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### **1 GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **1.1 Objectives and readership**

The Revista Panamericana de Salud Pública/Pan American Journal of Public Health (RPSP/PAJPH) is a free-access, peer-reviewed, monthly journal, published as the flagship scientific and technical publication of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), headquartered in Washington, D.C., United States of America.

Its mission is to serve as an important vehicle for disseminating scientific public health information of international significance, mainly in areas related to PAHO's essential mission to strengthen national and local health systems and improve the health of the peoples of the Americas.

To this end, the RPSP/PAJPH publishes materials that reflect PAHO's main strategic objectives and programmatic areas: health and human development, health promotion and protection, prevention and control of communicable and chronic diseases, maternal and child health, gender and women's health, mental health, violence, nutrition, environmental health, disaster management, development of health systems and services, social determinants of health, and health equity.

The RPSP/PAJPH aims to bridge the gap between policy-makers, researchers, health professionals, and practitioners.

## **1.2 Contents**

The RPSP/PAJPH will accept the following contributions for the journal: articles based on original research, reviews, special reports, opinion and analysis, brief communications, current topics, and letters. A brief description of the specific features for each type of contribution is outlined below, and formatting specifications for each type of manuscript are outlined in section 2.

In general, the following contributions will not be accepted for publication: clinical case reports, anecdotal accounts of specific interventions, reports on individual studies intended for publication as a series, noncritical and descriptive literature reviews, manuscripts with substantial overlap or with only minor differences from previous research results, and reprints or translations of articles already published—whether in print or electronically. Exceptions to this general rule will be judged and a determination made on a case-by-case basis.

### **1.2.1 Original research articles**

Original research reports focus on substantive studies conducted on public health topics of interest to the Region of the Americas. Experimental or observational research must follow the IMRAD format (Introduction, Materials and methods, Results, and Discussion).

### **1.2.2 Reviews**

Systematic reviews of relevant public health priorities and interventions will also be considered.

### **1.2.3 Special reports**

These are reports on research, studies, or projects relevant to the Region of the Americas.

### **1.2.4 Opinion and analyses**

Authoritative opinion papers, reflections, and analyses may be submitted on topics of interest to the public health field.

### **1.2.5 Brief communications**

Brief communications describe innovative—or promising—techniques or methodologies, or detail preliminary research results on topics of special interest to the public health field.

### 1.2.6 Current topics

These include analysis of current national and regional health initiatives, interventions, and/or epidemiological trends related to diseases and major health problems in the Americas.

### 1.2.7 Letters to the editor

Clarifications, discussion points, or other comments on content presented in the RPSP/PAJPH are welcomed. Letters commenting on specific public health topics may also be accepted.

## 1.3 Language

Manuscripts are accepted in English, Portuguese or Spanish. **Authors are strongly urged to write in their native language.** An inadequate command of a second language can obscure the meaning of the text and is frequently at odds with the scientific precision that high-quality research articles require.

Formal names of institutions, either in texts or in the author affiliation data, should not be translated unless an officially accepted translation exists. Also, titles in references should be left in their original language.

## 1.4 Guidelines and research protocols

The RPSP/PAJPH follows the [Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals](#), which was developed and is maintained by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), and it is listed among the journals that follow these requirements. These guidelines include ethical considerations, authorship and contributorship, peer review, conflicts of interest, privacy and confidentiality, protection of human subjects and animals, as well as editorial and publishing issues such as advertising, overlapping publications, references, and registering clinical trials.

RPSP/PAJPH expects authors to follow the best research protocols available. Research protocols are described in the [EQUATOR Network Resource Centre](#). A complete list of the major [biomedical research reporting guidelines](#) is maintained and published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine, and additional guidelines and best practices for research and scientific writing are outlined in RPSP/PAJPH's [Author Resources](#) Section.

Following WHO and [ICMJE recommendations](#), the RPSP/PAJPH requires registration of clinical trials in a public trials registry as a condition of consideration for publication. The clinical trial registration number must be published at the end of the abstract with a link to the corresponding registry. The RPSP/PAJPH does not advocate one particular registry, but recommends that authors register clinical trials in one of the registries certified by WHO and the ICMJE that are available at the [International Clinical Trials Registry Platform](#).

