Editorial Procedure

Double-Blind Peer Review

All manuscripts are anonymously reviewed. Each copy of a manuscript should include a separate title page with authors’ names and affiliations, and these should not appear elsewhere in the manuscript. Footnotes that identify the authors should be typed on a separate page. Authors should make every effort to ensure that the manuscript contains no clues to their identities.

When you are ready to submit a manuscript to MCHJ, please be sure to upload these 2 separate files to the Editorial Manager site to ensure timely processing and review of your paper:

- A title page with the running head, manuscript title, and complete author information. Followed by (page break) the Abstract page with keywords, significance, and the corresponding author e-mail information.
- The blinded abstract and manuscript containing no author information (no name, no affiliation, and so forth) which adheres to all standards described below.

Two-tiered Review Process

The MCHJ implements a two-tiered review process. Manuscripts are first reviewed by an Editorial Board member for suitability for the Journal, general quality, and potential contribution. Editorial Board members then recommend further peer review, or rejection. Those papers recommended for full peer review are then sent for review to appropriate reviewers.

Authors should note that only papers of the very highest quality and importance to the field of maternal and child health will be considered for the Journal.

Time to Review from Submission

As a matter of equity and fairness to all authors, the policy of the Journal Editorial Board is to work through the queue in sequence. The Journal cannot prioritize authors based on their queries. Reviewers are selected deliberately to match each paper, which is a process that takes some time to ensure that each paper is handled equitably.

Reviewers are given several weeks from the initial invitation to review until the due date for the review. If a reviewer does not respond to the initial invitation, another reviewer is chosen. In the case where multiple reviewers are invited to review a paper, authors can expect a long delay before receiving news of the decision regarding their article. The Journal requires three detailed reviews to be received before a decision can be made.

Authors will be asked to classify their article in the Editorial Manager site. These classifications are crucial to the choice of reviewers for the article. The Journal encourages authors to choose classification categories with care to expedite the review process.

If the paper has significant grammar or stylistic concerns, authors will be encouraged to utilize a service such as Edanz as no copy-editing support from the publisher is available to the editors. Authors should carefully proof-read their submissions or ask colleagues to assist.

To expedite the review of your submission, please ensure that your manuscript conforms to the format details outlined below. Submissions in another format will be returned to the author for correction before proceeding to the peer review process.
**Resubmission Review Process**

As a matter of equity and fairness to all authors, the policy of the Journal Editorial Board is to work through the resubmitted paper queue in sequence. The Journal cannot prioritize authors based on their queries. Reviewers are selected deliberately to match each paper, which is a process that takes some time to ensure that each paper is handled equitably.

The editors of the Journal recommend that authors respond thoughtfully to the recommendations of the reviewers, carefully check their grammar and spelling, and ensure that their paper conforms to the guidelines below. The original reviewers will often be invited to review the resubmitted paper. Authors should document their changes thoroughly and explain whether they made suggested changes or declined to make those changes and why. Additional reviewers may also be invited to review the resubmitted article.

If the paper has significant grammar or stylistic concerns, authors will be encouraged to utilize a service such as Edanz as no copy-editing support from the publisher is available to the editors. Authors should carefully proof-read their submissions or ask colleagues to assist.

**Page Charges**

The journal makes no page charges. Reprints are available to authors, and order forms with the current price schedule are sent with proofs.

- **Springer Open Choice**

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**Changes to Accepted Papers**

Once a paper is accepted and the final proofs are approved, no changes can be made to the final version. Any changes must be submitted as erratum. Please carefully check your paper to ensure accuracy.

**Types of Papers**

The Journal is interested in original research in the area of maternal and child health, both within the US and from other countries. As this is primarily a journal devoted to population health, we are not interested in clinical case studies, in papers that are exclusively clinically focused, or in research that does not have an obvious public health focus. Research or practice-based articles from communities within the United States and from countries outside the US are welcome as long as they address issues of maternal and child health that will be of interest to more than a local audience.

**Manuscripts of the following types are welcome:**

*Original Research* reports (3500 word limit) results from an empirical research study, whether quantitative or qualitative, on a focused topic, presented consistent with international guidelines for research reporting (see [http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines](http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines)). *Original Research* may also take the format of a systematic review.

