



Aziz Fatimah Medical & Dental College

Journal Policy Document

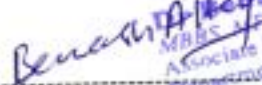
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Revision Date: This policy was revised on 22nd Aug 2022, in the JAFMDC Editorial Board, considering the HEC "Revision of Research Journals & Publication Policies Reference No 2 (22) R & D (SS & H)/HEC/2019/337".



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Aziz Fatimah Medical & Dental College

Aims & Scope:

The JAFMDC aims to encourage innovative academic research and provide a free platform for researchers who have made significant contributions to the medical community to publish their research in the form of original articles, systematic reviews/meta-analysis, short communications, case reports and case series. As a medical journal, our goal is to improve healthcare by focusing on all areas of health and medical sciences, including medical education. We publish articles related to medical, dental, nursing, and allied health sciences.

Our journal is open access and double-blind peer-reviewed, ensuring that high-quality medical research is disseminated worldwide with consistency in presenting relevant scientific themes. We also aim to achieve indexing in reputable international databases to enhance the global visibility and accessibility of scientific medical literature originating from the local context of the Pakistani population.

Objectives:

The journal objectives include:

- Publishing original, peer-reviewed articles with a strong emphasis on quality and originality on a broad range of medical topics.
- Publishing articles with high ethical standards.
- Promoting critical thinking, ensuring academic integrity, and encouraging medical postgraduate and undergraduate students to expand their writing skills.
- Promoting innovative developments in the medical sciences to improve healthcare practices.
- Updating healthcare professionals, bio researchers, and students about recent developments and discoveries in health sciences.
- Providing physicians with continuing education in basic and clinical science to support informed clinical decisions.
- Synchronizing the knowledge of physicians to remain informed in multiple areas of the medical arena.
- Improving public health at the international level by enhancing the quality of medical care, disease prevention, and research through an informed and knowledgeable readership.
- Fostering responsible and balanced debate on controversial issues that affect medicine and healthcare.
- Highlighting common issues and trends in medicine and healthcare.
- Displaying social responsibility to improve the wellbeing of individuals and the integrity of science.
- Achieving the highest level of ethical medical journalism.
- Achieving timely, credible, and informative publications.

Selection of Editorial Board:

JAFMDC follows the recommendations of HEC policies, International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), and COPE guidelines in the selection of the editorial board, peer reviewer, authorship, and all steps until the publication of articles.

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- The editorial board will be headed by a medical person.
- The Chief Editor will have editorship experience.
- Highly qualified editorial members from various disciplines and capabilities will be selected by the editor-in-chief.
- Editorial members will have a strong research background.
- 25% of the editorial board members will be selected from outside the institutes.
- The editor is responsible for conducting Editorial Board meetings on a regular basis.

Responsibilities of Editor:

The Editor of JAFMDC is responsible for:

- Establishing and maintaining the quality of the journal by publishing quality papers.
- Promotion of freedom of expression within the cultural, constitutional/legal framework.
- Providing integrity and credibility of the research contributions.
- Meeting the needs of authors and readers.
- Maintaining the ethical standards of their journal.
- Providing corrigendum for any correction, clarification, and apologies where required.

Good Practices for Their Job Would Include To:

- Encourage new ideas and suggestions from authors, peer reviewers, members of the editorial board, and readers for improving the quality of the journal.
- Apply the process of blind peer review in true letter and spirit.
- Promote innovative findings in the respective field and publish them on priority.
- Promote the anti-plagiarism policy.
- Educate contributors (authors) about ethical practices in research.
- Implement the journal's policy without institutional pressure and revise the policy from time to time.

Publication Policies:

- The study must not have been published (partly or as a whole) before or be under consideration for publication elsewhere (except as an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis).
- Authorship will be according to the guidelines by ICMJE as required by PM&DC and HEC.
- A submitted article will be processed through a double-blind peer review system by a subject expert.
- Articles with the highest ethical standards with reference to plagiarism will be considered for publication.
- JAFMDC will accept manuscripts prepared in accordance with the recommendations of ICMJE.
- Publication misconduct will be dealt with according to COPE guidelines.
- The journal also encourages the submission of useful reports of negative results.
- An author may have a maximum of one article per issue, either as the principal author (first or corresponding author) or as a co-author.

