

## **Guidelines to Authors**

**Scope, objectives and general information:** The Tanzania Medical Journal is a multi – disciplinary journal published two times a year in March - June and September – December. The journal is produced with due respect for its own objectives of being a scientifically reliable journal that aims at improving all aspects of medicine. To achieve its objectives the journal invites papers on original scientific research, short communications, case reports and letters to the editor, in any branch of medical science. Original articles should present data from original research which is relevant to the practice of medicine especially in Tanzania, East Africa and the African continent. Papers from other developing and developed countries are also invited. Topical review articles and editorials are also accepted but by invitation of the experts in the respective subjects. Reviews must be critical analyses of the fields reviewed, covering a wide range of issues for instance, controversies, ‘gray’ areas, and breakthroughs. Case reports are invited; but the reason for presenting them must be clearly justified. Case reports should be authentic, and should observe the general principles of medical ethics. Letters to the Editor are welcome but must be relevant to other readers and priority will be given to those responding to articles published in the journal within six months. Obituaries of interest to the Tanzania Medical Journal readership will also be published but should preferably be accompanied with a good quality pass port sized photograph. Obituaries should be short and should contain: full names, date and place of birth and death, brief education history, year and place of qualification, all degrees or other qualifications, appointments/ positions, hobbies, family (spouse, children) and cause of death.

Original articles should not be more than 4000 words with no more than six tables/illustrations. Case reports should not be more than 1500 words which includes a succinct, informative summary of no more than 100 words. Short articles/communications should not exceed 750 words in length. Letters to the Editor could be up to 450 words with no more than one illustration. Obituaries could be up to 350 words. The word count limit excludes abstracts, references, tables, charts and figures.

The Editor retains the customary right to style, amend and if necessary shorten the material accepted for publication. All communications should be addressed to the Chief – Editor, Tanzania Medical Journal, P. O. Box 701, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Tel: +255 – 22 – 2151835 , Fax: +255 – 22 – 2153514, E–mail: [tmj@mat-tz.org](mailto:tmj@mat-tz.org)

**Manuscript preparation: Overview.** Manuscripts submitted to the Tanzania Medical Journal for publication, should be prepared in accordance with the ‘Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication guidelines, as prepared by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (icmje), and updated in February 2006 (website <http://www.icmje.org/index.html>).

The manuscripts should be prepared in the following order: Title, Abstract, Text, Acknowledgements (if any) and References. Other types of articles, such as case reports, reviews, and editorials do not need to adhere to this format. The manuscripts

should be clearly and concisely prepared in English with correct grammar. They should be double spaced in all sections including the title page, abstract, text, acknowledgement, references, individual tables, and legends and printed or typewritten on numbered pages on one side of good quality A4 (210 x 297) white paper with font size 12. Margins should be at least 25 mm on the left side. Authors should preferably use Times New Roman throughout the text. Abbreviations can only be used after the long form has been written and should follow the internationally acceptable standards.

### **Manuscript format**

**Title page:** The title page should carry the following information: 1) The full title of the article: The title should be brief and clear, depicting the main theme of the article. The title should not contain any formulae or abbreviations unless it is very necessary in which case only internationally recognized abbreviations should be used. Too long and too short titles should be avoided as they are either ambiguous or lack important information; 2) Authors' names and institutional affiliations; 3) The name of the department to which the work should be attributed; 4) Disclaimers if any; 5) Corresponding author (The name, mailing address, telephone, fax numbers and e – mail address of the author responsible for correspondence about the manuscript); 6) Key words.

**Abstract:** An abstract should follow the title page. The abstract should reflect the content of the article accurately with much emphasis being made on new and important aspects of the study. Abstracts of not more than 350 words should be structured under the following headings: Background, Broad objective, Methodology (i.e. Study design, Study setting, Study population, Measures of outcome, Interventions, Statistics), Results, Conclusions and recommendations. Main findings of the study should specify effect sizes and their statistical significance, if possible.

**Key words:** Should come after the abstract: Authors should provide, and identify as such, 3 to 10 key words or short phrases that capture the main topics of the article, for purposes of indexing.

**Text:** The text of manuscripts of original observational and experimental articles should be sub – divided into sections with the following headings: Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion, that is, “IMRAD” structure.

**Introduction:** The introduction should provide a context or background for the study (i.e., the nature of the problem and its significance). It should state the specific purpose or research objective, or hypothesis being tested by the study or observation. Both the main (broad) and specific (secondary) objectives should be made clear. The rationale for conducting the study must be stated clearly. The introduction should not include data or conclusions made from the research work being reported.