Reviews on specific, defined topics (3500 word limit) are welcome if they are systematic and reported in a standardized format. When justified, Reviews may exceed 35 references. Reporting guidelines have been developed for different study designs. The Journal encourages authors to follow these guidelines because they help authors describe the study in enough detail for it to be evaluated by editors, reviewers, readers, and other researchers evaluating the medical literature. Authors of review manuscripts are encouraged to describe the methods used for locating, selecting, extracting, and synthesizing data; this is mandatory for systematic reviews. The Journal encourages authors to utilize the following standards:


For additional information, see [http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/](http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/)

An example of an *Original Research* article is “New Evidence on Breastfeeding and Postpartum Depression: The Importance of Understanding Women’s Intentions” by Cristina Borra, Maria Iacovou, Almudena Sevilla which is available here: [http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10995-014-1591-z](http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10995-014-1591-z)

Another example is “Complex Calculations: How Drug Use During Pregnancy Becomes a Barrier to Prenatal Care” by Sarah C. M. Roberts and Cheri Pies available here: [http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10995-010-0594-7](http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10995-010-0594-7)

*From the Field* articles (2500 word limit) report novel programs, policies, or interventions of interest to a general maternal and child health audience, and may reflect evaluations, assessments, or other systematic description. *From the Field* articles may share a local experience that has potential
applicability to other communities. Authors are encouraged to describe the context clearly to ensure readers in other areas understand what is important and what has changed. Specific types of *From the Field* articles might include:

- **Field or practice-based articles** (2500 word limit) that describe new models, demonstrate the effectiveness of new or modified interventions, discuss the development or impact of new policies, or evaluate large or small-scale programs.

- **Methodological Notes** (2500 word limit) report upon focused, specific methodological issues of interest to maternal and child health researchers and practitioners, and can address qualitative, quantitative, policy, or other research modalities. Methodological notes may describe innovations in data gathering, measurement, study design, assessment and evaluation.

- **Professional Development manuscripts** (2500 word limit) present systematic descriptions and analyses of aspects of maternal and child health career paths, skills, leadership, and training.

- **Policy Briefs** (2500 word limit) describe the development and/or implementation of particular policies at any level of administration that may relate to maternal and child health.

- **Brief Reports** (2500 word limit) are short analyses of specific topics, usually reflecting the results of empirical research of general interest.

- **Graduate Education pieces** (2500 word limit) describe novel educational curricula development, educational interventions, or evaluations, broadly useful to maternal and child health and related fields.

- **Historical Notes** (2500 word limit) present historical accounting and analysis of key developments in maternal and child health and may reflect aspects of clinical care, maternal and child health programming, education, or administration, or more general public health developments in the field.


**Commentary or Letters to the Editor** (2500 word limit) reflect a systematically presented opinion around a particular issue of maternal and child health interest, often promoting new ideas or directions. For specific guidance on how to prepare these, please see [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2647072/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2647072/).


**Article Length**

As a general rule, the more concise the presentation, the better. Large-scale program evaluations, complex practice-based interventions, and some quantitative research may be allowed a few additional pages, if there is strong justification provided in a separate note to the editor. There is no need to repeat in text what is presented in tables and figures, and there is no need to repeat information from one section of the narrative to another.

- **Original Research** articles, which include **Review** articles, should be limited to 3500 words with no more than 35 references.
From the Field and Commentary or Letters to the Editor should be limited to 2500 words with no more than 25 references.

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Manuscripts should be submitted through the Editorial Manager Website for Maternal and Child Health Journal at: http://www.editorialmanager.com/maci/.

APA Style


Suggested Reviewers

Authors are asked to submit the names, current email addresses, and other contact information for three (3) suggested reviewers for their article. These potential reviewers should not be members of the authors’ departments or institutions, must not have participated in writing, editing, or reviewing the submission, and should be qualified to address the topic of the article. The editors of the Journal reserve the right to invite the suggested reviewers or other reviewers.

Integrity of Research and Reporting

Ethical standards

Manuscripts submitted for publication must contain a statement to the effect that all human and animal studies have been approved by the appropriate ethics committee and have therefore been performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments.

It should also be stated clearly in the text that all persons gave their informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study. Details that might disclose the identity of the subjects under study should be omitted.
These statements should be described in the Methods or Description sections of submission. If these statements are not applicable, authors should state that the manuscript is not based upon clinical study or patient data.

