

Instructions for authors

INTRODUCTION

The *British Journal of Psychiatry* is published monthly by The Royal College of Psychiatrists. The *Journal* publishes original work in all fields of psychiatry. Manuscripts for publication should be submitted online via <http://submit-bjp.rcpsych.org>.

All published articles are peer reviewed. Contributions are accepted for publication on the condition that their substance has not been published or submitted for publication elsewhere. Authors submitting papers to the *Journal* (serially or otherwise) with a common theme or using data derived from the same sample (or a subset thereof) must send details of all relevant previous publications and simultaneous submissions.

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Manuscripts accepted for publication are copy-edited to improve readability and to ensure conformity with house style.

ONLINE SUBMISSION

Manuscripts for publication must be submitted online at <http://submit-bjp.rcpsych.org>. A unique account will be created for each contributor using his or her email address as identification. (Note for contributors with more than one email account: please ensure you use the same email address whenever logging on to the manuscript submission website.) Contributors may track the progress of their submissions at any time via this website. For assistance with online submission, please email bjp@rcpsych.ac.uk or telephone +44 (0)20 7235 8857.

A cover letter should be included with the submission explaining why you consider the submitted article suitable for publication in the *Journal*.

FAST-TRACK ASSESSMENT

Authors have the option of submitting articles for fast-track assessment. Those wishing to take this route should state this

in the first or second sentence of their cover letter, together with the reasons for rapid assessment. A decision whether to approve the fast-track route will be made within 10 days of submission; those papers that are not selected for this route will be assessed in the normal way unless the authors state specifically that they want fast-track assessment only. All papers approved for the fast-track route will be assessed within 4 weeks of submission. Review articles will not be considered for fast-track assessment.

TITLE AND AUTHORS

The title should be brief and relevant. If necessary, a subtitle may be used to clarify the main title. Titles should not announce the results of articles and, except in editorials, they should not be phrased as questions.

All authors must sign the copyright transfer and publication agreement, which can be downloaded from <http://submit-bjp.rcpsych.org> once a manuscript has been accepted. One of the authors should be designated to receive correspondence and proofs, and the appropriate address indicated. This author must take responsibility for keeping all other named authors informed of the paper's progress. The contribution of each author to the paper must be stated at the end of the article. Authorship credit should be based only on substantial contribution to:

- conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data
- drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content
- and final approval of the version to be published.

All these conditions must be met. Participation solely in the acquisition of funding or the collection of data does not justify authorship. In addition, the corresponding author must ensure that there is no one else who fulfils the criteria but has not been included as an author.

The *Journal* does not consider people thanked in the Acknowledgements or listed as members of a study group on whose behalf a paper is submitted to be authors. Only those who are listed as authors on

the title page of the manuscript and (on acceptance for publication) whose signed copyright agreement has been obtained, qualify as authors. It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to ensure that authorship is agreed among the study's workers, contributors of additional data and other interested parties, before submission of the manuscript.

The names of the authors should appear on the title page in the form that is wished for publication, and the names, degrees, affiliations and full addresses at the time the work described in the paper was carried out should be given at the end of the paper.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All submissions to the *Journal* (including editorials and letters to the Editor) require a declaration of interest. This should list fees and grants from, employment by, consultancy for, shared ownership in, or any close relationship with, an organisation whose interests, financial or otherwise, may be affected by the publication of the paper. This pertains to all the authors of the study.

STRUCTURE OF MANUSCRIPTS

Papers

A structured summary not exceeding 150 words should be given at the beginning of the article, incorporating the following headings: Background; Aims; Method; Results; Conclusions; Declaration of interest. The summary is a crucial part of the paper and authors are urged to devote some care to ensuring that all the important findings are within the word limit.

A short introduction should be followed by Method, Results and Discussion sections. The Discussion section should always include limitations of the paper to ensure balance. Use of subheadings is encouraged, particularly in Discussion sections. A separate Conclusions section is not required.

The article should normally be between 3000 and 5000 words in length (excluding references, tables and figure legends) and include no more than 25 essential references beyond those describing statistical procedures, psychometric instruments and diagnostic guidelines used in the study.