## 1.5 Ethics

The RPSP/PAJPH is committed to the highest ethical standards for the conduct of research, as stipulated by the [Declaration of Helsinki](#) and CIOMS' [International Ethical Guidelines for Health-related Research](#)

**Involving Humans.** Manuscripts reporting research involving humans must include the information about the ethics review committee(s) that approved the study prior to its initiation. Studies should obtain ethics approval in the country where they were conducted. If a study was deemed exempt from ethics review, authors must provide the documentation for such exemption.

### **1.6 Conflict of interests**

Authors must fully disclose information about any grant or subsidy to cover research costs received from a commercial or private entity, national or international organization, or research support agency. These disclosures help the reader to better understand the relationship between the authors and various commercial entities that may have an interest in the information reported in the published article.

The RPSP/PAJPH adheres to the ICMJE recommendations for disclosure of competing interests. The ICMJE asks authors to disclose four types of information:

1. Associations with commercial entities that provided support for the work reported in the submitted manuscript,
2. Associations with commercial entities that could have an interest in the submitted manuscript,
3. Financial associations involving family
4. Any other relevant nonfinancial associations.

Authors hold sole responsibility for the views expressed in their texts, which may not necessarily reflect the opinion or policy of the RPSP/PAJPH. The mention of specific companies or certain manufacturers' products does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended in preference to other ones of a similar nature. Generic names for drugs or products should be used whenever possible.

### **1.7 Copyright**

As a condition for publication, the RPSP/PAJPH requires authors to provide information indicating that the text, or a similar one, has not been previously published in print or electronic format and that the manuscript will not be submitted to any other journal until the RPSP/PAJPH reaches a decision regarding its publication. Any instance of possible prior publication in any form must be disclosed at the time the manuscript is submitted and a copy or link to the publication must be provided. Authors are solely responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce any copyrighted material contained in the manuscript as submitted. The manuscript must be accompanied by an original letter explicitly granting such permission in each case. The letter(s) should specify the exact table(s), figure(s), or text being cited and how it/they is/are being used, together with a complete bibliographic reference to the original source.

In the case of papers containing translations of quoted material, a link or copy of that text in the original language must be clearly identified and included as part of the manuscript's submission.

The Journal articles are open access and are distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 IGO License](#), which permits use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. No modifications or commercial use of the articles are permitted. In any reproduction of the

article there should not be any suggestion that PAHO or the article endorse any specific organization or products. The use of the PAHO logo is not permitted.

### **1.8 Peer review process**

Manuscripts undergo selection through a formal peer review process. Initially, a manuscript that meets the general requirements for submission and complies with the subject scope of the RPSP/PAJPH will be reviewed by the journal's Associate Editors to determine if it has scientific merit and relevance for the journal's readership. If so, it will be sent for double blind peer review to at least three different reviewers. Upon receipt of all requested reviews, the Associate Editors will prepare a recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief to: (a) reject the manuscript; (b) conditionally accept the manuscript (with either minor or major revisions); or (c) accept the manuscript.

In the case of a conditional acceptance, authors will be required to revise the manuscript to address the concerns and recommendations emanating from the peer review process, or alternatively, to provide a detailed justification of the reasons for disagreeing with the observations made. The manuscript is again revised by the Associate Editors, as well as by peer reviewers in some cases. Be advised that the text may undergo as many reviews as needed to ensure that authors have adequately addressed all issues raised.

The Editor-in-Chief makes the final decision on the acceptance of manuscripts. All decisions are communicated in writing to the corresponding author.

The time needed to process a manuscript varies depending on the complexity of the subject matter and the availability of appropriate peer reviewers.

Accepted papers are subject to editorial revision. See section 2.10, "Editing the manuscript" for additional information.

