeeck A, Maier J, Hartmann A, Wetzler-Burmeister E, Wirsching M, Herzog T (2009) Stationäre und tagesklinische Behandlung der Anorexia nervosa: Bewertung von Therapiekomponenten aus Patientensicht. *Psychother Psych Med* 59:194-203.

<https://doi.org/10.1055/s-2008-1067408>

### • Online-first article

Lamott F, Mörtl K, Buchholz MB (2009) Biografiekonstruktionen im Dienste der Abwehr. *Selbstdeutungen von Straftätern*. Forum Psychoanal.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00451-009-0003-2>

### • Book

Jürgens U, Malsch T, Dohse K (1989) *Moderne Zeiten in der Automobilfabrik*. Springer, Heidelberg

### • Book chapter

Brown B, Aaron M (2001) The politics of nature. In: Smith J (Hrsg) *The rise of modern genomics*, 3. Aufl. Wiley, New York, S 230-257

### • Online document

Abou-Allaban Y, Dell ML, Greenberg W et al. (2006) Religious/spiritual commitments and psychiatric practice. Resource document. American Psychiatric Association. [http://www.psych.org/edu/other\\_res/lib\\_archives/archives/200604.pdf](http://www.psych.org/edu/other_res/lib_archives/archives/200604.pdf).

Accessed: 25 June 2007

### • Dissertation

Fritzlar B (1989) *Missbildungen bei Regenwürmern im Nahbereich deutscher Atomkraftwerke*. Dissertation, University of Freiburg i.Br.

## Tables / Figures / Infoboxes

The total number of tables, figures and infoboxes *must not exceed 6 in total*.

Additional materials can be provided as "Supplementary Information" (see below, section "Supplementary Information"). Furthermore, the following requirements apply:

- Tables, figures and infoboxes are placed at the end of the manuscript under the reference list.
- Within the text, tables, figures and infoboxes must be referred to at an appropriate place. The numbering is adapted to the order of the citation. Figures may contain partial figures that are labeled with lowercase letters (e.g. Fig. 1a, 1b).
- *Tables* must be in Word format. Under no circumstances should the space bar be used to align text in tables. Table layout is done by the publisher. Tables must not contain illustrations or color highlighting (alternatively, creation as a figure).
- *Figures* should also be submitted as a separate file in the respective optimal image format in TIFF, JPEG, PNG or PPT format (300 dpi).
- *Infoboxes* are particularly suitable for highlighting important information, e.g. in the form of bullet point lists.

Infoboxes may only contain text and should be kept short. Infoboxes should not be framed; the layout is done by the publisher.

- The *title* of a figure, table or infobox should concisely reflect the respective content. For figures, the title is created separately in Word format and not integrated.
- A legend (Word format) can be created for tables and figures, which is later placed in the layout under the table or figure. The legend should, for example, explain technical terms and abbreviations used (in alphabetical order) or provide important information for understanding. Additional information on individual elements can also be presented as footnotes (superscript lowercase letters). Significance values are indicated with asterisks (\*).
- If figures, tables or infoboxes are taken in whole or in part *from other publications*, the source must be indicated in the form of a reference at the end of the legend. The image rights must also be taken into account.

## Image rights

As the author, you are responsible for ensuring that you have all the necessary rights to the images used when submitting the manuscript. Images (also in modified form) from publications of other publishers or from the Internet can only be considered if the authors provide proof of the unlimited reprint permission (print/online/offline) of the rights holder (e.g. initial publisher, homepage provider).

If the initial publisher is a member of the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM), such permission may not be required or may be granted free of charge. Further information and the list of member publishers can be found here: [www.stm-assoc.org](http://www.stm-assoc.org). In any case, the legend must contain a reference to the literature.

Reproductions with recognizable persons must be approved in writing by them or by their legal representative to the author.

## Supplementary Information

Supplementary Information is published exclusively in the electronic version of the article. It may consist of, for example:

- extensive original data such as additional tables or figures;
- information that cannot be printed, such as animations, videos, audio samples;
- information that is easier to use in electronic form, such as sequences, spectral data, etc.

The Supplementary Information is not converted or edited by the publisher or typesetting company. In order to achieve optimal usability, the following instructions must be observed:

- Only standard formats are to be used. Care should be taken that the files are not too large so that download times are not too long.
- Texts and presentations should preferably be submitted in PDF format. It is also best to combine several illustrations in one PDF file.
- If you only want to present results, spreadsheets should also be converted to PDF. The .xls format (Excel) should be used if the readers are to make their own calculations.
- Audio files, videos and animations should always be submitted in MPEG-1 (.mpg) format.
- Special formats such as .pdb (chemistry), .wrl (VRML), .nb (Mathematica notebook) and .tex can also be submitted.
- Multiple files can also be combined in a .zip or .tar archive.

The Supplementary Information must be referenced within the article at an appropriate place in terms of content, e.g. "see Supplementary Information 1" or "see table Z1 in the Supplementary Information".

## Publication

**Forwarding to Springer Publishing.** After your article has been accepted and prepared for publication in the editorial office at the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), it is forwarded to publisher Springer, where it enters the automated publication process of the journal.

