

Instructions for authors

This guide aims to providing support for an effective online submission process of your manuscript to the Pan African Medical Journal (PAMJ).

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1. General

PAMJ is an online open access peer-reviewed journal. Authors are encouraged to submit original research, systematic review and short reports from the field of medicine and public health in Africa.

Prior to submit your first article, you should apply for a user name and password. PAMJ offers a user friendly process for online submission.

Short reports will include case report, commentary, conference proceedings, editorials, viewpoints, and letter to the editors. Short Communications should be no longer than 1500 words. They must have an abstract and references, but the main body of the text does not have to follow the original research's format. We give privilege to invited reviews and encourage prospective authors of systematic reviews to discuss the project with the editorial office before development.

After initial screening, which takes only a few days, manuscripts are sent to two-three referees. If appropriate, a statistical reviewer is involved. On average, we will report back to authors within 4-6 weeks with a first decision.

Manuscripts must be submitted by one of the authors of the manuscript, and should not be submitted by anyone on their behalf. The submitting author takes responsibility for the article during submission and peer review.

Languages of publication are English and French. Each author should provide an abstract of his article in the other

language prior to submission. Poor English or French do not prevent acceptance provided the paper's content is of high scientific quality. All accepted manuscripts are copy-edited.

To facilitate rapid publication and to minimize administrative costs, PAMJ accepts only online submission. The submission process is compatible with version 3.0 or later of Internet Explorer, Opera, and Netscape Navigator.

Files can be submitted as a batch. The submission process allows the authors to interrupt it at any time, and continue where they left off at their return on the site.

During submission you will be asked to provide a cover letter. Use this to explain why your manuscript should be published in the journal and to elaborate on any issues relating to our editorial policies detailed in the instructions for authors.

Assistance with the process of manuscript preparation and submission is available from the customer support team (submission@panafrican-med-journal.com). We also provide a collection of links to useful tools and resources for scientific authors, on our [resources for authors](#) page.

2. Submission of a paper

Online submission

Authors may submit article to Pan African Medical Journal [online](#). Simple onscreen instructions are provided.

Submission by email

Authors may submit article by email if they have limited or unstable Internet connection. Articles and associated material should be sent to any of the following email address:

- submission@panafrican-med-journal.com

Conflict of interest

Will be mentioned in the manuscript as "Authors declared they have no conflict of interest".

The editorial office will acknowledge receipt of all manuscripts by email

3. Organization of a full-length paper

Download the journal [manuscript template](#).

Maximum length: 4000 words in main text (i.e., excluding abstract, references, legends, tables and figures), 6 tables/figures, and a structured abstract of 250 words plus up to 50 references.

Title page – This page should state: a) The title of the paper (include the study design if appropriate; for example: A versus B in the treatment of C: a randomized controlled trial; X is a risk factor for Y: a case control study), b) Authors names (full name – no qualification), c) institution(s) of origin, d) Corresponding author plus his/her address, telephone and fax number, e-mail address, e) Word count (for both abstract and the main text)

Abstract - The abstract of the manuscript should not exceed 250 words and must be structured into separate sections: **Background:** the context and purpose of the study; **Method:** how the study was performed and statistical tests used; **Results:** the main findings; **Conclusion:** brief summary and potential implications. Please minimize the use of abbreviations and do not cite references in the abstract.

Keywords. Up to ten keywords (suitable for Index Medicus listing) should be provided at the end of the Abstract.
Abbreviations Please do not provide a list of abbreviations. Abbreviations should be spelled out the first time they appear in the text.

Background The background section should be written from the standpoint of researchers without specialist knowledge in that area and must clearly state - and, if helpful, illustrate - the background to the research and its aims. Reports of clinical research should, where appropriate, include a summary of a search of the literature to indicate why this study was necessary and what it aimed to contribute to the field. The section should end with a very brief statement of what is

being reported in the article.

Method Sufficient information should be given to permit repetition of the experimental work. This should include the design of the study, the setting, the type of participants or materials involved, a clear description of all interventions and comparisons, and the type of analysis used, including a power calculation if appropriate.

Results - The Results should be stated concisely without discussion and should not normally contain any references. The same data should not be presented in figures and tables. Do not repeat all the data that is set out in the tables or figures in the text; emphasize or summarize only important observations.

Formatting tables

- **Any table should be able to old on a single page** and should be included at the end of the manuscript. Download sample of correctly formatted tables (Microsoft Word 2002-2003, *.DOC): [Table 1](#), [Table 2](#).