### **1.9 Dissemination**

The RPSP/PAJPH is published in electronic format at the [journal website](#). The RPSP/PAJPH also deposits a complete version of the accepted manuscript in electronic format in PAHO Institutional Repository for Information Sharing, SciELO Public Health, PubMed and other major scientific databases. Users may register at the [journal's website](#) to receive monthly the table of contents of published articles. Database links lead directly to full-text versions of all published articles.

Journal manuscripts are also disseminated through a mailing list and the journal's [Twitter account](#).

## **2 GUIDELINES FOR MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION**

### **2.1 General criteria for manuscript acceptance**

The selection of material for publication in the RPSP/PAJPH is based on the following criteria:

- Suitability for the journal's subject scope;

- Scientific soundness, originality, salience, and timeliness of the information;
- Applicability beyond its place of origin and across the Region of the Americas;
- Compliance with the standards of medical ethics governing research conducted on human and animal subjects;
- Compliance with specific research reporting protocols;
- Coherence of the research design and methodology;
- The need to strike a balance in topical and geographical coverage.

Manuscripts must comply with the specifications outlined in these Instructions and Guidelines in order to be accepted. Authors should carefully read all sections before submitting papers through the online system to ensure the paper will meet the conditions for publication.

Manuscripts not following the standard format of RPSP/PAJPH will immediately be returned to authors. The journal may also refuse to publish any manuscript whose authors fail to answer editorial queries satisfactorily.

Final acceptance or rejection of a manuscript is decided by the Editor-in-Chief, based on recommendations resulting from the peer review process described in section 1.8.

## 2.2 Manuscript specifications

Manuscripts must be prepared using a word processor software, in double-space, single column, using 12-pt. characters in Times New Roman or Arial script.

For figures and tables, .xls (Excel), .ppt (PowerPoint) or .eps formats must be used. Figures may be in color or black and white and should be provided in an editable format.

Once articles are accepted for publication, authors may be asked to send figures and tables in a more clear and readable format.

## 2.3 Formatting Requirements

The general formatting for the RPSP/PAJPH's various sections is presented as follows:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Words<sup>1</sup></b> (maximum)	<b>References</b>	<b>Tables, figures<sup>2</sup></b>
Original research articles	3 500	Up to 35	Up to 5
Reviews	3 500	Up to 50	Up to 5
Special reports	3 500	Up to 35	Up to 5
Brief communications	2 500	Up to 10	Up to 2
Opinion and analysis	2 500	Up to 20	Up to 2
Current topics	2 000	Up to 20	Up to 2
Letters	800	Up to 5, if any	None

<sup>1</sup> Excluding abstract, tables, figures, and references.

<sup>2</sup> Global max. word count for 5 figures/tables is 1 000; for 1-2 figures it is 400.

## 2.4 Title

The manuscript's title should be clear, precise, and concise and include all the necessary information to identify the scope of the article. A good title is the first entry point to the article's content and facilitates its retrieval in databases and search engines.

Titles may not exceed 15 words. Ambiguous words, jargon, and abbreviations should be avoided. Titles separated by periods or divided into parts should also be avoided.

## 2.5 Authorship

RPSP/PAJPH defines authorship in agreement with the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\) guidelines](#), which recommend that authorship be based on the following 4 criteria:

- (1) Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- (2) Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- (3) Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- (4) Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved." Authors must declare in the cover letter the contribution of every author.

Inclusion of other persons as authors, out of friendship, acknowledgment, or other nonscientific motivation, is a breach of research ethics.

When a large, multicenter group has conducted the work, the group should identify the individuals who accept direct responsibility for the manuscript. Names of institutions should not be translated unless an official translation exists.

Although the submission system includes fields for 8 authors only, the RPSP/PAJPH accepts more than 8 authors for a given manuscript. All authors should be mentioned in the cover letter.

*Contributorship* refers to the general supervision of a research group or general administrative support; and writing assistance, technical editing, language editing, and proofreading.

## 2.6 Abstract and keywords page

The abstract is the second point of entry for an article and must enable readers to determine the article's relevance and decide whether to read the entire text.

