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# Writing for Publication

An easy to follow guide for nurses  
interested in publishing their work

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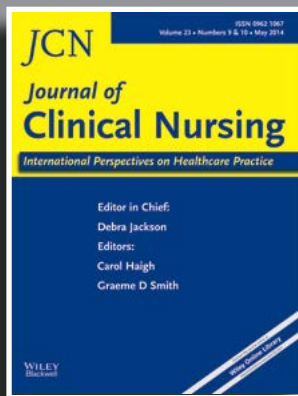
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## INTRODUCTION

Wiley first produced this complimentary Writing for Publication booklet in 2005. It has been extremely well received by the nurse author community and read by thousands of nurses in print and online.

The booklet aims to provide useful information and helpful suggestions to nurses who are thinking of writing and publishing an article. This latest version has been completely updated and we hope it will be an essential resource for you in supporting your writing activities. While the art and science of writing has not changed substantially over the years, most journals now operate an online submission and reviewing process, with the final version of the article assigned a DOI (Digital Optical Identifier) and published online for rapid dissemination within the community. These changes have been coupled with a growing awareness of the need for authors to focus on good practice in the standard reporting of findings and to pay close attention to issues concerning publication ethics, including copyright.

Wiley has an extremely broad range of nursing journals (for details see: [www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/subject/nursing](http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/subject/nursing)) and there is likely to be an appropriate journal for each type of article that you may be thinking of writing. However, the guidelines in this booklet are relevant to almost all kinds of writing, whether for our journals, for other publishers, or for assignments if you are studying on a course.

Wiley also provides a free online publication, Nurse Author & Editor, available at [www.NurseAuthorEditor.com](http://www.NurseAuthorEditor.com). This is a ready source of advice for authors, editors and reviewers, and also reports on new developments within journal publishing.

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We wish you every success in your writing endeavours.

*Note: Throughout this booklet 'Wiley' includes the 'Wiley-Blackwell' imprint.*

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## 1. WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

### ***How do you get started?***

You have decided that you want to publish an article because you have something to say that you want to share with others. If you are uncertain about what you want to say it is worth spending a short time thinking about it – but only a short time. The sooner you start writing, the better! Remember, data older than five years will not be accepted by most journals. Editors look for contemporary information and ideas to publish. Once you start writing then your ideas should begin to flow and, rather than a blank screen, you will have something to edit.

### ***Who do you want to read your article?***

The answer to this question is crucial. It will help you to decide which journal is most appropriate so that you can aim your writing to increase your article's appeal to your target readers.

If you want to reach clinical staff who give direct care, then you need to choose a journal that is attractive to and read regularly by this kind of readership. Articles published in these journals will be written in a style that appeals to them and contains the right amount of detail. They are likely to be shorter, use less technical language, and include easy-to-read features such as boxes and bullet points. The implications of the article for clinical practice will be clearly stated. These journals may also include commentaries on articles to help readers to understand and critique them.

If your intended readers are researchers, then a more specialised academic journal may be appropriate. Some of these journals accept longer articles up to 5,000 words, and they are structured in a conventional format for research studies. However, some journals aimed at clinicians also publish short reports, perhaps in a simpler format designed to be reader friendly for clinical staff and less experienced researchers.

### ***Don't waste time and effort!***

It is important to be clear about your target readers at the outset. Many people make the mistake of writing their article and then looking around to see which journal to send it to. This can mean that time is wasted having to rewrite the article to fit a journal's requirements.

However, remember that the first person to read your article will be an editor who will decide quickly if your

article is suitable for publication. It will then be read by reviewers who will advise the editor further on your article's suitability for publication (the Guide to Reviewing Manuscripts which is available at [www.nurseauthoreditor.com/forreviewers.asp](http://www.nurseauthoreditor.com/forreviewers.asp) will give you some ideas about what reviewers are looking for). For these reasons, it is good to think first about these people as your audience and to ensure that you address the kinds of issues that the editor will have in mind, such as how well the article fits the journal, if the article is readable and follows the structure required by the journal, and if it makes a contribution to the field of knowledge in nursing.

### ***How will you put your message across?***

There are several different types of article; each journal will have its preferred types and may not accept others. The most common types of article are:

- Evidence synthesis articles (such as systematic review articles)
- Original research articles
- Clinical articles
- Discussion articles
- Short reports
- Case studies
- Opinion pieces

In the following pages we give more guidance for writing the first three types of article.

### ***Which journal to publish in?***

Researchers may choose journals based on the journal's Impact Factor (see page 21) as a means to help establish their reputation, in order to win further research grants or to gain promotion. They may also consider whether the journal is academic or clinical in focus. Research published in clinical journals is more likely to reach frontline practitioners, who might use it to develop their practice and contribute to policy changes, thereby demonstrating the impact researchers' work can have on improving health. Some researchers adopt a dual strategy and publish related articles in both clinical and academic journals.

Before starting to write, therefore, check the aims and scope of a range of journals to see which would fit your article best.



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### ***How do you write?***

One way of approaching your writing is to follow the 'Four Rules' of writing:

- Read the author guidelines
- Set targets and count words
- Seek criticism
- Treat a rejection as the start of the next submission

#### ***Read the author guidelines***

Established journals usually have a website where you will be able to find their author guidelines. To find the aims and scope of Wiley nursing journals, go to [www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/subject/nursing](http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/subject/nursing). By looking at the Author Guidelines section of the individual journals' websites you can also see how each journal editor wants articles to be presented and submitted. The main things to pay attention to are:

- How long should the article be?
- How should the article be structured – which headings should be used?
- Which referencing system does the journal use – Harvard, Vancouver?

#### ***Set targets and count words***

You should not become overwhelmed with the task of writing. Don't think in terms of the finished article which may be anything up to 5,000 words; think of it in small steps to be achieved on a daily basis. Therefore, set yourself a daily target or a target every time you sit down to write. A reasonable target is 500 words and you should not stop until you have reached that; also, you should not go beyond it. If you have an idea for the next 500 words then note them on the text as bullet points and this will give you a starting point next time you sit down to write.

