

# Author Guidelines

*Populace Journal of Public Health and Epidemiology* | Version 1.2, October 2026

| Item             | Policy                                                                               |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Access           | Open access, free to read, CC BY 4.0                                                 |
| Peer review      | Double-anonymous                                                                     |
| Languages        | English or French                                                                    |
| Fees             | No submission fee; APC payable only after acceptance                                 |
| First decision   | Target of 6 to 8 weeks from submission                                               |
| Submission       | Online: <a href="#">Submit online</a>                                                |
| Templates (Word) | <a href="#">Title Page Template</a> ; <a href="#">Anonymised Manuscript Template</a> |

**Contents:** 1. Scope, technical check and editorial screening; 2. Manuscript types and limits; 3. Manuscript structure; 4. Ethics, authorship and declarations; 5. Style and referencing; 6. Figures and tables; 7. Submission process; 8. Article processing charges; 9. Licence and rights; 10. Indicative timelines; 11. Language policy; 12. Contact; Submission preparation checklist; Copyright notice; Privacy statement.

## 1. Scope, Technical Check and Editorial Screening

Populace Journal of Public Health and Epidemiology publishes original work in public health and epidemiology. The Journal has a global scope and welcomes submissions from all regions, including Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Oceania, with particular attention to the needs of low-resource and underserved health systems, without exclusivity or preferential treatment at the expense of scientific quality.

All submissions first undergo a technical check by the Editorial Office, using a technical verification checklist (completeness of files, format, anonymisation and similarity check). This administrative check is not a scientific assessment: incomplete or non-compliant submissions are returned to the authors for correction, which is not a rejection. Submissions are then assessed by an editor to determine whether they fit the Journal's aims and scope and meet minimum standards of quality (editorial screening). Submissions considered a good fit are sent for peer review before a final decision is made.

An editor may decline a submission without external review (desk rejection) if, for example:

- (a) the topic is outside the scope of the Journal;
- (b) the study design is unclear or inappropriate for the research question;
- (c) the research argument is poorly articulated;
- (d) the title is imprecise, or the abstract cannot stand on its own;
- (e) the manuscript does not follow these guidelines.

Checking these points carefully before submission also makes it more likely that reviewers will agree to evaluate the paper.

## 2. Manuscript Types and Limits

| Manuscript type                            | Indicative length    | Figures and tables (combined) |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Original Research Articles                 | 3,000 to 6,000 words | Up to 6                       |
| Systematic Reviews & Meta-Analyses         | Up to 6,000 words    | Up to 6                       |
| Case Reports (Public Health Relevance)     | Up to 2,000 words    | Up to 3                       |
| Short Communications                       | Up to 1,500 words    | Up to 2                       |
| Study Protocols                            | No strict limit      | Up to 4                       |
| Outbreak & Public Health Emergency Reports | Up to 2,000 words    | Up to 4                       |

Word counts exclude the title page, abstract, references, tables, figures and supplementary material.

Editorials and Commentaries are published at the invitation of the editors. They do not require a structured abstract and are not peer-reviewed; this is indicated alongside each published item of this type.

## 3. Manuscript Structure

Research manuscripts should follow the IMRAD structure:

1. Title page (separate file, see section 5.2)
2. Structured abstract of no more than 300 words, under the headings Background, Methods, Results and Conclusion, followed by 4 to 6 keywords
3. Introduction
4. Methods
5. Results
6. Discussion
7. Conclusion
8. References

For articles in French, the manuscript also includes, immediately after the French abstract and keywords, an English title, a structured English abstract (same structure, 300 words maximum) and English keywords. These elements are mandatory (see section 11).

Acknowledgements and the mandatory declarations (see section 4.6) are placed on the title page only, to preserve anonymity during peer review.

Case Reports, Study Protocols and Outbreak & Public Health Emergency Reports may adapt this structure to their content, following the relevant reporting guideline (see section 5.7).

## 4. Ethics, Authorship and Declarations

Populace follows the guidance of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and the recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). See also our Publication Ethics policy on the Journal website.

### 4.1 Authorship

All persons listed as authors must meet the ICMJE authorship criteria, must consent to be listed, and must approve the final version of the manuscript. Contributors who do not meet these criteria should be listed in the acknowledgements. Any change to the author list after submission requires the written agreement of all authors.