**Publication process.** After the preparation of your article by the publisher, you will automatically receive generated emails from [do-not-reply@springernature.com](mailto:do-not-reply@springernature.com), in which you will be asked to provide important information for publication. Simultaneously, you will receive by email a link to the corrected version of your contribution (Author's Proof), with a request for review and, if necessary, the insertion of your corrections. Once all essential information for your publication is available and the corrections have been incorporated, your article will be published. If you have any questions about this publication process, you can contact the responsible editorial team at any time (Sabine Mohr, [sabine.mohr@springer.com](mailto:sabine.mohr@springer.com)).

**Online-First Publication.** After approval and correction, your article will be published online. The DOI (Digital Object Identifier) makes it immediately citable, independent of its appearance in the printed journal.

## General and legal requirements

**Granting of rights/copyright.** The Bundesgesundheitsblatt is published by Springer. By accepting the commission to write an article, the author grants Springer the exclusive, geographically and temporally unlimited right to create copies by printing or any other way (online/offline/mobile use) as well as the right to edit and translate



the article into any language and for any country (except of Open Access articles, see below).

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The fees for Open Access (so-called "Article Processing Charges", APC) can be found on the journal homepage.

Some universities or institutions have a so-called "Read and Publish" agreement with Springer, through which the APC may be paid in full or in part by the institution (for example, DEAL agreement in Germany).

More information:

<https://www.springer.com/de/open-access/springer-open-choice/springer-compact>

Specific information on the German Open Access agreement "DEAL":

<https://www.springernature.com/gp/open-research/institutional-agreements/oaforgermany-de>

## Author remuneration and benefits

After print publication of the article, the corresponding author will receive two specimen copies of the relevant issue from Springer as well as a PDF file of the article, of which 100 printouts may be distributed.

If an article has been invited by the publishing institutes (BfArM, BZgA, PEI and RKI) for a thematic issue, the authors, provided they do not belong to these federal institutes or the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG), will receive from the RKI a total expense allowance of 40 euros per completely filled printed page (max. 400 euros).

# Bundesgesundheitsblatt: Checklist for authors

Dear Authors, please ensure that your manuscript is complete before submitting it to the editorial department by using the following checklist

## Preparation of the manuscript

- Only authors who meet all criteria as recommended by the ICMJE may be listed as authors. This includes a significant contribution to the conception or design of the work or to the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data. At the same time, the person must have helped design the work or critically revised important intellectual content. (ICMJE: International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, see <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>).
- The general structure of the manuscript and the further structure according to article type were implemented (see pages 1 and 2 of the Author Guideline).
- The *limitation of the number of characters* was adhered to. Manuscript text: 28,000 characters including spaces (excluding abstracts, reference list, and tables); abstract: 1,800 characters including spaces.
- *Text formatting* was implemented: Manuscript created in MS Word, page numbers and line numbering inserted, basic font: Calibri 11 pt, highlighted words in italics, formulas created with Equation Editor or with MathType.
- *Spelling, grammar, comprehensibility and objective style* were checked. Technical terms and abbreviations were explained the first time they were mentioned in the text.
- The selected *gender-appropriate* spelling was consistently implemented throughout the manuscript.
- *Ethical principles* were observed and corresponding information was included in the manuscript: Declaration of Helsinki, patients' rights and animal protection regulations, information on conflict of interest (see section "Ethics" in the Author Guideline).

## References

- The number of references is restricted to 50

- References within the text with consecutive Arabic numbering in square brackets beginning at [1].
- References as a list with corresponding numbering (for citation examples, see the section "References" in the Author Guideline).

## Tables, figures, infoboxes, Supplementary Information

- The total number of tables, figures and infoboxes in the manuscript is maximum 6.
- Tables, figures and infoboxes are placed at the end of the manuscript under the reference list.
- *References* in the text to tables, figures, infoboxes or Supplementary Information have been created. The numbering corresponds to the order of the references in the text (Tab. 1, Tab. 2; Fig. 1, Fig. 2; Supplementary Information 1). Partial figures are labeled with lowercase letters where appropriate (Fig. 1a, 1b).
- Tables are available in Word format.
- Figures are also submitted as a separate file (preferably TIFF, JPEG, PNG, PPT).
- The *Supplementary Information* is submitted in a separate file.
- There is a *title* in Word format for each figure, table or infobox.
- If necessary, a *legend* in Word format has been created for tables and figures (for abbreviations, notes, explanations, etc.); footnotes are shown as superscript lowercase letters, significance values with asterisks (\*). If applicable, the legend contains the citation of the data source as a literature reference - if own figure, then corresponding note.
- All necessary *rights* to the figures used have been obtained (see section "Image rights" in the author guideline).

## Please submit the manuscript to the editorial office at the Robert Koch Institute:

- invited manuscripts to Ulrike Stahr: [StahrU@rki.de](mailto:StahrU@rki.de)
- unsolicited manuscripts to Sophia Seidel: [SeidelS@rki.de](mailto:SeidelS@rki.de)