**Methodology:** This section should include only information that was available at the time the protocol for the study was written (all information obtained during the conduct of the study belongs to the Results section). The methodology section should provide

details on study design, setting, population/subjects, measures of outcome, interventions, data analysis and ethical issues. Selection and description of study participants, including inclusion and exclusion criteria, the source of the population and the sampling methods used must be clear. Authors should clearly state why such inclusion and exclusion criteria were employed, e.g. why women only were included. Technical information must be detailed. Identify the methods, apparatus (give manufacturer's name and address in parentheses) and procedures in sufficient detail to allow others to reproduce the results. Give references to established methods, including statistical methods; provide references and brief descriptions for methods that have been published but are not well known to others; describe new or substantially modified methods and give reasons for using them. Identify precisely all drugs and chemicals used, including generic name(s), dose(s), and route(s) of administration. For review articles authors should describe the methods they used for locating, selecting, extracting and synthesizing data. These methods should also be summarized in the abstract. Statistical methods should be described with enough detail to allow verification of the reported data. When possible, findings should be quantified and presented with appropriate indicators of measurement error or uncertainty such as confidence intervals. Authors should avoid relying solely on statistical hypothesis testing, such as the use of P values, which fails to convey important information about effect size. If P values are used these should be accompanied by degrees of freedom (e.g.  $X^2 = 16$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.02$ ;  $t=3.5$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=0.05$ ). Statistical terms, abbreviations and symbols must be defined. The computer software used must be specified.

**Results:** The results must be presented in logical sequence in the text, tables, and illustrations; giving the main or most important findings first. Discrepancy between text and tables or figures must be avoided. Authors should not repeat in the text all the data in the tables or illustrations; emphasize or summarize only important observations. Extra or supplementary materials and technical detail if any should be placed in an appendix. Authors should give numeric results not only as derivatives (e.g. percentages, proportions) but also as the absolute results from which the derivatives were calculated, and specify the statistical methods used to analyze them. Average values must be accompanied by standard errors or standard deviations. Tables and figures must be restricted to those needed to explain the argument of the paper and to assess its support. Graphs should be used as an alternative to tables with many entries; do not duplicate data in graphs and tables.

**Discussion:** This section should emphasize the new and important aspects of the study and the conclusions that follow from them. Authors should not repeat in detail data or other material given in the Introduction or the Results section. For experimental studies authors may find it useful to begin the discussion by summarizing briefly the main findings, then exploring the possible mechanisms or explanations for these findings; compare and contrast the results with other relevant studies; state the limitations of the study; and explore the implications of the findings for future research and for clinical practice. Authors should link the conclusions with goals of the study but should avoid unqualified statements and conclusions not adequately supported by the data. They should also avoid claiming priority and alluding to work that has not been completed.

**Tables:** Tables must be self explanatory; capture information concisely and display it efficiently. Authors must avoid tables that place a lot of unrelated variables together. Tables must be titled correctly and numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals in the order of their first citation in the text. Authors must be sure that each table is cited in the text. Titles must be clear and concise that describe the what, where, when (and number of subjects where applicable in brackets). Each title should be preceded by a table number (e.g. table 1). Each row and each column must be labeled clearly and concisely using short or abbreviated headings, and should include units of measurement as well as totals for rows and columns. Authors should explain any codes, abbreviations or symbols used in tables in a footnote below the table, not in the title. Note any exclusion and any source of data that is not original in a footnote. For footnotes, authors are advised to use the following symbols in sequence: \*, †, ‡, §, ||, ¶, \*\*, ††, ‡‡. If data from another published or unpublished source is used, authors must obtain permission and acknowledge them. Do not use internal horizontal or vertical lines in the tables.

**Figures (Illustrations):** Figures should be either professionally drawn and photographed, or submitted as photographic quality digital prints. For x-ray films, scans, and other diagnostic images, as well as pictures of pathology specimens or photomicrographs, send sharp, glossy, black – and – white or color photographic prints, 127 x 173 mm (5 x 7 inches). Letters, numbers, and symbols on figures should be clear and even throughout and of sufficient size that when reduced for publication, each will still be legible. Figures should be as self explanatory as possible. Titles and detailed explanations belong in the legends, however, not on the illustrations themselves. In case of photographs of people, either the subjects must not be identifiable or their pictures must be accompanied by their written permission to use them. Figures should be numbered consecutively according to the order in which they have been first cited in the text.

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**Units of measurement:** Scientific measurements should be in SI Units except for blood pressure which should be expressed in mmHg; hemoglobin in g/dl and temperature in degrees Celsius.

**Abbreviations and symbols:** Authors should use only standard abbreviations. Avoid abbreviations in the title. The full term for which an abbreviation stands should precede its first use in the text unless it is a standard unit of measurement.