The editors reserve the right to reject manuscripts that do not comply with the above-mentioned requirements. The author will be held responsible for false statements or failure to fulfill the above-mentioned requirements. Evidence of institutional review and approval may be requested if necessary.

Conflict of Interest

Authors must indicate whether or not they have a financial relationship with the organization that sponsored the research. This note should be added in a separate section before the reference list. If no conflict exists, authors should state: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Formatting Requirements

Order of Manuscript Pages

- Title Page with all Author Contact Information and the corresponding author e-mail information.
- Blinded Abstract with Key Words and Significance Statement
- Blinded Manuscript
- Author Acknowledgements (including funding sources)
- References
- Tables, figures, footnotes, and legends should appear as separate sheets appended to the end of the manuscript.
- Figure caption sheet

Title Page

The title page should include:

- The name(s) of the author(s)
- A concise and informative title
- The affiliation(s) and address(es) of the author(s)
- The e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers of the corresponding author

Abstract

A structured abstract of up to 250 words is to be provided. The abstract should provide the context or background for the study and should state the study's purpose, basic procedures (selection of study participants, settings, measurements, analytical methods), main findings (giving specific effect sizes and their statistical and clinical significance, if possible), and principal conclusions. It should emphasize new and important aspects of the study or observations, note important limitations, and not overinterpret findings.
Because abstracts are the only substantive portion of the article indexed in many electronic databases, and the only portion many readers read, authors need to ensure that they accurately reflect the content of the article.

- For *Original Research* articles using the headings: Objectives, Methods, Results, and Conclusions for Practice.
- For *From the Field* articles use the headings: Purpose, Description, Assessment, and Conclusion.
- Another acceptable format for all article types is: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion.

**Significance**

Directly after the Abstract, the author should include a short paragraph (100 words or less) titled “Significance” which addresses what is already known about the topic of their article and what their article adds to the literature.

For example, the following paragraphs were included in “The educational gradient in coronary heart disease: the association with cognition in a cohort of 57,279 male conscripts” by Inger Ariansen, Laust Mortensen, Jannicke Igland, Grethe S Tell, Kristian Tambs, Sidsel Graff-Iversen, Bjørn Heine Strand, and Øyvind Naess in *J Epidemiol Community Health* available here: [http://jech.bmj.com/content/early/2014/11/13/jech-2014-204597.full.pdf+html](http://jech.bmj.com/content/early/2014/11/13/jech-2014-204597.full.pdf+html)

“What is already known on this subject?
The socioeconomic gradient in coronary heart disease may not be fully explained by social differences in cardiovascular risk factors. Cognitive ability has been proposed to impact this gradient independently of cardiovascular risk factors.

“What this study adds?
Adjustment for established cardiovascular disease risk factors substantially attenuated the educational gradient in coronary heart disease. Although the remaining unexplained gradient was not further attenuated by cognitive ability, cognitive ability alone moderately attenuated the educational gradient. This suggests that cognitive ability may be linked to coronary heart disease through risk factors.”

**Key Words**

A list of 4–5 keywords is to be provided directly below the abstract. Key words should express the precise content of the manuscript as they are used for indexing purposes.

**Ethical Statement Required**

Reports of original empirical research and *From the Field* articles must include a statement in the Methods or Discussion section certifying that the research was conducted in accord with prevailing ethical principles and reviewed by an Institutional Review Board or explaining the rationale for departures from those principles. The editors reserve the right to reject any submission which does not include this statement.


**Sections of the Text**

*Introduction, Objectives, Purpose*
Provide a context or background for the study (that is, the nature of the problem and its significance). State the specific purpose or research objective of, or hypothesis tested by, the study or observation. Cite only directly pertinent references, and do not include data or conclusions from the work being reported.

Methods, Description
The guiding principle of the Methods section should be clarity about how and why a study was done in a particular way. The section should include only information that was available at the time the plan or protocol for the study was being written; all information obtained during the study belongs in the Results section.

A note on Statistics: Describe statistical methods with enough detail to enable a knowledgeable reader with access to the original data to judge its appropriateness for the study and to verify the reported results. When possible, quantify findings and present them with appropriate indicators of measurement error or uncertainty (such as confidence intervals).