Don't try to write the article from start to finish: start wherever you have an idea and move about between sections until you have reached your target. To help you do this it is a good idea to create a file with all the necessary headings and subheadings in it and then add text under these. Don't edit as you go along; wait until a complete first draft is done and then start to edit and revise, and expect several revisions.

Finally, don't try to make your article perfect as you are writing. This stops your flow and, anyway, you can edit it afterwards. Don't try to think of the best word to express something, often the first word that comes to mind is the right one. Or, for example, if you cannot recall the word for 'sphygmomanometer', jot down in brackets 'machine for measuring blood pressure' and move on. You can remember the name later.

#### ***Seek criticism***

You will find it valuable to seek out a writing mentor. This is someone who has published before, whose opinion you respect and whom you can trust to provide honest feedback and guidance during the various stages of writing your article. It may be a higher degree supervisor or a work colleague. The ideal mentor is one who will be a constructive critic, informed as to the intended journal audience, not someone who will simply assure you that it is fine. Mentors are important for all writers, novice or experienced, and especially for writers whose first language is not English. Sometimes it might be hard to find mentors who have experience of international publications, so keep looking, as it is critical to success for novice writers.

#### ***Treat a rejection as the start of the next submission***

You are likely to be rejected in your early days of writing and this also happens to experienced writers. The trick here is try not to be downhearted, think 'where next?' and follow the 'Four Rules' again.

#### ***Now you are ready to start writing!***

We give more details about many of these aspects in the following pages, so you might want to read through them before putting pen to paper – or fingers to keyboard.

## 2. WRITING AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

When carrying out a research study you need to think carefully about your publishing strategy. It is best to start planning this when you first begin the research to avoid misunderstandings as the work progresses to publication stage, such as where to submit the articles, who will be listed as authors and in what order they will be listed.

### **Structuring the article**

Consult your chosen journal's guidelines and published articles to see if there is a preferred structure or format for headings and subheadings. If these are not specified, see below for a general guide to help you construct your article.

### **Reporting guidelines – reliability and quality**

The EQUATOR Network (available at: [www.equator-network.org](http://www.equator-network.org)) is a useful resource for information on

standardised reporting guidelines. Its aim is to improve the quality of health research internationally, and to encourage the use of specific checklists such as CONSORT, STROBE and PRISMA depending on the type of research study design.

Using standardised reporting guidelines will help to ensure that your reporting is transparent, accurate and presented in such a way that those reading your article are able to evaluate the data and reach their own conclusions about it. Remember, omitting key reporting items from your paper may result in it being excluded from future studies that synthesise research findings, such as systematic reviews.

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rationale, context</li> </ul>
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should be a substantial, critical literature review</li> <li>Should end with conclusions drawn from the review for the study</li> </ul>
<b>THE STUDY</b>	
<b>Aim/s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include research objectives/questions/hypothesis(es) if appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Design/Methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For quantitative studies this could be: survey, randomised controlled trial, quasi-experimental, descriptive, or cross-sectional</li> <li>For qualitative study this could be: grounded theory, phenomenology, or ethnography</li> </ul>
<b>Sample/Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not give findings about the sample, but include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type – for example random, stratified, convenience, purposive (state what purpose)</li> <li>Size</li> <li>Description (provide inclusion and exclusion criteria; a little about the setting)</li> <li>Justification for the above</li> <li>Was a power calculation done, if appropriate, and if not, why not?</li> <li>Response rate</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Data collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subheadings for different types if appropriate, eg questionnaires, interviews, observation</li> <li>Pilot study – if done, what changes (if any) did this lead to for the main study?</li> <li>When the data collection was undertaken</li> </ul>
<b>Validity and reliability/ Rigour as appropriate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statement of criteria used – should be appropriate to the design/methodology</li> <li>Steps taken to ensure this – such as audit trail or peer assessment. Describe results, do not just mention what was done</li> </ul>
<b>Ethical considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict of interest statement</li> <li>Ethics committee or institutional review board approval</li> <li>Information and guarantees given to participants</li> <li>Any special considerations, and how they were dealt with</li> </ul>
<b>Data analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including software used, if appropriate, and the measures used to calculate findings</li> </ul>
<b>RESULTS/FINDINGS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start with description of actual sample studied</li> <li>Subheadings as appropriate</li> <li>For qualitative research – findings and discussion/literature may be integrated</li> </ul>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start with limitations</li> <li>Must be linked to the literature</li> </ul>
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Real conclusions, not just a summary/repetition of the findings</li> <li>Recommendations for practice/research/education/management/policy as appropriate, and consistent with the limitations</li> </ul>

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### 3. WRITING AN EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS ARTICLE

#### **Why write an evidence synthesis article?**

Being able to undertake and report a high quality evidence synthesis, or being able to interpret and use a report of synthesised evidence, is considered an essential skill in nursing and healthcare. High quality evidence syntheses are those which contain a high level of systematic processing, interpretation of evidence or theory development and which make a significant new contribution to understanding or knowledge.

Evidence synthesis articles have many purposes, such as to:

- Discuss a phenomenon of interest
- Determine the current evidence base
- Identify theories of interest
- Develop theory
- Better understand context
- Better understand complexity and heterogeneity
- Develop an intervention
- Identify outcomes of interest
- Determine the psychometrics of instruments
- Determine intervention effectiveness
- Determine cost-effectiveness
- Describe implementation barriers and facilitators
- Describe stakeholder experiences
- Report a review of reviews
- Report a rapid review
- Clarify a concept

The reasons you have for undertaking an evidence synthesis may vary widely from being an academic requirement for a programme of study, a personal interest or research focus, or meeting a contractual agreement with a funder. Conducting a systematic review on what is known is now considered by key authors and funders as a prerequisite to obtaining any new research funding (Clarke et al 2010). Finally, a good reason for writing evidence synthesis articles, especially high quality systematic reviews, is that these are the articles which are most likely to be read and cited by other people.

#### **Evidence synthesis article types and methods**

There is now a suite of synthesis approaches and methodological guidelines, ranging from non-systematic to systematic, to help you in developing and writing your article. Method specific reporting guidelines are developed, published and updated over time as methods and reporting standards evolve.