**Original research articles or systematic reviews** must be accompanied by a structured abstract of no more than 250 words, divided into the following sections: (a) Objectives, (b) Methods, (c) Results, and (d) Conclusions.

**Other types of contributions** must also be accompanied by an informative abstract of no more than 250 words.

The abstract should not include any information or conclusions that do not appear in the main text. It should be written in the third person and should not contain footnotes, unknown abbreviations, or bibliographic citations.

**Keywords**, extracted from the [DeCS](#) (Health Sciences Descriptors) vocabulary managed by BIREME/PAHO/WHO, provided by U.S. National Library of Medicine's [MeSH](#) (Medical Subject Headings) and including Portuguese and Spanish translations, are available for the authors to select when submitting the manuscript through the online manuscript management system.

## 2.7 Body of the article

**Original research articles** and systematic reviews are usually organized according to the [IMRAD](#) (Introduction, Materials and methods, Results, and Discussion) format.

While subheadings may be needed throughout the body, typically the paragraph that begins the body does not need to be titled "Introduction" as this is usually eliminated during the editing process. However, the article's objective should be clearly stated at the end of the introductory section.

The "Results and Discussion" sections may require subheadings. And "Conclusions", which must be included at the end of the "Discussion" session, may also be identified by a subheading.

**Review articles** are usually structured similarly to original research articles but must include a section describing the methods used for selecting, extracting, and synthesizing data.

**Brief communications** follow the same sequence of original articles, but usually omit subdivision headings.

Other types of contributions have no predefined structure and may use other subdivisions, depending on their content.

When using **abbreviations**, give the full term the first time an abbreviation or acronym is mentioned in the text followed by the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses. As much as possible, abbreviations should be avoided. In general, abbreviations should reflect the expanded form in the same language as that of the manuscript. Exceptions to this rule include abbreviations known internationally in another language.

**Footnotes** are clarifications or marginal explanations that would interrupt the natural flow of the text; therefore, their use should be kept to a minimum.

Footnotes are numbered consecutively and appear at the bottom of the page on which they are cited. Links or references to cited documents must be included in the references list.

**Citations** are essential to the manuscript and must be relevant and current. Citations serve to identify the original sources of the referred-to concepts, methods, and techniques resulting from earlier research, studies, and experiences. They also support facts and opinions stated by the author and provide the reader with the bibliographic information needed to consult the primary sources.

The RPSP/PAJPH follows the [ICMJE Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals](#) style for references (known as "Vancouver Style"), which is based largely on an American National Standards Institute style adapted by the U.S. National Library of Medicine for its databases. Recommended formats for a variety of document types and examples are available in [Citing Medicine, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed](#) and [here](#).

Example:

Rabadán-Diehl C, Safdie M, Rodin R; Trilateral Working Group on Childhood Obesity. Canada-United States-Mexico Trilateral Cooperation on Childhood Obesity Initiative. *Rev Panam Salud Publica*. 2016;40(2):80-4.

References should be numbered consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text, and identified by Arabic numerals in parentheses in text, tables, and legends.

Examples:

"It has been observed (3, 4) that..."

or:

"Several studies (1-5) have shown that ..."

References cited only in table or figure legends should be numbered in accordance with the sequence established by the first identification in the running text of the particular table or figure.

The referenced journal titles should be abbreviated according to the style used in the [Journals Database](#) created and maintained by the [U.S. National Library of Medicine](#).

The list of references must be numbered consecutively and should begin on a separate sheet placed at the end of the manuscript. All electronic references should include the access date.

## 2.8 Tables and Figures

**Tables** present information—usually numerical—in an ordered, systematic arrangement of values in rows and columns. The presentation should be easy for the reader to grasp, supplementing, without duplicating, the information in the text. Too much statistical information may also be hard to interpret. Tables should be uploaded separately from text files and left in an editable format (preferably an Excel file) and not as objects extracted from other files or embedded in Word documents. Each table should have a brief, but complete title, including place, date, and source of the information. The column headers should also be as brief as possible and indicate the unit of measure or the relative base (percentage, rate, index).

