



Portugal Saúde em Números/Health by Numbers Portugal

Directorate-General of Health Journal

Editorial policy and publication rules

1. Content

The mission of *Portugal Saúde em Números – Health by Numbers Portugal – Directorate-General of Health Journal* is to disseminate public health information, technical and scientifically rigorous, of national interest, that allow the responsible of planning, health professionals and researchers greater effectiveness in their work. The ultimate purpose of its publication aims to contribute, in some way, to help improving the Portuguese population health, especially in vulnerable groups.

The journal accepts a great variety of article types. Manuscripts of future articles are initially evaluated for its originality, relevance for health audience in Portugal and scientific character. After this first evaluation are sent for peer review, whose opinions are taken into account by the journal editorial board in the decision of accepting (or not) the publication of the manuscripts sent. The publication format is electronic, through the open-access system in the internet.

2. Types of articles to publish

2.1 Articles by author's initiative

Manuscripts may be submitted to the following sections of the journal: Research, Systematic Reviews, Policy and Practice, Public Health Interventions and Comments. The articles prepared for the first four sections must include, when submitting the manuscript, two paragraphs indicating what is added to the knowledge of the theme. These paragraphs must briefly explain:

- What is already known on the theme;
- The article contribution in terms of new knowledge.

2.1.1 Research

Original research articles, using scientific method, focus on relevant themes for public health in Portugal. Manuscripts with maximum 3.000 words, 50 references and a structured Abstract (see 3.4). The manuscripts are subject to peer review.

Apart from having to comply with the internationally accepted ethical principles during its conception, planning and field work, the communication of the studies' results must meet the principles described in the rule *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals* [updated April 2010], prepared by *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors* (ICMJE) available at http://www.icmje.org/urm_main.html.

The text of manuscripts related to observational and trial studies should be divided in the following sections: Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion (“IMRAD” structure).

Observational studies must fulfil communication guidelines from the STROBE Declaration (*Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology*), available at <http://www.strobe-statement.org/index.php?id=available-checklists> (Portuguese translation published in the *Revista Brasileira de Saúde Pública* and available at:

statement.org/fileadmin/Strobe/uploads/translations/STROBE_translation_portuguese_Commentary_Malta_RevSaudePublica_2010_checklist.pdf).

Trial studies require registration in a Clinical Trial Register, accepted by ICMJE, before submission- The registration number should be supplied at the end of the Abstract. These types of registration are described at: http://www.icmje.org/faq_clinical.html. This kind of investigation must also fulfill the publication guidelines of the *CONSORT Declaration*, available at <http://www.consort-statement.org/consort-statement/overview0/#checklist>.

2.1.2 Systematic reviews

For critical, exhaustive evaluation, of published and unpublished studies (“grey literature”) concerning investigation questions relevant for public health knowledge, practice and policy, the meta-analysis method should be used, when pertinent. Manuscripts should read maximum 3.500 words and 150 references, plus a structured Abstract (see point 2.4). These manuscripts will be subject to peer-review.

The way how reviewed studies were included and excluded must be designed in a flux diagram. Authors must strictly follow the communication guidelines for systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis from the *PRISMA Declaration* available at: <http://www.prisma-statement.org/2.1.2%20-%20PRISMA%202009%20Checklist.pdf>.

2.1.3 Policy and Practice

Analytical assessment, debates and articles generating hypothesis, motivated or based in quantitative data; maximum 3.000 words and 50 references, and an Abstract (not necessarily structured). These manuscripts will be subject to peer-review.

2.1.4 Public Health Interventions

Articles describing experience and practice acquired in solving specific problems in public health. Convincing evidence of the obtained effect should be provided. Maximum 1.500 words and 15 references, a structured Abstract (see point 3.4); Maximum limit of a Chart and a Figure; these manuscripts are subject to peer-review and should contain the following:

- Brief framing of the theme;
- Context: resources, information source and data, participants;
- Description of the problem in terms of person, place and time, indicating how it was observed and measured;
- Description of the way how the need of intervention/action has been identified, who proposed intervention and the factors taken into account in its selection;
- Description of changes made, how they were implemented and by whom;
- Description of the intervention impact in the specific problem: has the intervention been monitored or evaluated? How? If not, why?
- Discussion of the singular aspects of the work and results, including limitations, what may be (or not) generalised to other places and next steps;
- Discussion of the role of chance, leadership and management in the developed work.