Results, Assessment
Present your results in logical sequence in the text, tables, and figures, giving the main or most important findings first. Do not repeat all the data in the tables or figures in the text; emphasize or summarize only the most important observations.

Discussion, Conclusions, Conclusions for Practice
Emphasize the new and important aspects of the study and the conclusions that follow from them in the context of the totality of the best available evidence. Do not repeat in detail data or other information given in other parts of the manuscript, such as in the Introduction or the Results section. For experimental studies, it is useful to begin the discussion by briefly summarizing the main findings, then explore 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.

Link the conclusions with the goals of the study but avoid unqualified statements and conclusions not adequately supported by the data. In particular, distinguish between clinical and statistical significance, and avoid making statements on economic benefits and costs unless the manuscript includes the appropriate economic data and analyses. Avoid claiming priority or alluding to work that has not been completed. State new hypotheses when warranted, but label them clearly.

For more detailed information and further discussion of each of these sections, please see the ICMJE Recommendations: http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/manuscript-preparation/preparing-for-submission.html

Statistical Reporting
Manuscripts should confirm to the Statistical Analyses and Methods in the Published Literature (SAMPL) Guidelines, which can be found at http://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/sampl/.

Manuscript Formatting Considerations
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Manuscripts should be submitted in Word.

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- Use italics for emphasis.
• Use the automatic page numbering function to number the pages.
• Do not use field functions.
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• Use the table function, not spreadsheets, to make tables.
• Use the equation editor or MathType for equations.
• Save your file in docx format (Word 2007 or higher) or doc format (older Word versions).

**Headings**
- Please use no more than three levels of displayed headings.
  - Level 1: Centered
  - Level 2: Centered Italicized
  - Level 3: Flush left, Italicized
- For *Original Research* articles using the headings: Objectives, Methods, Results, and Conclusions for Practice.
- For *From the Field* articles use the headings: Purpose, Description, Assessment, and Conclusion.
- Another acceptable format for all article types is: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion.

**Abbreviations**
Abbreviations should be defined at first mention and used consistently thereafter.

**Footnotes**
Footnotes can be used to give additional information, which may include the citation of a reference included in the reference list. They should not consist solely of a reference citation, and they should never include the bibliographic details of a reference. They should also not contain any figures or tables.

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Always use footnotes instead of endnotes.

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- Generic names of drugs and pesticides are preferred; if trade names are used, the generic name should be given at first mention.
- Please use the standard mathematical notation for formulae, symbols etc.:
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Roman/upright for numerals, operators, and punctuation, and commonly defined functions or abbreviations, e.g., \( \cos, \det, e \text{ or } \exp, \lim, \log, \max, \min, \sin, \tan, d \) (for derivative).

Bold for vectors, tensors, and matrices.

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  - Drug concentrations may be reported in either SI or mass units, but the alternative should be provided in parentheses where appropriate.

**Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgments of people, grants, funds, etc. should be placed in a separate section no longer than one paragraph before the reference list. The names of funding organizations should be written in full.

**References**

All references must be in APA Style. Some examples are provided below. For a complete style guide, please visit: [http://www.apastyle.org/](http://www.apastyle.org/).

**Citation**

Cite references in the text by name and year in parentheses. Some examples:

- Negotiation research spans many disciplines (Thompson 1990).
- This result was later contradicted by Becker and Seligman (1996).
- This effect has been widely studied (Abbott 1991; Barakat et al. 1995; Kelso and Smith 1998; Medvec et al. 1999).

**Reference list**

The list of references should only include works that are cited in the text and that have been published or accepted for publication. Personal communications and unpublished works should only be mentioned in the text. Do not use footnotes or endnotes as a substitute for a reference list. Reference list entries should be alphabetized by the last names of the first author of each work. Journal names and book titles should be italicized.

- **Journal article**
  

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- **Book**
  

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Tables should be numbered in one consecutive series of Arabic numerals and referred to by number in the text. Each table should have a descriptive title.

- All tables are to be numbered using Arabic numerals.
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Each table should be inserted on a separate page at the back of the manuscript in the order noted above. A call-out for the correct placement of each table should be included in brackets within the text immediately after the phrase in which it is first mentioned. Copyright permission footnotes for tables are typed as a table note.

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