Formatting figures

- Formats: PNG, JPEG only. **MUST BE SUBMITTED AS SEPARATE FILES**, not embedded in the main manuscript. Submit the best quality possible
Files must be named with the three letter file extension appropriate to the file type (eg: .jpeg, .png). You will be asked to provide figure labels during the submission process. (The label is the small comment that usually goes with the figure. Example: **Figure 1**: Prevalence of diabetes in the study population aged 18 years and above. Findings of the TRICARE Diabetes Study, Uganda, 2006.)
If you use excel to generate your graph, avoid 3D, crowded axes, colored background, strong grid etc.. Use Tahoma font (size 10 maximum) for all items in your graphs (Title, legend, axes etc..). Expand your Excel graph to obtain a large image, copy and paste it in Paint (Microsoft Paint), crop any white border and save the image as PNG or JPEG. Look at an acceptable [formatted Excel graph here](#)

Discussion - The Discussion should deal with the interpretation of the results and not recapitulate them. We encourage authors to write their Discussion in a structured way, as follows:a) statement of principal findings; b) strengths and weaknesses of the study; c) strengths and weaknesses in relation to other studies; d) discussion of important differences in results; e) meaning of the study; f) unanswered questions and future research.

Conclusion - The conclusion should provide a brief summarize of the key findings, potential implications and the way forward.

Acknowledgements - Please acknowledge anyone who contributed towards the study by making substantial contributions to conception, design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data, or who was involved in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content, but who does not meet the criteria for authorship. Please also include their source(s) of funding. Please also acknowledge anyone who contributed materials essential for the study. The role of a medical writer must be included in the acknowledgements section, including their source(s) of funding. Authors should obtain permission to acknowledge from all those mentioned in the Acknowledgements. Please list the source(s) of funding for the study, for each author, and for the manuscript preparation in the acknowledgements section. Authors must describe the role of the funding body, if any, in study design; in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; and in the decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

Competing interest - Authors are responsible for recognizing and disclosing conflicts of interest that might bias their work. They should acknowledge in the manuscript all financial support for the work and other personal connections. Authors are required to complete a declaration of competing interests. All competing interests that are declared will be listed at the end of published articles. Where an author gives no competing interests, the listing will read 'The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests'. When completing your declaration, please consider the following questions:

Financial competing interests

- In the past five years have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future? Is such an organization financing this manuscript (including the article-processing charge)? If so, please specify.
- Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the

- publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future? If so, please specify
- Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript? Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript? If so, please specify.
- Do you have any other financial competing interests? If so, please specify.

Non-financial competing interests

- Are there any non-financial competing interests (political, personal, religious, ideological, academic, intellectual, commercial or any other) to declare in relation to this manuscript? If so, please specify.
- If you are unsure as to whether you, or one your co-authors, has a competing interest please discuss it with the editorial office.

Authors' contributions - In order to give appropriate credit to each author of a paper, the individual contributions of authors to the manuscript should be specified in this section.

References - References must be numbered consecutively, in square brackets, in the order in which they are cited in the text, followed by any in tables or legends. Reference citations should not appear in titles or headings. Each reference must have an individual reference number. Please avoid excessive referencing. If automatic numbering systems are used, the reference numbers must be finalized and the bibliography must be fully formatted before submission. We encourage authors to use a recent version of EndNote (version 5 and above) or Reference Manager when formatting their reference list, as this allows references to be automatically extracted. Examples of the PAMJ reference style are shown below. Please take care to follow the reference style precisely; references not in the correct style may be retyped, necessitating tedious proofreading.

Manuscripts not formatted according to the Pamj style will be returned to the authors. For all research papers, make sure your manuscript includes the following sections: **Background, Method, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, List of tables and Figures, Conflicts of interests, Authors' contribution, Acknowledgment (if any) and References.** Pay special attention to citations in the manuscript. Pamj citation format is [1], [1-2], [X1,X2.....] and **NOT X¹, X³, or anything else.** . Manuscript not following these basic formatting rules will be returned illico presto. A basic sample for reference is provided below (We follow PubMed format for citing articles):

1. Kirikou Thomas, Doe John, Shaba Kevin, Kashawa Tuma. A sample of the pamj reference style as shown on the journal website. J Hist Fant. 2006; 76(11):204-212
2. Kirikou Thomas, Doe John, Shaba Kevin, Kashawa Tuma. Another sample of the pamj reference style: as shown on the journal website. J Hist Fant. 2006; 76(12):212-228

Authors names are separated by coma. Article title starts after the author name series, precedes by a dot and terminated by a dot. Journal abbreviation or name dot then follow, with year; volume number and in brackets issue number, then page numbers if applicable. The format is:

Author1 LastName FirstName, Author2 LastName FirstName, Author3 LastName FirstName, AuthorX LastName FirstName. Article title. Journal Year; Volume(Issue): StartPage-EndPage. Note that author names, article title, journal name can not contain dots.