The available synthesis approaches vary in the degree to which they are classified as systematic, and depending on the approach can include different types of evidence (eg quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method, non-empirical or grey literature). Evidence synthesis approaches also vary in the degree to which evidence is synthesised, interpreted and theorised. For example:

- **Knowledge maps and scoping reviews** tend not to be informed by theory and aim to report the range and type of evidence on a specific topic without quality appraisal and with low level (if any) synthesis of findings.
- **Narrative literature reviews** tend not to be informed by theory, or include quality appraisal, and aim mainly to aggregate evidence on a phenomenon of interest.
- **Concept analyses and clarifications** in nursing are usually located within a nursing theory and aim to produce a new understanding of a concept.
- **Qualitative meta-ethnographies** are likely to be undertaken with a conceptual/theoretical framework or proposition with the aim of interpreting synthesised evidence to develop a new theory.
- **Cochrane reviews** of effectiveness begin with a proposition or theory as to how the intervention works. The level of synthesis or ability to perform a meta-analysis will depend on the availability of clinical trials reporting similar interventions with similar populations with the same outcome measures. Assessment of risk of bias is essential.



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### ***Which types of evidence synthesis article are likely to be published?***

Academic journals are more likely to publish high quality evidence syntheses which contain a high level of systematic processing, interpretation of evidence or theory development and which make a significant new contribution to understanding or knowledge. Evidence syntheses are most commonly rejected due to poor planning, design, conduct and reporting. Syntheses with systematic processing of evidence usually require more than one author to complete.

Also be aware that searches for evidence are time limited and very quickly become obsolete as new evidence is published. Reviews that have taken a long time to complete can require updating before they are publishable.

### ***What are the essential points to remember when writing an evidence synthesis article?***

Your team should include members who have knowledge, experience and expertise with evidence synthesis. Other key success factors include using a high quality methodological guide for the selected approach, following this faithfully, and making transparent any adaptations or deviations. Producing a high quality evidence synthesis may take far longer than anticipated and can be as complex as undertaking primary research. The design and methods must be the most appropriate to address the question and accommodate the available evidence. For example, if addressing an effectiveness question and there is a reasonable pool of clinical trials then it is more appropriate to undertake a systematic Cochrane-type review, rather than an integrative review with a lower level of systematic processing.

Make sure that you:

- Select a journal that publishes evidence syntheses of the type/length/scope that you have undertaken and can accommodate the number of essential figures and tables integral to your article.
- Follow the journal reporting requirements.
- Articulate a clear question, objective and purpose.
- Report a named and cited evidence synthesis method/design/process to address the specified question/objective/purpose that is appropriate for synthesising and interpreting the available included evidence.
- Do not overstate the interpretation of evidence or make any conclusions or recommendations that are not supported by the evidence synthesis.
- Follow the methodological guidance for conducting the specific evidence synthesis.
- Make clear the strengths and limitations of the evidence synthesis and the applicability of findings to different contexts.
- Follow reporting standards for conducting searches for evidence.
- Follow the reporting standards for the specific evidence-synthesis type (if available) and make transparent all methods and processes.
- Follow generic reporting standards if method specific reporting standards are not available.
- Mention any conflicts of interest that may have an impact on interpretation of evidence.
- If appropriate, develop a plan for updating the review as new evidence is published.

Before you submit your article, ask an experienced colleague to proofread for factual, abstraction and typographical errors, and obtain pre-submission peer review from experienced authors.

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### **Intellectual property and copyright**

It is easy, inadvertently, to infringe intellectual property or copyright law when synthesising and reporting evidence from published sources. Copyright law varies from country to country, as does guidance on extraction and reproduction of copyright work in reports of evidence synthesis. If re-using published sources, it is your responsibility as the author to find out which permissions are required and which acknowledgements need to be made.

If in doubt, check with the journal editor as to which copyright legislation applies and, if appropriate, confirm with the copyright holder.

Further information is available at:

[authorservices.wiley.com/bauthor/faqs\\_copyright.asp](http://authorservices.wiley.com/bauthor/faqs_copyright.asp)

### **Reporting guidelines**

Visit the '**Enhancing the QUALity and Transparency Of health Research**' (EQUATOR) network website for updated reporting guidelines for your type of review:

[www.equator-network.org](http://www.equator-network.org)

### **Journal specific guidelines**

#### **Journal of Advanced Nursing:**

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1365-2648/homepage/systematic\\_review\\_or\\_other\\_type\\_of\\_review\\_paper.htm](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1365-2648/homepage/systematic_review_or_other_type_of_review_paper.htm)

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1365-2648/homepage/concept\\_analysis.htm](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1365-2648/homepage/concept_analysis.htm)

### **Reference**

Clarke M., Hopewell S., Chalmers I. (2010) Clinical trials should begin and end with systematic reviews of relevant evidence: 12 years and waiting, *The Lancet* 376 (9734), 20-21. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)61045-8

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## 4. WRITING A CLINICAL ARTICLE

Writing a clinical article is an important way of getting your message to frontline healthcare staff who are expected to implement evidence-based practice. Frontline healthcare staff are looking for ways to improve their practice and if this can be found in well-written articles which explain clearly what benefits the results have and how they can be used, then this is likely to have a positive impact on healthcare. In addition, research funders are also looking at the outputs from research that demonstrate an impact on improving health, such as policy changes. Therefore, taking into consideration the frontline users of your research when writing is an important part of any researcher's publication strategy.

### **Why don't nurses read about and implement research in their practice?**

Unfortunately, we know from a wealth of studies on implementing evidence-based guidelines and other research material that some practising nurses:

- do not read research articles
- do not read nursing journals regularly
- are 'turned off' when they do try to read them
- find the language too complicated and full of jargon
- do not understand statistics because they are not used to them
- cannot evaluate the quality of the research

You can read more about these problems and suggestions for overcoming them in:

Brown, C.E., Ecoff, L., Kim, S.C., Wickline, M.A., Rose, B., Klimpel, K. and Glaser, D. (2010), Multi-institutional study of barriers to research utilisation and evidence-based practice among hospital nurses. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 19: 1944-1951. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2702.2009.03184.x

Thompson, D.S., O'Leary, K., Jensen, E., Scott-Findlay, S., O'Brien-Pallas, L. and Estabrooks, C.A. (2008) The relationship between busyness and research utilization: it is about time. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 17: 539-548. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2702.2007.01981.x

### **How can you avoid these pitfalls?**

If busy clinical nurses are to read research, understand and evaluate it, and consider whether it is suitable to be implemented in their practice areas, articles need to be made as reader friendly as possible.