### 4.2 Ethics approval and informed consent

Research involving human participants, human data or human material must be approved by an appropriate ethics committee, in accordance with the legal requirements of the country where the study was conducted. The

Methods section must state the name of the committee and the approval reference number, and describe how informed consent was obtained. Evidence of approval may be requested. If a study was exempt from ethics review, authors must explain why.

If the name of the committee could identify the authors, replace it in the anonymised manuscript with "[blinded for review]" and give the full details on the title page. Upload the approval document with your submission.

### 4.3 Registration

- (a) Clinical trials must be registered in a public registry recognised by the WHO International Clinical Trials Registry Platform before the enrolment of the first participant. Give the registration number at the end of the abstract.
- (b) Registration of systematic reviews in a recognised registry, such as PROSPERO, is strongly encouraged.

### 4.4 Third-party material

Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to publish any third-party material included in the submission, such as photographs, figures, documents or datasets (see also section 6.6).

### 4.5 Originality and preprints

Submitted manuscripts must not have been published previously and must not be under consideration by another journal. Posting a preprint on a preprint server, institutional repository or personal website does not count as prior publication: authors are welcome to share their manuscript as a preprint before submission and during peer review. Please mention the preprint in your cover letter.

### 4.6 Mandatory declarations

Every submission must include the following declarations, on the title page:

- (a) conflicts of interest for each author;
- (b) funding source and the funder's role in the study;
- (c) ethics approval and informed consent (committee name and reference number);
- (d) data availability statement;
- (e) author contributions (CRediT taxonomy recommended);
- (f) disclosure of any generative AI tool used, where applicable (see our AI Policy).

## 5. Style and Referencing

### 5.1 Manuscript format

| Element      | Requirement                                                                             |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| File type    | Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx). PDF files are not accepted for the main manuscript.     |
| Font         | 12-point Times New Roman or Arial                                                       |
| Line spacing | Double-spaced throughout, including the abstract, references, tables and figure legends |
| Margins      | 2.5 cm (1 inch) on all sides                                                            |
| Line numbers | Continuous line numbering throughout, so that reviewers can refer to specific lines     |
| Page numbers | On every page                                                                           |
| Alignment    | Left-aligned text; do not justify                                                       |
| Headings     | Up to three levels, clearly distinguished                                               |

## 5.2 Files to submit

1. **Title page** (separate file, required): title (and English title for an article in French), full names of all authors, affiliations, corresponding author with email address, ORCID identifiers, word count, acknowledgements and the declarations listed in section 4.6. Use our [Title Page Template](https://populacejournal.org/public/docs/Populace_Title_Page.docx) ([https://populacejournal.org/public/docs/Populace\\_Title\\_Page.docx](https://populacejournal.org/public/docs/Populace_Title_Page.docx)).
2. **Anonymised manuscript** (main file, required): no author names, affiliations, acknowledgements or other information that could identify the authors, to allow double-anonymous peer review. Refer to your own previous work in the third person, and remove the author name from the file properties of the Word document. Tables and figures are inserted in the text of this file, just after the paragraph in which they are first cited (see sections 6.2 and 6.3). Use our [Anonymised Manuscript Template](https://populacejournal.org/public/docs/Populace_Anonymised_Manuscript_Template.docx) ([https://populacejournal.org/public/docs/Populace\\_Anonymised\\_Manuscript\\_Template.docx](https://populacejournal.org/public/docs/Populace_Anonymised_Manuscript_Template.docx)).
3. **Figures**: inserted in the text of the manuscript; a separate high-resolution file for each figure is requested at acceptance (see section 6.3).
4. **Supplementary material**, if any, and the completed reporting checklist (see section 5.7).
5. **Ethics approval document**, where applicable (see section 4.2).
6. **Cover letter** (separate file, required; see section 7).

## 5.3 Writing style

Write in clear, concise language, using either British or American English consistently. Define each abbreviation at first use in the abstract and again in the main text. Avoid abbreviations in the title. Write numbers one to nine in words, and 10 and above in figures, except for units of measurement.

## 5.4 References

Use the Vancouver style.

- (a) Number references consecutively in the order in which they are first cited, using numbers in square brackets in the text, for example [1], [2, 5] or [3-6].
- (b) List all authors when there are six or fewer. When there are more than six, list the first six followed by "et al."
- (c) Abbreviate journal titles according to the NLM Catalog.
- (d) Include the DOI whenever available.
- (e) Cite unpublished data and personal communications in the text only, not in the reference list.
- (f) Reference management software (Zotero, EndNote, Mendeley) may be used, provided the final format follows the examples below.