2.1.5 Comments

Discussions, hypothesis or points of view (with a clear message), motivated or based in quantitative data, on a question of matter in public health. Manuscripts are to be sent to *Portugal Saúde em Números (Health by Numbers Portugal)* to this section with a maximum limit of 1.500 words and 6 references. Before being published, this type of manuscript will be subject to peer-review.

2.2 Articles of editorial initiative

Articles prepared on editorial board invitation. Authors wishing to submit an unsolicited manuscript should previously contact the editorial board.

2.2.1 Editorials

Comments, reviews or authorized perspectives of important aspects related with a theme or with one or more published articles in a specific journal number. Editorial manuscripts should not contain more than 800 words and maximum 12 references.

2.2.2 Perspectives

Critical or explicative analysis on relevant themes in public health, based, preferably, on quantitative data. Manuscripts of this kind of articles should not contain more than 3.000 words and 50 references and a chart or figure or, in alternative, two charts or two figures. Its publication is subject to previous peer-review.

3. Preparation and submission of manuscripts

Manuscripts should be submitted at the Directorate-General of Health site (www.dgs.pt) where instruction for the authors can be found. Only will be accepted manuscripts with unpublished contents and those that are not in submission process to another journal.

Queries on the submission phase should be sent to revista@dgs.pt. Authors that need support for electronic submission should contact the editorial board.

3.1. Requirements for manuscripts submission

As previously indicated, article manuscripts should be made according to the *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals* – requirements for articles submitted to biomedical journals emitted by the Vancouver Group (ICMJE). Full document, updated in April 2010, is available at: http://www.icmje.org/urm_main.html.

3.2. Language

Manuscripts should be written either in Portuguese and/or English and shall be translated, when necessary, upon acceptance for publication. Articles will be published in Portuguese and English, and a translated version will be asked the authors if the manuscript is accepted for publication or, when necessary, a translation proposed by the journal that the authors must validate before publication in the second language. The journal encourages authors to provide, whenever possible, the manuscripts in both languages.

3.3. Authorship

Authors should provide their full name, name and address of the institution where they work, telephone and e-mail. If they have several professional affiliations, should provide only the most important. The criteria for authorship described in the *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals* should be rigorously observed. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work presented to take public responsibility for its content, with its specific contribute described (active participation in the conception, analysis, discussion, redaction – or in several of these aspects). Complete postal address and e-mail of the author responsible for communicating with the readers should be published, unless otherwise solicited.

The journal encourages contributions of authors from Portuguese Official Language Countries (PALOP), e and according with this policy, at least one author must be from the country where the study took place and have professional affiliation in this country.

In articles with more than one author it is their full responsibility the order of the names presented in the manuscripts submitted for publication

3.4. Abstract

Abstract should be written in a clear way to highlight the most important aspects of the text, and should be included in the following types of articles: *Research, Systematic Reviews, Policy and Practice and in Public Health Interventions*. In *Research* and *Systematic Reviews* articles, Abstract should be structured in the following parts: Problem definition and/or Research or Review goal, Methods, Results, Discussion (including a conclusion, if applicable). Whenever relevant, Abstract should be quantified and include the statistic number of the results. Should not exceed 250 words.

In the articles of category *Public Health Interventions*, Abstract should be structured in following parts: Framing the problem, approach, population-target, relevant changes obtained with intervention and learned lessons. Should not exceed 250 words.

3.5. Figures and Charts

In a maximum number of 8 (Charts + Figures), must be used only to complement the understanding of the text, and information already transmitted in a Chart should not be repeated in a Figure. Charts and Figures should always be mentioned in the text and consecutively numbered (ex.: Figure 1, Figure 2; Chart 1, Chart 2, etc.).