Your publication strategy might include writing two articles on the same topic – one in a professional or clinical journal aimed at practitioners and another in a more academic journal for researchers, but see the advice on Publication Ethics (page 19).

Many of the suggestions in other parts of this booklet will help with this, but here are some points to bear in mind when planning and writing a clinical article:

- Make the article easy to follow.
- Use headings and subheadings to point the way for readers.
- Use bullet points, boxes, trigger questions and other means to liven up the article and stimulate readers' interest.
- Use simple and direct language.
- Write in the first person.
- Address readers directly, eg 'in your clinical area you may like to consider...'
- Avoid research jargon and if technical terms are needed, explain them or give explanations in a glossary or box.
- Do not make the article longer than it needs to be – include only the essentials.
- Say why the points you are making are important and how they might be used to improve nursing practice.
- Explain why the research you are quoting is rigorous and suitable for clinical application, if appropriate.
- Consider whether the technical details you plan to include are really needed and understandable by non-specialists, eg research methodology, statistics.
- Consider omitting technical material, but giving a reference to another article reporting this aspect in more detail.
- Give clinical examples.
- State the clinical relevance of what you are writing about.
- Give suggestions about how to find out more about the topic, including websites.

For more advice on English and writing style, see page 14.

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### ***Get some consumer feedback***

Find some practitioners who are potential readers of your article. Tell them about your ideas and ask them what they would like to read about in the article. Draw up your plan based on their suggestions and then check back with them again.

When you have written your first draft, consult your mentor, and perhaps also ask at least a couple of your potential readers to read it and tell you frankly what they think:

- Can they understand it?
- Is it interesting?
- Is it relevant to their practice?
- Ask them to write in suggestions, corrections, comments – whether positive or negative.

Consider their feedback carefully and not defensively, and make the necessary changes, checking back with them again. Put their names in an acknowledgement to the article – this will reward them and encourage them to help you again next time. Give them a copy of the article when it is published.

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## 5. PUBLISHING FROM A RESEARCH THESIS

### **First steps**

It is important to discuss a publication strategy at the very beginning of your work for a master degree dissertation or doctoral thesis. Your supervisor(s) will play a major role in helping to develop your ideas, carry out the work, and write up the thesis. Therefore, it is appropriate that issues such as co-authorship have been discussed and agreed.

Journals are likely to have a policy on who can be included as an author and who should be acknowledged as making a contribution, but not as an author (see Publication Ethics on page 19). When your supervisor(s) has participated in writing an article, then it is probably most appropriate that you are the first named author, followed by the name of your supervisor(s) in the order agreed. It is conventional that the first named author is recognised as doing the major part of the work, and the others are seen as making a lesser contribution. Authors should adhere to journal rules about authorship convention rather than those of individual universities.

### **When should you publish from your thesis?**

It is usual to wait until your thesis is finished before writing articles for publication – unless you are undertaking a doctorate by publication. It might be appropriate to publish an article while you are still working on the study:

- if you are doing a multi-stage study and one part is completed
- if you have material for a methodological article
- if it is a requirement of your doctoral programme that you publish articles before the examination or defence of your thesis. Please bear in mind, however, that the time from submission to publication varies from journal to journal, and journal editors won't take into account your doctoral programme deadlines.

It is essential to discuss this with your supervisor(s) to judge whether it is a good idea to write an article at this stage, or whether it would divert you from the main objective of finishing the project or thesis. It may also be premature to publish ideas or data that later need to be modified.

This may be the biggest piece of work you will ever do, and it is vital to publish your findings while they are still fresh and relevant. It is tempting, once the relief of finishing the thesis, having the examination and celebrating your success are over, to move on to new work. However, be aware that journals may be reluctant to publish 'old' material; and data collected over five years ago may be considered to be too out of date to publish.

### **Publishing strategy**

Discuss with your supervisor(s) how many articles you will write, what will be included in each, the timetable for writing and submitting them, and how you will collaborate on the writing.

From your work you may write:

- a literature review article
- a methodological article
- one or more articles on study results.

However, it is important to bear in mind that you should not submit for publication small sections of a study in several separate articles (sometimes called 'salami slicing'). See Publication Ethics (page 19).



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### ***Is it easy to turn a thesis into articles for publication?***

Sometimes quite major modifications are needed before a thesis can be submitted as an article.

A journal article is quite different in many respects from a thesis in terms of:

- length and amount of detail needed on a topic
- depth of methodological discussion needed
- language and style
- interest value of the material
- audience.

This brings us back to several vital issues:

- Work on the publications with your supervisor(s) – he/she is likely to be an experienced writer and so will be able to guide you on how to develop articles from the thesis.
- Consult libraries or journal websites to identify the most appropriate journals for your articles.
- Make sure that you follow the journal's author guidelines closely to improve the chances of acceptance of your article.

### ***Caution!***

Unfortunately, not all student projects are suitable for turning into an article for publication. Some are just too small-scale and/or local. This does not mean that your work was not valuable – after all, you were awarded the degree! But a piece of work done for one purpose does not always lend itself to another. If in doubt about whether to spend time turning your work into an article, write an abstract of the proposed article and email it to the journal editor asking if it will be suitable.

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## 6. PRESENTATION OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Here are some tips to help you with designing tables and figures for your article.