### Examples

| Type            | Format                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Journal article | Author AA, Author BB, Author CC. Title of article. Abbreviated Journal Title. Year; Volume(Issue):first page-last page. doi:xx.xxxx/xxxxx |
| Book            | Author AA. Title of book. Edition. City: Publisher; Year.                                                                                 |
| Report          | Name of organisation. Title of report. City: Publisher; Year. Available from: URL                                                         |
| Website         | Name of organisation. Title of page [Internet]. City: Publisher; Year [cited Year Month Day]. Available from: URL                         |
| Dataset         | Author or organisation. Title of dataset [dataset]. Repository; Year. doi or URL                                                          |

## 5.5 Units, numbers and statistics

- (a) Use SI units. Conventional units may be added in parentheses where helpful.
- (b) Use a decimal point, not a comma (for example 2.5, not 2,5), including in French-language articles, for consistency across the Journal.

- (c) Report effect estimates with 95% confidence intervals.
- (d) Give exact p-values (for example  $p = 0.03$ ), except for values below 0.001, reported as  $p < 0.001$ .
- (e) Name the statistical software used, with its version number.

## 5.6 Terminology

- (a) Use generic names for medicines.
- (b) Use person-first, non-stigmatising language, for example "people living with HIV" rather than "HIV patients".
- (c) Report sex and gender in line with the SAGER guidelines.
- (d) Use the official names of countries and territories, as used by the United Nations.

## 5.7 Reporting guidelines

Follow the relevant EQUATOR Network guideline and upload the completed checklist with your submission:

| Study type                           | Guideline     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Observational studies                | STROBE        |
| Randomised trials                    | CONSORT       |
| Systematic reviews and meta-analyses | PRISMA        |
| Case reports                         | CARE          |
| Study protocols                      | SPIRIT        |
| Qualitative research                 | COREQ or SRQR |

# 6. Figures and Tables

## 6.1 General rules

- (a) The maximum number of figures and tables depends on the manuscript type (see the table in section 2).
- (b) Each part of a multi-panel figure (for example Figure 1A and 1B) counts as part of a single figure.
- (c) For systematic reviews, the PRISMA flow diagram counts as one figure.
- (d) Additional figures and tables may be provided as supplementary material, without limit. The editor may accept a small number of additional figures or tables where they are essential to the study.
- (e) Number figures and tables separately, in the order in which they are first cited in the text (Figure 1, Figure 2; Table 1, Table 2).
- (f) Every figure and table must be cited in the text.
- (g) Each figure and table must be understandable without reference to the text, with all abbreviations explained.
- (h) There are no charges for colour figures.

## 6.2 Tables

- (a) Create tables with the table function of Word, so that they can be edited. Do not submit tables as images.
- (b) Insert each table in the text, just after the paragraph in which it is first cited.
- (c) Give each table a short title above it, and explanations and abbreviations in a footnote below it.
- (d) Do not repeat in the text all the data already shown in a table.

## 6.3 Figures

| Element           | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Files             | Insert each figure in the text, just after the paragraph in which it is first cited. At acceptance, supply each figure as a separate high-resolution file, named by its number (for example Figure1.tiff). |
| Formats           | TIFF or PNG for photographs and images; EPS, PDF or SVG for charts, graphs and diagrams                                                                                                                    |
| Resolution        | At least 300 dpi at final size for photographs and images; 600 dpi for line drawings                                                                                                                       |
| Text in figures   | A simple font (Arial or Helvetica), readable when reduced to one column width                                                                                                                              |
| Colours           | Distinguishable by readers with colour vision deficiency; do not rely on red and green alone                                                                                                               |
| Legends           | Placed directly below each figure, with a short title and enough explanation to understand the figure                                                                                                      |
| Charts and graphs | Both axes labelled with variable and unit; confidence intervals or error bars shown where relevant, and explained                                                                                          |

## 6.4 Maps

- Indicate the source of the base map and of the data shown.
- Include a scale and a north arrow where relevant.
- Add the following note below any map showing national borders: "The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply any opinion on the part of the Journal concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries."

## 6.5 Photographs of people

- Remove any information that could identify a patient or study participant, unless written informed consent for publication has been obtained. Provide this consent on request.
- Masking the eyes alone is not sufficient to ensure anonymity.

## 6.6 Previously published material

Figures or tables reproduced or adapted from other sources require written permission from the copyright holder, unless they are published under an open licence that allows reuse. Cite the original source in the legend.

