

## Guidelines for Health Research Reporting:

### How to promote their use in your journal

This document aims to improve the dissemination of research reporting guidelines in public health, biomedical, and medical journals. Journal editors, peer reviewers and authors are responsible for the quality of the articles published in their journals. Guidelines are tools that help to meet this responsibility. All are responsible for whether or not their journals adopt these tools.

Research Reporting Guidelines improve the accuracy, transparency, and completeness of health research publications. They specify a minimum set of items needed for a complete and clear account of study methods and subsequent findings.

The [EQUATOR Network](#) is an international initiative that works to improve the reliability and value of published health research through the use of reporting guidelines and by making them accessible on its website. The EQUATOR website provides access to a searchable database containing more than 200 guidelines.

Biomedical journals are critical in implementing reporting guidelines. If everyone embraces these guidelines, the quality of the articles published in journals will likely increase, making the editorial process more accurate and transparent as well as making research findings replicable.

#### Biomedical journals can introduce reporting guidelines in their journals by:

- a) incorporating the philosophy of transparent and accurate reporting,
- b) fostering the use of reporting guidelines by authors and reviewers,
- c) fostering sufficient knowledge of principles of good reporting
- d) advising their readers on how use existing reporting guidelines and where to access them (see Section A in [How to promote reporting guidelines in your journal](#)).
- e) suggesting their use in the instructions for authors, peer reviewers, and in editorial processes (see Section B in [How to promote reporting guidelines in your journal](#)).

Most common health reporting guidelines and their checklists are:

[CONSORT](#) for randomized controlled trials. [CONSORT Checklist](#)  
[PRISMA](#) for systematic reviews and meta-analyses to evaluate health care interventions. [PRISMA Checklist](#)  
[STARD](#) for diagnostic accuracy studies. [STARD Checklist](#)  
[STROBE](#) for observational studies in epidemiology. [STROBE Checklist](#)  
[SPIRIT](#) for preparing trial protocols. [SPIRIT Checklist](#)

The EQUATOR Network offers more than 200 reporting guidelines and a wealth of information for editors on how to implement them in journals and how editors should refer to them.

As a journal editor, peer reviewer or author, you can play an important role in incorporating reporting guidelines into research projects and publications. For some guidelines editors can ask authors to confirm adherence through submitting a copy of the checklist indicating page number where the required information is provided.

The following is an example of how a renowned journal mentions The EQUATOR Network and reporting guidelines in its *Instruction for Authors*.

“Responsible reporting of research studies, which includes a complete, transparent, accurate, and timely account of what was done and what was found during a research study, is an integral part of good research and publication practice and not an optional extra. The [journal name] support initiatives that aim at improving the reporting of health research. We ask authors to use the following guidelines when drafting their manuscripts:

Authors should list each guideline’s name and scope, provide a link to the guideline website or to the EQUATOR website, and clearly indicate the degree of requested compliance with the guidelines. Adherence to recommended reporting guidelines will facilitate review of their manuscript, increase the probability of it successful publication, and improve the usability of research findings from their study in further research and clinical practice. “

Below are links to more examples of how other renowned journals incorporate reporting guidelines in their journals (see Section C in [How to promote reporting guidelines in your journal](#)).

- [BMJ](#)
- [Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health](#)
- [European Journal of Clinical Investigation](#)
- [Physiotherapy](#)

If you would like more concrete examples on how to refer to reporting guidelines or to the EQUATOR Network in your journal please consult the document [How to promote reporting guidelines in your journal](#). If you are having difficulties or would like to know more about why and how to use reporting guidelines, the [EQUATOR Network](#) is a valuable resource. The EQUATOR team has developed and maintains a comprehensive collection of online resources providing up-to-date information, tools, and other materials related to health research reporting.