### **All tables and figures**

- Simple and easy to follow tables and figures are best. Too much detail can get in the way of understanding your main message.
- Check the journal guidelines:
  - Is there a limit on the number of tables or figures you can use?
  - Does the journal use colour, or black and white?
  - What guidelines should be followed when producing electronic artwork?
  - If your article includes many tables and/or figures, does the journal offer the option of posting supplementary material online?
- Place the tables and figures at the end of the article. Do not put them in the text – they will be placed appropriately when the printer prepares the page proofs.
- Refer to all tables and figures in the text, for example 'See Table 1', 'Figure 2 shows that...'
- In the text of the article, pick out the highlights or main points that the table/figure is telling your readers.
- Number tables and figures in separate sequences, eg Table 1, 2, etc, Figure 1, 2, etc.
- Give each table/figure a concise heading that summarises its content.
- Try to avoid abbreviations. If they are essential, give them in full in a footnote to the table, even if you have already explained them in the text.
- Each separate table/figure should stand alone, that is, it should be understandable without having to refer back to the text.
- Give the number of cases/sample size to which the table/figure refers, eg N=120.
- Do not put a border around tables and figures.

### **For tables**

- Make sure that numbers, especially if they have decimal points, line up properly – using tabs or right justification for these columns is the easiest way to do this; do not use the space bar.
- Round numbers to two decimal places, except for statistical significance levels.
- If you are indicating that some numbers represent statistically significant differences, give the test used and significance level – preferably in columns of the table rather than footnotes.
- Give column and row totals where appropriate.
- Do not use lines to separate columns.
- Only use lines to separate rows if the rows deal with different types of variable, eg age, income, nursing qualification.

### **For figures**

- With figures, avoid backgrounds, eg shading, patterned bars – use plain white, grey or black.
- Label both axes of figures in a sans-serif font (eg Arial).
- If multiple parts exist in a figure then each part should be labelled with (a), (b), (c), etc and have an explanation in the legend.

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## 7. ENGLISH AND WRITING STYLE

It is important to write in a manner that is accessible to your intended audience, so that readers can easily understand and enjoy reading your article. As you may have noticed, each journal describes its aims and scope and positions itself toward a particular audience – frontline practicing nurses in general, nurses in a specific speciality field, nurse educators, nurse philosophers, and so on. In your writing, it is important to develop a writing voice that is appropriate to the style of each journal in reaching its intended audience.

Whilst not all journals are explicitly international in their aims and scope, the fact that the majority of them are available online means that many of their readers will not have English as their first language. This is a further reason to ensure that you use a clear writing style.

### ***Reader friendly scholarly writing***

The best scholarly writing communicates complex ideas in a straightforward, clear and elegant manner. Being truly scholarly in your writing does not require writing in a dense or obtuse manner.

In many studies of nursing research utilisation and knowledge transfer, it has been reported that uninteresting or overly complex writing, or too much use of language that requires interpretation puts people off reading journals. So if your intended audience is a clinical population, clear language and direct messaging is especially important. Simple, short sentences may work better than long and convoluted ones. Avoid trying to impress people with long words, and if you don't fully understand the meaning of a term, don't use it (overuse of the thesaurus has got many authors into trouble!).

The principles for readability are the same as those that you may have used already when writing patient information leaflets and health education materials – simple words, short sentences, direct speech, and no jargon.

As a general rule of thumb, write in the first person – 'I' or 'we' – rather than the third person – 'the author' or 'the researcher'. So in a research-based paper, for example, write 'We interviewed patients postoperatively...' rather than 'The researchers interviewed patients postoperatively'. Similarly, using the active voice creates better clarity and flow of your ideas than does overuse of the passive voice in your writing. For example, 'We interviewed patients...' is better than 'Patients were interviewed' and 'We found that this population had...' rather than 'This population was found to have...'

### ***Singular, plural and gender***

In general it is best to avoid stereotyping with gender-specific language. For example, be especially careful to avoid defaulting to the feminine pronoun (she/her) for nurses and the male pronoun (he/his) for patients!

Writing in the plural avoids:

- frequent repetition of his/her or she/he. Instead, use they.
- overuse of 'the', as in 'the patient with diabetes...' or 'the nurse should...' Instead, write 'patients with diabetes...' or 'nurses should...'

It is also important to ensure that there is consistency in your use of singular or plural nouns, for example 'When patients were intubated, they...' is grammatically correct, whereas 'When the patient was intubated, they...' is incorrect.

If your paper has multiple authors be careful to write in the first person plural rather than singular. If there are sections of the paper where you are using first person singular because only one author voice is required, be explicit about why this is so.

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### **Avoid jargon**

One person's jargon is another person's specialist, technical language. Sometimes shortened terms are used within specialist areas or even abbreviations are commonplace, but these need to be explained or written out in full to make sure that non-specialist readers can understand them. Examples of jargon are 'D & E grades' instead of 'staff nurses', and 'scope' instead of 'endoscope'. Some journals focus on expert, informed audiences, however, so not all scholarly writing needs to be accessible to a non-expert reading audience.

Although writing with simplicity and using commonly understood terms may work best for reaching the widest audiences, if you are writing for a journal with a specialised audience attempting to be overly simplistic may detract from the quality of your argument. For example, in a philosophical or theoretical article, precise use of complex terminology may be an essential ingredient to a logically defensible claim. So the choice of language and expression is highly related to the journal you are writing for and its intended audience. Ensuring you are familiar with the journal's author guidelines and reading a selection of recently published articles will help you feel more confident in your assessment of how best to write for a successful outcome.

### **Abbreviations**

Explain abbreviations the first time you use them, for example:

National Service Framework (NSF)

American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE)

National Health Service Executive (NHSE)

Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG)

Where the location is not self-evident in the title, and the intended audience extends beyond your local region, you may also need to provide further explanation (eg 'In the United Kingdom (UK), the National Health Service (NHS) is...').

Remember that ways of expressing ideas that are commonplace to you, in your region, may not be self-evident to others, even within a speciality field. For example, don't use the single word 'nurses' as shorthand for 'nursing staff'. Generally, 'Nurse' refers to a Registered Nurse (note the capital letters). If other kinds of worker are included, such as nursing aides, then 'nursing staff' would be the correct expression.

Avoid using 'etc' at the end of a group of examples.