Missing information should be indicated by an ellipsis (...). If the data do not apply, the cell should be marked "NA" (not applicable). If either or both of these devices are used, their meaning should be indicated with a footnote to the table.

Vertical rules (lines) should not be used in tables. There should only be three full horizontal rules: one under the title, a second under the column heads, and a third at the end of the table, above any footnotes.

Footnotes to a table should be indicated with superscript lowercase letters, in alphabetical order, in this way: a, b, c, etc. The superscript letters in the body of the table should be in sequence from top to bottom and left to right.

Authors must be sure to include "call-outs"—points of reference in the text that correspond to the data—for all of the tables in the text.

Tables or data from another published or unpublished source must be acknowledged and authors must obtain prior permission to include them in the manuscript. See "Copyright" section 1.8 for further details.

**Figures** include graphs, diagrams, line drawings, maps, and photographs. They should be used to highlight trends and to illustrate comparisons clearly and exactly. Figures should be easy to understand and should add information, not repeat what has been previously stated in the text or the tables. Legends should be as brief as possible, but complete, and include place, date, and source of the information.

Figures should be sent in a separate file, in their original editable format, following standards of the most common software programs (Excel, Power Point, Open Office, .eps).

The legend of a graph or map should be included as part of the figure itself if there is sufficient space. If not, it should be included in the figure's title. Maps and diagrams should have a scale in SI units (see below).

If the figure or table is taken from another publication, the source must be identified and permission to reproduce it must be obtained in writing from the copyright holder of the original publication. See "Copyright" section 1.8 for more information.

When including units of measure, authors must use the [International System of Units \(SI\)](#), based on the metric system and organized by the International Committee for Weights and Measures (Bureau International des Poids et Mesures).

Abbreviations of units are not pluralized (for example, use 5 km, not 5 kms), nor are they followed by a period (write 10 mL, not 10mL.), except at the end of a sentence. Numbers should be grouped in sets of three to the left and to the right of the decimal point in English manuscripts (decimal comma in Spanish and Portuguese manuscripts), with each set separated by a blank space.

**Correct style:**

12 500 350

1 900,05 (Spanish and Portuguese articles)

1 900.05 (English articles)

**Incorrect style:**

12,500,350 / 1.900,05

A [calculator](#) may be used to convert units, degrees and other measurements into the International System.

## **2.9 Submitting the manuscript**

Manuscripts should be submitted only through the [journal online manuscript management system](#).

Authors will be notified by e-mail that their manuscript has been received. Authors can view the status of their manuscripts at any time by entering their "Author Center" at any time throughout the process.

All manuscripts must be accompanied by a cover letter which should include:

- Information about all previous reports and submissions
  - Possible conflicts of interest
  - Permission to reproduce previously published material
  - Confirmation that the manuscript has been read and approved by all the authors, and the contribution of each author is listed
- Additional information that may be helpful to the Associate Editors and the Editor-in-Chief

The cover letter should be uploaded as a separate file from the rest of the manuscript. Author names and affiliations should not be included anywhere on the main text document (submitted as a Word document; please don't upload PDFs) at the time of submission.

Please review the files and aspects mentioned in these instructions prior to submittal to ensure your manuscript will comply with all of the Conditions for Publication should it be accepted.

## **2.10 Editing the manuscript**

Manuscripts are accepted with the understanding that the publisher reserves the right to make revisions necessary for consistency, clarity, and conformity with the style of the RPSP/PAJPH.

Manuscripts accepted for publication will be edited and then sent to the corresponding author to respond to the editor's queries and to approve any revisions. If during this stage the author does not satisfactorily respond to the editor's queries, the journal reserves the right not to publish the manuscript. To avoid delay in the publication of the corresponding issue, authors are urged to return the edited manuscript, with their approval, by the date indicated in the accompanying message.

The final PDF version will be sent to the corresponding author for approval before publishing online. Articles will be published in .html and .pdf formats.