Charts should be identified by number and title, written on the top of the Chart. Figures should be identified by number and legend, always on the bottom of the Figure.

3.5.1. Maps

Use of maps should be limited to the articles where they are needed to illustrate results or an essential aspect. Maps that show international borders, partially or in full, should be created under one of the following sources:

<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/htmain.htm>, <http://www.unsalb.org> or <http://apps.who.int/tools/geoserver> and EPS (*Encapsulated PostScript*) file should be submitted. Maps should be identified in text as Figures and follow same rules of numbering and subtitling.

3.6. References

The accuracy of all references is of the authors responsibility and must be checked in the original source (avoid “second-hand” references, i.e., obtained from other articles references). References should be numbered by their mentioned order in the text and identified by a note consisting of an Arabic numeral inside round brackets. Reference notification should be included in text immediately after quotation from another author, and not at the end of paragraph.

Authors’ names must be quoted up to a maximum of three, and substituted by *et al.* when over three. Journals titles should be abbreviated, using the abbreviations proposed by the *Index Medicus*. Non listed journals in the *Index Medicus* must be written in full. Examples and additional explanations available in *Instructions for authors* at www.dgs.pt.

3.7. Publication permit

If the manuscript is accepted for publication, the author(s) will be invited to sign a statement of exclusive license to publish (not *copyright*) to DGS. A copy of this statement is available at www.dgs.pt.

Authors are responsible for obtaining the permission to reproduce in their articles any material that has Copyright protection (Charts, Figures, long text parts, etc.) and this should be sent along to the editorial board with the submitted manuscript. Also, authors should ensure agreement of those in the Acknowledgements they decide to include in the manuscript text.

4. Ethical considerations, conflicts of interest and financing

Portugal Saúde em Números – Health by Numbers Portugal – Directorate-General of Health Journal only publishes research results involving human beings if it fully complies with ethical principles, including the dispositions of the Helsinki Declaration from *World Medical Association* (amended at the 59th

General Assembly, Seoul, Republic of Korea, October 2008, available at: <http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm>). Any article describing such research results must contain a clear statement to this effect and specify that free and informed consent of the individuals, or their legal responsible, has been obtained and that the relevant institutional or national ethical committee approved the research. Eventual research involving use of animals should contain specification on their accommodation, treatment and feeding before, during and after experiments.

4.1. Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest arises when a professional judgment of an author may be influenced by a secondary commercial, political, academic or financial interest with potential to affect the interpretation that author makes of the content of his article. We ask all authors to divulge, when submitting, any conflicts of interest they may have. Examples of several types of conflicts of interest are available at <http://www.icmje.org>.

Same request is applicable to reviewers, and they should decline reviewing manuscripts if conflict of interest exist or think it may exist, that may impede their objectivity and declare it.

Editors and editorial board members are obliged to declare conflict of interest that may impede their objectivity and exclude themselves of handling manuscripts with which their interests collide.

4.2. Financing

Authors should identify financing sources of the work make and claim not to have entered into financing arrangement that may limit the capacity to complete the research as planned, and also indicate they had full control of all the primary data.

5. Publication

Manuscripts received are evaluated by the editorial board and sent to external review. Editorial board will appreciate comments made by reviewers and shall decide as follows:

- a) Accepted manuscript, that will be published with no need of change from the authors;
- b) Conditionally accepted manuscript, that will be return to the authors for review and introduction of the proposed corrections;
- c) Rejected manuscript.

In case of rejection, a description of the reasons that lead to the rejection will accompany the communication to the authors. Authors of the rejected manuscripts may request a review of the decision, by sending a detailed letter, based on objective analysis, to the Journal editor, explaining the reason the decision should be reviewed and commenting, one by one, the criticisms made by the review team.

Authors are remind that a publication rejection may correspond not to a poor research quality or produced work, but only to the fact that this may not be adequate to the purpose or kind of public of *Portugal Saúde em Números - Health by Numbers Portugal*.

The responsibility for the final decision concerning publication is always of the Journal editors.