### **National and international audiences**

Some journals, such as national speciality journals, clearly aim for a primarily local audience. In writing for these journals you can safely assume that your readers have some knowledge of the local context and will understand your references to local conditions (popular policy frameworks, names of health authorities and professional organisations, and so on). However, many journals aim to communicate with an international audience, assuming that their intended readers will come from a range of communities and cannot be familiar with local context. In this case, you should use accessible language and provide sufficient detail to allow all readers to easily understand what you mean, and follow your ideas.

### **When English is not your first language**

If fluency in English is an issue for you, it is advisable to try to prepare your draft article in English. Even if this is somewhat difficult for you, it tends to make for a more successful article than writing it in your preferred language and having it translated into English afterwards. If there are problems with the English writing, most journals will strongly encourage you to obtain editorial and/or proofreading advice prior to initial submission. If your article is not written in clear English, it is more likely to be rejected. There are now many services available, regardless of your location, to provide this work, and help you make the text as clear and comprehensible as possible. Most health research units and universities have departments to facilitate this process, including services by native English copyeditors. If this is not locally available, Wiley offers a service that you may wish to take advantage of. Visit [wileyeditingservices.com](http://wileyeditingservices.com) for details.

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### **Checking and re-checking your article**

Use spelling and grammar checkers to help you avoid most of the common errors.

When you think you have finished writing your article, there are still several steps to be taken.

Read it out aloud to yourself to check that it makes sense, has a logical order, and the punctuation is in the right places.

Ask your writing mentor to review the article for you. You may also want to find someone to represent your target readers, such as a staff nurse if it is a clinical paper or a new researcher if it is a research report. Ask them to read the article and tell you where you may need to write more clearly or in more detail. If they have contributed significantly to the writing of the article, then remember to thank them in the Acknowledgements section. They will usually be more likely to help you and others in future.

### **Useful resources**

Hall, George M. (Ed.) (2012) *How To Write a Paper*, 5th edition. Oxford: BMJ Books

Holland, K and Watson, R (Eds.) (2012) *Writing for Publication in Nursing and Healthcare: Getting it Right*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

Nurse Author & Editor (Wiley): [www.nurseauthoreditor.com](http://www.nurseauthoreditor.com)

Writing for Publication (International Academy of Nursing Editors): <http://nursingeditors.com/resources/writing-for-publication/>

EASE Guidelines for Authors and Translators of Scientific Articles to Be Published in English, available at [www.ease.org.uk/publications/author-guidelines](http://www.ease.org.uk/publications/author-guidelines)

Writing Resources for Nursing Faculty and Students (University of Florida College of Nursing): <http://nursing.ufl.edu/research/resources-for-faculty/writing-resources-for-nursing-faculty-and-students/>

<http://exchanges.wiley.com/blog/2012/04/26/the-alchemy-of-words-turning-base-manuscripts-into-golden-articles/>

[http://authorservices.wiley.com/bauthor/more\\_resources.asp](http://authorservices.wiley.com/bauthor/more_resources.asp)



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## 8. MAKING YOUR ARTICLE DISCOVERABLE ONLINE

### ***Search engine optimisation (SEO)***

Increasing the readership of your article will raise the visibility of your research. Search engine optimisation (SEO) is a key factor in ensuring your research is discovered and available to read or download.

Here are a few tips to help you with this.

#### ***Make sure you have a SEO friendly title for your article***

The title needs to be descriptive and must incorporate a key phrase related to your topic. Put your keywords within the first 65 characters of the title.

#### ***Carefully craft your abstract using keywords***

- Choose the appropriate keywords and phrases for your article. Think of a phrase of 2-4 words that a researcher might search on to find your article.
- Consider looking up specific keywords on Google Trends to find out which search terms are popular.
- Repeat your keywords and phrases 3-4 times throughout the abstract in a natural, contextual way.
- BUT don't go overboard with repetition as search engines may un-index your article as a result.

#### ***Provide at least five keywords or phrases in the keywords field***

Include the keywords and phrases you repeated in your abstract. Provide additional relevant keywords and synonyms for those keywords as they relate to your article. Keywords are not only important for SEO, they are also used by abstracting and indexing services as a mechanism to tag research content.

#### ***Stay consistent with authors' names***

Refer to authors' names and initials in a consistent manner throughout the article and make sure you're referring to them in the same way they've been referred to in past online publications.

### ***Headings***

Headings for the various sections of your article tip off search engines as to the structure and content of your article. Incorporate your keywords and phrases in these headings wherever it's appropriate.

#### ***Cite your own or your co-authors' previous publications***

Cite your previous work as appropriate because citations of your past work factor into how search engines rank your current and future work.

#### ***Promotion on social media***

Once your article is written and published, you can promote it on your academic and social networks. Linking to your article on platforms such as those listed below will also influence search engine rankings.

- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Your blog, or websites that you contribute to
- Your institution's repository
- Your academic institution's website
- Mendeley
- ResearchGate

### ***Resources***

You may find the following posts on the Wiley Exchanges blog useful:

'Search Engine Optimization and Your Journal Article'

<http://exchanges.wiley.com/blog/2013/07/23/search-engine-optimization-and-your-journal-article-do-you-want-the-bad-news-first/>

'Optimizing Abstracts for Search Engines'

<http://exchanges.wiley.com/blog/2006/12/06/optimizing-abstracts-for-search-engines/>

10 easy ways to make sure your article gets read

<http://exchanges.wiley.com/blog/2013/09/23/10-easy-ways-to-make-sure-your-article-gets-read/>

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## 9. COPYRIGHT ISSUES

### ***What is copyright?***

The general purpose of copyright is to provide the holder with rights to control the way in which the material they own can be used. The rights can cover any number of things including how material is distributed, copied and adapted.

Each publisher and journal will have its own copyright transfer agreement, which is a legal document generally used to transfer the copyright of journal articles from one party to another. Open Access journals, or journals which offer an Open Access publication option, will instead ask authors to sign the relevant Open Access licence. Once signed, the signatory is contracted to the rules governing the agreement.

### ***Copyright transfer agreements (CTAs)***

It is a legal requirement for publishers to receive a signed CTA before publication of an article can proceed.