4. Short communication

A maximum of 1500 words in the main text (i.e. excluding abstract, references and legends) plus up to ten references and normally no more than two illustrations (tables or figures or one of each). Otherwise in the same format as full-length original papers (see above).

5. Review

A maximum of 5000 words in the main text (i.e. excluding abstract, references and legends) plus up to 100 references. Reviews are usually solicited, although unsolicited Reviews may be considered for publication. Prospective writers of Reviews should first consult the Editors

6. Letters to the Editors

Comment briefly on findings of Journal articles or other noteworthy public health advances (up to 800 words in main text, no abstract, limited to 10 references). Please note that word counts refer exclusively to the main text and do not include abstract, references, or acknowledgments.

7. Commentaries

Up to 2500 words in main text, 2 tables/figures, and an unstructured abstract of 120 words.

8. Essays

Analytical essays provide a forum for critical analyses of public health issues from disciplines other than the biomedical sciences, including (but not limited to) the social sciences, human rights, and ethics (up to 3500 words in main text, 4 tables/figures, and an unstructured abstract of 120 words). Essays in the *Health Policy and Ethics Forum* present critical views on public health policy and ethics controversies. *Government, Politics, and Law* encourages both new and familiar voices to sound off on essential public health topics, with arguments grounded in critical analysis.

9. Debate

This is designed to present a forum for critical debate about timely public health topics (up to 1000 words, 10 references).

10. Briefs

Report Preliminary or novel findings may be reported as (up to 800 words in main text, 2 tables/figures, and an abstract of up to 80 words).

11. Supplements and workshop reports

We welcome conferences proceedings. Prospective conference organizers should contact the editorial office with the project for specific instructions.

12. Revised manuscripts

If you are asked to revise your manuscript you will be expected to provide a covering letter that responds in detail to each point raised by reviewers or editors, and to highlight new material in the text using a different color (do not use the 'track changes' mode of Word). If a manuscript returned to the authors for revision is not returned to the Editorial Office within the stipulated time-period (usually 4 weeks), it will be treated as a new manuscript.

13. Proofs

An email is sent to the corresponding author. Typographical errors only should be corrected. The corrected proof should be returned within 48 h. Failure to comply with this deadline will delay publication. Any changes to the text or figures are liable to be charged to the author.

14. Permissions

Verbatim material or illustrations taken from other published sources must be accompanied by a written statement from the author, and from the publisher if holding the copyright, giving permission to PAMJ for reproduction.

15. Copyright

The author(s) keep(s) the copyright to his/their article if and when the article is accepted for publication. The copyright covers the exclusive and unlimited rights to reproduce and distribute the article in any form of reproduction (printing, electronic media or any other form); it also covers translation rights for all languages and countries. For more information about the copyright, see our copyright agreement.

Publication and peer review processes

1. Key points

PAMJ uses online peer review to speed up the publication process. Submitted manuscripts will be sent to peer reviewers, unless they are either out of scope or below threshold for the journal, or the presentation or written English/French is of an unacceptably low standard.

Competing interests from are seek from authors and reviewers. Reviewers declare any competing interests and have to agree to open peer review. This implies that authors and reviewers agreed that if the manuscript is published, the peer review will be made available to the readers. The pre-publication history (initial submission, reviews and revisions) is then posted on the web with the published article.

The article will be available online through PAMJ as browser able (html) and PDF format. The ultimate responsibility for any decision lies with the Editor-in-Chief, to whom any appeals against rejection should be addressed.

Each author will be asked to provide the contact details (including e-mail addresses) of at least 2 potential peer reviewers for their manuscript. These should be experts in their field of study, who will be able to provide an objective assessment of the manuscript. However, any suggested peer reviewers should not have published with any of the authors of the manuscript within the past five years and should not be members of the same research institution. Members of the Editorial Board of the journal can be nominated. Suggested reviewers will be considered alongside potential reviewers identified by their publication record or recommended by Editorial Board members.