## 7. Submission Process

Manuscripts are submitted exclusively through the Journal's online submission system. An author account is required: please register or log in to submit. Submit online at <https://populacejournal.org/index.php/populace/about/submissions>.

Each submission must be accompanied by a cover letter, uploaded as a separate file, that:

- summarises the manuscript's contribution and its relevance to public health;
- confirms that the manuscript is not under consideration elsewhere;
- mentions any related preprint or previous presentation of the work.

Authors may suggest up to three potential reviewers with relevant expertise and no conflict of interest (for example, no co-authorship within the last three years and no shared institutional affiliation), with their institutional email addresses. Authors may also ask for specific individuals to be excluded from the review, with a brief reason. The final choice of reviewers remains at the editor's discretion.

## 8. Article Processing Charges

Populace applies a standard Article Processing Charge (APC) of USD 500 per accepted manuscript, payable only once a manuscript has been accepted for publication following peer review. There are no submission fees, and ability to pay is never assessed before the editorial decision is made. The fee is automatically reduced according to the World Bank Group's income classification of the country of the corresponding author's institutional affiliation at the time of submission:

| Income group                                                                             | Reduction | APC payable |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| High income                                                                              | 0%        | USD 500     |
| Upper-middle income                                                                      | 50%       | USD 250     |
| Lower-middle income                                                                      | 85%       | USD 75      |
| Low income                                                                               | 90%       | USD 50      |
| Low income and on the World Bank Group's Public FCV List or Institutional Fragility List | 100%      | Full waiver |

No separate application is required: the applicable tier is determined automatically. Full details and the list of countries are available on the Article Processing Charges page.

## 9. Licence and Rights

Accepted articles are published open access under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence. Authors retain full copyright (see the copyright notice below).

## 10. Indicative Timelines

Populace aims for efficient handling of every manuscript, without ever compromising the rigour and quality of peer review and editorial assessment.

| Stage                                   | Timeline                               |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Submission acknowledgement              | Automatic and immediate                |
| Technical check and editorial screening | Within 10 days of submission           |
| First decision after peer review        | Target of 6 to 8 weeks from submission |

## 11. Language Policy

Populace accepts and publishes manuscripts in English or French. Articles in French must include, in addition to the French version:

- a title in English;
- an abstract in English, structured in the same way and within the same word limit as the French abstract (300 words maximum);
- keywords in English.

Articles in English do not require a French abstract.

**Peer review.** Manuscripts are reviewed in the language in which they are submitted. Reviewers may write their reports in English or French.

**Language quality.** Authors are responsible for the linguistic quality of their manuscript. The Journal does not provide translation. Manuscripts whose language prevents a fair scientific assessment may be returned to the authors before peer review.

**Publication.** Each article is published in its original language. The English title, abstract and keywords are published with every article, so that all articles can be found in international databases.

## 12. Contact

For any questions regarding a submission, please write to [editorial@populacejournal.org](mailto:editorial@populacejournal.org).

## Submission Preparation Checklist

Before submitting, authors must confirm that their submission meets each of the following points. Submissions that do not meet them may be returned to the authors.

1. The work is original, has not been published before and is not under consideration by another journal.
2. The manuscript follows the IMRAD structure and uses the Vancouver referencing style.
3. For research articles, the abstract is structured (Background, Methods, Results, Conclusion) and does not exceed 300 words.
4. The word limit of the chosen manuscript type is respected.
5. The manuscript file is anonymised, including its file properties.
6. A separate title page and a cover letter are uploaded.
7. Ethics approval and informed consent are described where relevant, and the approval document is uploaded.
8. A data availability statement is included.
9. All authors meet the authorship criteria, agree to be listed and have approved the final version.
10. Conflicts of interest and funding sources are declared.
11. The manuscript file is in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx).
12. For an article in French, the English title, structured abstract and keywords are included.
13. Tables and figures are inserted in the text, just after the paragraph in which they are first cited, with their titles and legends.

## Copyright Notice

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## Privacy Statement

The names and email addresses entered on this journal site will be used exclusively for the stated purposes of this journal and will not be made available for any other purpose or to any other party.

| Version | Date            | Changes                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.0     | 15 October 2026 | First release                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1.1     | 21 October 2026 | Aligned with the guidelines published on the Journal website; submission checklist, copyright notice and privacy statement added                                                                                              |
| 1.2     | 29 October 2026 | Tables and figures inserted in the text of the manuscript; English title, abstract and keywords for articles in French added to the manuscript structure and checklist; links to the templates and to online submission added |