There are a number of reasons why a CTA is sought; not least the fact that under European copyright law a publisher must have explicit authority from the copyright holder to post an article online. If publishers did not have this authority for all articles, it would prevent them from being able to easily disseminate articles in electronic format, and, consequently limit the amount of exposure articles receive. Publishers adopting a policy of obtaining CTAs also has the following advantages:

- It facilitates international protection against infringement, libel or plagiarism.
- It enables the most efficient processing of licensing and permissions in order that the article can be made available to the fullest extent both directly and through intermediaries, and in both print and electronic form.
- It enables publishers to maintain the integrity of an article once refereed and accepted for publication, by facilitating centralised management of all media forms including linking, reference validation and distribution.

### ***What rights do you retain?***

The essential features of a CTA are usually as follows:

- You will be identified as the author whenever and wherever your article is published.
- You or, if applicable, your employer, retains all proprietary rights (other than copyright), such as patent rights, in any process, procedure or article of manufacture described in your article.
- You retain various rights related to reuse and self-archiving. These vary between publishers and journals, so you should check the exact terms on the journal's website before submission.
- All requests by third parties to re-use or adapt your article in whole or in part will usually be handled by the publisher.

### ***Open Access licences***

Each journal that offers an Open Access publication option will again have its own licence, which you should check on the journal's website. Many Open Access licences are based on the Creative Commons Licences (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/>). Creative Commons have several licences, although not all journals will offer all of them, and these allow different levels of re-use (eg commercial/non-commercial re-use).

Some funding bodies and universities have policies that require any authors funded or employed by them to publish their work under certain licences. Open Access is a relatively new and rapidly-changing movement, and it is therefore important to fully understand the different options and requirements, and what they mean for the re-use of your article.

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## 10. PUBLICATION ETHICS

Ethical issues are important for everyone involved in journal publishing, including authors, reviewers, editors and publishers; adhering to a standard of ethical authorship and publication is good practice and furthers the concept of good science. Violation of publication ethics standards could have serious implications for your career and reputation, so it is important to address ethical issues carefully – at the time of writing your article. This section outlines some of the key ethical considerations for you as an author, but publication ethics is a complex subject and we recommend that you access the listed resources for further information.

The Wiley *Best Practice Guidelines on Publication Ethics* can be accessed at:  
[exchanges.wiley.com/ethicsguidelines](http://exchanges.wiley.com/ethicsguidelines)

Wiley, like many publishing companies, is a member of the Committee for Publication Ethics (COPE). COPE offers a wide array of guidelines and flow sheets to assist editors in managing the ethical issues they confront in their roles. COPE is also available to authors and can be accessed at [www.publicationethics.org](http://www.publicationethics.org). Academic writers are encouraged to visit the site and make use of the resources that are free to all.

If you have queries or concerns which aren't answered by referring to the above website, it's a good idea to contact the editor of the journal to which you are planning to submit your article.

### **Authorship**

Journals' definitions as to what constitutes authorship will vary, so it is important to consult the specific journal's guidance about this. Definitions are also provided by various bodies including the International Council of Medical and Journal Editors (ICMJE) which offers guidance on authorship issues, in this case for submissions to biomedical publications:  
[www.icmje.org](http://www.icmje.org)

Establishing authorship and order of authors at the start of your project can help to avoid embarrassment and confusion at the later stages. You should not list people as authors who have had little or no part in the research. Similarly, it is unethical to leave out the names of individuals who contributed substantially to the research.

Normally, the person who has played the major role in research design, data generation and analysis, and in writing the article, will be the first named author. Research teams may divide up the publications so that each member has one for which he/she is the first named author. Publications resulting from student projects should have the student as the first named author, and the supervisor(s) afterwards, but only if he/she has made a major contribution both to the work and to the article. If not, the supervisor(s) should be acknowledged, but not listed as co-authors.

Other people who you may wish to acknowledge, rather than list as authors, could be managers who have granted research access, or graduate students who have checked the accuracy of references.

You may like to read this editorial about authorship:

Hayter, M., Noyes, J., Perry, L., Pickler, R., Roe, B. and Watson, R. (2013), Who writes, whose rights, and who's right? Issues in authorship. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 69: 2599–2601. doi: 10.1111/jan.12265

### **Duplicate and redundant publication**

If you are preparing more than one article from the same study, these should be submitted as separate articles. Each article should address different aspects of the study, or report the study in distinctly different ways for different readerships. When there are several articles from the same study you should alert the editor to this in your covering letter for each article at the time of submission.

You should not submit for publication small sections of a study in several separate articles (sometimes called 'salami slicing'). When more than one article is prepared from the same study there should be minimal duplication and no cut and paste of material across the articles. It might be appropriate, for example, to describe the research methods fully in one article and give a summary of these in a second article, with reference to the fuller description in the first article. However done, there must always be direct referencing to any other articles from the same study that have been published (or are 'in press').

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It is never acceptable to submit the same article to more than one journal at a time. If you wish to submit to another journal, the original article must be withdrawn from the journal where it is being reviewed. If an article is rejected by a journal, you are free to submit to another.

If you wish to publish a translation of your article from English, or into English, remember that this would be duplicate publication, and permission would need to be sought from both of the journals' publishers.

### **Plagiarism**

As you will be aware, you need to take care to avoid plagiarism. The US Office of Research Integrity (ORI) offers this working definition of plagiarism:

'ORI considers plagiarism to include both the theft or misappropriation of intellectual property and the substantial unattributed textual copying of another's work.' <http://ori.hhs.gov/ori-policy-plagiarism>

Many journals screen submitted articles by using plagiarism screening services such as CrossCheck, which is a multi-publisher initiative to screen published and submitted content for originality. To find out more about CrossCheck visit [www.crossref.org/crosscheck.html](http://www.crossref.org/crosscheck.html)

Due to copyright issues it is unacceptable to reuse text or figures from your own previously published work without appropriately referencing (and seeking permission in some cases). See hyperlink to [http://authorservices.wiley.com/bauthor/faqs\\_copyright.asp](http://authorservices.wiley.com/bauthor/faqs_copyright.asp) for further information.

### **Other important issues:**

- **Conflict of interest**

If there are financial or personal interests which could be thought to affect your ability to present your work objectively, then these should be disclosed. Check the author guidelines to find out how the journal you are submitting to wants declarations to be made.