Reviewers are asked whether the manuscript is scientifically sound and coherent, how interesting it is and whether the quality of the writing is acceptable. Where possible, the final decision is made on the basis that the peer reviewers are in accordance with one another, or that at least there is no strong dissenting view. In cases where there is strong disagreement either among peer reviewers or between the authors and peer reviewers, advice is sought from a member of the journal's Editorial Board. The journal allows a maximum of two revisions of any manuscripts.

Reviewers are also asked to indicate which articles they consider to be especially interesting or significant. These articles may be given greater prominence and greater external publicity.

Article-processing and access to full-article charges

To promote the online publication of original studies from the African medical and public health communities, PAMJ will not charge article-processing fee for any accepted article submitted from African researchers or institutions or from any researcher and institution around the world

We will cover the costs incurred by open-access publication through a scaled-cost design to access to the full text article. Access to full-text article for users is free of charge.

2. Editorial policies

Any manuscript or substantial parts of it, submitted to PAMJ must not be under consideration by any other journal. The manuscript should not have already been published in any journal or other citable form, with that exception that the journal is willing to consider peer-reviewing manuscripts that are translations of articles originally published in another language. In this case, the consent of the journal in which the article was originally published must be obtained and the fact that the article has already been published must be made clear on submission and stated in the abstract. Authors who publish in PAMJ retain copyright to their work. Correspondence concerning articles published in PAMJ is encouraged.

Submission of a manuscript to PAMJ implies that all authors have read and agreed to its content, and that any research that is reported in the manuscript has been performed with the approval of an appropriate ethics committee. Research carried out on humans must be in compliance with the Helsinki Declaration, and any experimental research on animals must follow internationally recognized guidelines. A statement to this effect must appear in the Methods section of the manuscript, including the name of the body which gave approval, with a reference number where appropriate. Informed consent must also be documented. Manuscripts may be rejected if the editorial office considers that the research has not been carried out within an ethical framework, e.g. if the severity of the experimental procedure is not justified by the value of the knowledge gained.

Generic drug names should generally be used. When proprietary brands are used in research, include the brand names in

parentheses in the Methods section.

We ask authors of PAMJ papers to complete a declaration of competing interests, which should be provided as a separate section of the manuscript, to follow the Acknowledgements. Where an author gives no competing interests, the listing will read 'The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests'. To learn more about competing interests the following articles provide some background:

- K Morin, H Rakatansky, FA Riddick Jr, LJ Morse, JM O'Bannon 3rd, MS Goldrich, P Ray, M Weiss, RM Sade, MA Spillman: **Managing conflicts of interest in the conduct of clinical trials**. JAMA 2002, 287 :78-84
- CD DeAngelis, PB Fontanarosa, A Flanagin: **Reporting financial conflicts of interest and relationships between investigators and research sponsors**. JAMA 2001, 286 :89-9
- R Smith: **Beyond conflict of interest**. BMJ 1998, 317 :291-292
- R Smith: **Making progress with competing interests**. BMJ 2002, 325 :1375-1376

For all articles that include information or clinical photographs relating to individual patients, written and signed consent from each patient to publish must also be mailed or faxed to the editorial staff. The manuscript should also include a statement to this effect in the Acknowledgements section, as follows: "Written consent for publication was obtained from the patient or their relative."

Online submission

1. Requirements

You will need the following to complete the submission of your manuscript:

- Name and email addresses of all authors.
- Correctly formatted manuscript: Microsoft Word (version 3 and above). Get manuscript template [here](#)
- Correctly formatted figures in one of the acceptable formats (see 'preparing illustration and figure').
- Cover letter that explains why the journal should consider your manuscript and declares any competing interest.

2. PAMJ reference style

We strongly encourage authors to use reference software to format references. Output styles for Reference Manager and EndNote are provided below. In case these software aren't available, format your references manually. A sample of the PAMJ reference style below [1,2].

1. Kirikou Thomas, Doe John, Shaba Kevin, Kashawa Tuma. A sample of the pamj reference style as shown on the journal website. J Hist Fant. 2006; 76(11):204-212
2. Kirikou Thomas, Doe John, Shaba Kevin, Kashawa Tuma. Another sample of the pamj reference style: as shown on the journal website. J Hist Fant. 2006; 76(12):212-228

When formatting references manually, remember that authors names are separated by coma. Article title starts after the author name series, proceeds by a dot and terminated by a dot. Journal abbreviation or name terminated by a dot. Year follow by a ; with volume number and in brackets issue number, then page numbers if applicable. The format is:

Author1 LastName FirstName, Author2 LastName FirstName, Author3 LastName FirstName, AuthorX LastName FirstName.
Article title. Journal. Year; Volume(Issue): StartPage-EndPage.