**Acknowledgement:** Authors are advised to acknowledge any persons who have made substantial contributions to their work in one form or another e.g. acquisition of funds,

subject recruitment, data collection, laboratory investigations, data analysis e.t.c., but who do not meet the criteria for authorship (as defined below).

**Reference style and format:** Authors should avoid extensive lists of references. They should use small numbers of references to key original papers in order to save space in the journal. References for original long articles should be limited to 15 while short articles and letters should have a maximum of 5 references. Authors should avoid using abstracts as references unless there are compelling reasons to do so. References to papers accepted but not yet published should be designated as “In press” or “forthcoming”; written permission to cite such papers as well as verification that they have been accepted for publication should be sought by the author. Information from manuscripts submitted but not yet accepted should be cited in the text as “unpublished observations” with written permission from the source. Authors should avoid citing a “personal communication” unless it provides essential information not available from a public source, in which case the name of the person and date of communication should be cited in parentheses in the text. Retracted articles should not be cited as references except in the context of referring to the retraction. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the references they cite and are advised to visit the following website: <http://www.pubmed.gov> for information about retracted articles.

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#### *Journal article*

1. Malima FP, Paulo DL, Kilomo KP. Hypertension among people on salt-free diets. Tanzania Medical Journal 2007; 5:631-38.

#### *Supplementary journal article*

2. Madenga KP, Pallandi SM, Kitulo MP *et al.* Rheumatic heart diseases in Dar es Salaam. East Afr Med J 1973; Suppl 5:631-38.

#### *In press*

3. Malando KP, Kilomo RB. The prevalence of Kaposi's sarcoma in East Africa. Adv Cancer Res. In press.

#### *Published abstract*

4. Malya FP, Palama DL, Kilomo KP. Hypertension among elderly primigravidae in rural Tanzania. (abstract). Lancet 1973; 5:631-38.

#### *Abstracts within conference proceedings*

5. Madenga FP, Pallandi DN, Kilomo KP. Hypertension among people on salt-free

diets. In: Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Hypertension: 24<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> July 2007; Dar es Salaam. Edited by Kilongawima MUHAS. Dar es Salaam: Mwananchi Press; 2007; 234 – 2236.

*Articles within a book*

6. Adams EB. Diseases of the blood. In: Lema QR, Mhairu PL, eds. A companion to clinical medicine in the tropics and subtropics 1st ed. Oxford. Oxford University Press, 1989; 39-44.

*PhD/Masters thesis*

7. Panya KQ. The pattern of mucocutaneous disorders in HIV infected children attending care and treatment centers in Dar es Salaam. PhD/Masters thesis. Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences; 2007

**Peer review Policy:** All manuscripts submitted for publication to the Tanzania Medical Journal shall be subjected to unbiased, independent and critical assessment by one or two outside peer reviewers, who are not part of the editorial staff. Manuscripts will be treated as private property of the authors and will be reviewed with due respect for authors' confidentiality. Peer reviewers will be selected from a data base of experts in the relevant fields/specialties, who have contributed significantly in the medical field especially through publications in journals. The names of the reviewers shall be treated confidentially. Details of the review shall not be disclosed to anyone other than the authors and reviewers. Reviewers are not allowed to make copies of the manuscript for their files and are prohibited from sharing it with others, except with the permission of the editor. In the review process the following main points will be considered: i) that the work is original and presents a significant contribution to the medical science; ii) that the experimental designs and methodologies used are satisfactory; iii) that conclusions have been based upon an adequate number of tests with appropriate statistical evaluation; iv) that only appropriate and pertinent references have been cited. Manuscripts with complex statistical components will in addition be reviewed by a statistician.

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After all corrections have been made in accordance with the reviewer's comments, and the manuscript has finally been accepted for publication, the corresponding author will be officially notified and all authors will be required to give written consent to publication by signing the author's page that shall be sent to them by the editor.

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**Contributors listed in Acknowledgements:** All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship (for example a person who provided purely technical help, writing assistance, or a department chair who provided only general support) should be listed in an acknowledgement section. Financial and material support should also be acknowledged as contributors.

**Ethics:** Manuscripts submitted to the Tanzania Medical Journal must be accompanied by a statement that the study received all the necessary ethical clearance from the relevant bodies (local and/or abroad), and that informed consent of subjects or their legal guardians was obtained. Authors are responsible for the authenticity, views and opinions on the material published in the Tanzania Medical Journal. The Tanzania Medical Journal complies with the guidelines provided by the ‘Forum for African Medical Editors’ (FAME) and the World Medical Association (WMA) Declaration of Helsinki (as amended by the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, Edinburgh, Scotland, October 2000). Authors are advised to visit the following website for more information regarding ethical issues: <http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm>

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[tmj@mat-tz.org](mailto:tmj@mat-tz.org)

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