- **Registering clinical trials**

Clinical trials should be registered in publicly accessible registries prospectively, before participants are enrolled.

- **Respecting confidentiality**

You should write in such a way as to protect research participants from being recognised in your article.

- **Protecting research participants**

If your research involves human participants you are required to obtain ethical approval from an appropriate body, and many journals will require you to indicate how you obtained ethical approval for your study. There are recognised international standards to ensure that studies involving human participants are conducted in such a way as to minimise harm to participants.

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## 11. THE IMPACT FACTOR

While the Impact Factor remains the most widely known and used measure of a journal's impact, exactly what it tells us is often the cause of considerable confusion and debate. Many alternative metrics are available, some of which are based (like the Impact Factor) on citations, while others are based on other ways of measuring impact, such as online accesses to articles (usage) and dissemination through social media.

This section looks first at the Impact Factor, and then at alternative methods for measuring impact.

### ***What is an Impact Factor?***

The Impact Factor was devised by the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI), now part of Thomson Reuters. Thomson Reuters' Journal Citation Reports are published annually and list the Impact Factors of the indexed journals, of which there are now over 11,000.

Broadly speaking, the Impact Factor is a measure of the journal's influence – as measured by the number of citations it receives. Specifically, the Impact Factor for a given year is defined as the total number of citations received by the journal in that year to articles published over the previous two years, divided by the total number of citable items published by the journal in that two year period.

For more information about ISI, visit [thomsonreuters.com/thomson-reuters-web-of-science/](http://thomsonreuters.com/thomson-reuters-web-of-science/)

### ***What does a journal need to do to get an Impact Factor?***

To merit inclusion in the ISI database (and therefore to receive an Impact Factor) a journal must pass a vetting procedure which begins with an ISI in-house editor, with appropriate subject expertise, and concludes with a review and confirmation by the entire ISI editorial team. The assessment involves a number of parameters, including regularity of publication, profile of the editorial team, whether the journal is peer reviewed, the relevance and topicality of the contents, and whether the speciality is sufficiently covered already within ISI. For more information, see the Thomson Reuters Journal Selection Process Essay at [wokinfo.com/essays/journal-selection-process/](http://wokinfo.com/essays/journal-selection-process/)

### ***Are Impact Factors important? If so, why?***

For some authors – rightly or wrongly – the Impact Factor is a significant criterion when selecting a journal for the article they want to publish. The reason for this is that, for many people, a journal which has an Impact Factor/high Impact Factor is deemed to be one of high quality (relatively speaking). Historically, this has been the view of those who allocate research funding or determine academic promotion. But this is changing: more and more, the quality of an article is considered on an individual basis rather than on the basis of the journal's Impact Factor in isolation. Assessing articles at an individual level makes a lot of sense as, in theory, a journal could receive a high Impact Factor by publishing one heavily cited article, alongside a number of articles that are seldom cited.

What is more, not only is it contentious to assume any link between citation numbers and the quality of material published, it may be that a journal receives fewer citations because the material it publishes has been less widely disseminated compared to competitor journals (not that the quality of the journal is any worse than other journals in its field).

### ***What about those journals that do not have an Impact Factor?***

So where does this leave journals which do not have an Impact Factor? Firstly, not having an Impact Factor does not automatically mean a journal is not publishing material equal to, or even better than, material published in journals that do have an Impact Factor. In addition to the above, the journal could be new, and so yet to have published sufficient material to have received a full ISI assessment. Likewise, it could be that the journal focuses on material that is less likely to gain (or indeed increase) an Impact Factor – for example, case reports, which tend to be less frequently cited. This does not necessarily mean that the journal is of any less value – perhaps just that its editorial team have chosen to publish articles more suited to a specific target audience.



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In addition, some subject areas (including nursing) are less time sensitive. Consequently, the two year timeframe for assessing a journal's Impact Factor is not always a true reflection of the worth of a journal; some journals have articles which continue to be highly cited – or start being cited – three or four years after publication, but are not included within the current ISI calculation for assessing an Impact Factor.

The Impact Factor has tended to dictate which journal some authors (particularly academics) choose to submit to, and this is likely to continue for the reasons (and misunderstandings) outlined above. Given that there is no obvious alternative for measuring the relative quality of a journal, this is understandable. However, the Impact Factor should not be the only factor considered when choosing which journal to publish in. Referring back to the earlier section entitled 'Who do I want to read my article?' (page 3) is a better starting point!

### ***Alternative methods for measuring impact***

There are also other metrics and methods for evaluating the impact of journals. Many rely on the same data as the Impact Factor, used in a slightly different way.

The Five Year Impact Factor looks at citations from a certain year to articles published in the previous five years, rather than the previous two years as the Impact Factor does.

The Eigenfactor (and related metric Article Influence) also look at a five year window, but additionally seek to resolve some of the problems of the Impact Factor by removing self-citations from the calculation and weighting citations by the impact of the citing journal.

The SCImago Journal Rank does not rely on ISI's data but rather Elsevier's competitor index, Scopus. Like the Impact Factor, it essentially measures citations per article, but removes self-citations and weights cites as the Eigenfactor does.

Not all metrics look at journals. The *h*-index is used to evaluate individual authors; an author has an *h*-index of, say, five when he/she has published at least five articles, each of which has been cited at least five times, or an *h*-index of ten when he/she has published at least ten articles, each of which has been cited at least ten times. There are numerous similar metrics that evaluate authors in the same way.

Other metrics are not based on citation data.

Online usage statistics and usage-based metrics are becoming increasingly important, and COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources) is currently working towards developing a Journal Usage Factor ([www.projectcounter.org/usage\\_factor.html](http://www.projectcounter.org/usage_factor.html)).

Article-level metrics that are not based on citations are becoming more widely accepted, and these are often referred to as altmetrics. There are several companies, websites and groups that calculate altmetrics, including Altmetrics.com, ImpactStory, CitedIn and Plum Analytics. The most common altmetrics relate to online views and mentions on social media, blogs or news media.



# Wiley's Nursing Journals

## BIRTH\*

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