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- The corresponding author is responsible for ensuring that all co-authors have approved the publication of the article.
- Author dispute-related issues will not be entertained after the publication of the paper.
- Any change in the authorship (such as addition or deletion of author(s) or change in the sequence of the author list) after the submission of an article will not be entertained.
- An undertaking will be obtained from the author to prevent duplicate publication.
- A website for JAFMDC with complete archives will be maintained.
- Submission of an article does not guarantee its publication.
- Self-institutional authorship will not exceed 1/5th or 20% of total articles.
- Articles of editorial board members will not be published.

Plagiarism and Similarity Index:

- The journal aims to advance the field of medical science by publishing research of the highest quality, which cannot be achieved if plagiarism is tolerated. The journal's plagiarism policy adheres to the guidelines set by HEC and PMDC.
- To check the similarity index, all articles are processed through Turnitin software, one of the leading anti-plagiarism tools, which helps promote academic integrity and uphold a strong reputation through original writing.
- As per HEC guidelines, if a manuscript has a similarity index of 19% or less, the benefit of the doubt may be given to the author. However, if any single source has a similarity of 5% or more without proper citation, the manuscript must be revised and will be returned to the author to reduce the similarity index to within the permissible limit.
- After revision, the manuscript will be reprocessed through the same software to verify its originality. Once a satisfactory report is obtained, it will be sent to reviewers for peer review.
- Articles with a similarity index exceeding 19% will not be published.
- Similarities with the author's previous work may be disregarded if they pertain to the same study.

ICMJE Recommendations for Authorship and Acknowledgments

Criteria for Authorship:

ICMJE recommends that authorship should be based on fulfilling all four of the following criteria:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work.
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content.
3. Final approval of the version to be published.
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.

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Acknowledgement Criteria:

Contributors who do not meet all four criteria for authorship, but helped in the study, may be listed in the acknowledgement section.

Contributions:

Detailed contribution made by each author will be required at the time of manuscript submission.

Peer Review Policy (COPE guidelines/ ICMJE):

The journal follows a double-blind peer review policy as per ICMJE criteria and COPE guidelines. Peer reviewers play a pivotal and critical role in the review process, ensuring the integrity of the scholarly record. Reviewers must be aware of ethical obligations recommended by COPE and review articles with responsibility and unbiased judgment. Reviewers who have a conflict of interest should report it to the editor to prevent bias.

Appropriate expert reviewers from various disciplines will be selected by the editorial board for unbiased, independent, and critical assessment of articles to improve the quality of the manuscript. The Manuscript can be modified based on feedback provided by reviewers from the relevant specialties. Submitted manuscripts initially undergo internal peer review. A manuscript with plagiarism and poor quality will be rejected in-house. Appropriate articles will be sent for double-blind external peer review by two subject experts.

Original articles authored by the editorial board will not be published. Editorials authored by the editor-in-chief will be subjected to an external peer review.

Ethical Guidelines for the Reviewers:

Reviewers are expected to provide constructive feedback to help improve the article intellectually, avoiding harsh language that may discourage the author.

Reviewers should provide specific comments and suggestions on the layout and format, title, abstract, introduction, graphical abstracts and/or highlights, methodology, statistical analysis, results, discussion/conclusion, language, and references.

We follow a peer review policy in accordance with COPE guidelines (COPE guidelines are available at: <https://publicationethics.org/files/Peer%20review%20guidelines.pdf>)

Reviewers must treat all manuscripts they are asked to review as confidential documents. Since peer review is confidential, reviewers must not share information about the review with anyone without the agreement of the editors and authors involved. This applies both during and after the publication process.

Any suggestion by a reviewer that the author include citations to the reviewer's (or their associates') work must be made solely for genuine scientific reasons and not to influence citation counts or to enhance the visibility of the reviewer's work (or that of their associates).

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If a reviewer has any concerns about potential conflicts of interest, they must inform the editor immediately.

Conflict of Interest:

All participants, including authors, peer reviewers, and editorial board members, must disclose any potential conflicts of interest. Reviewers and editorial board members must recuse themselves from reviewing or making decisions on a manuscript if a conflict of interest exists. (Refer to ICMJE guidelines for detailed guidance.)

Confidentiality:

- Before conducting any research involving human participants, researchers must obtain informed consent from each participant. All information about the participants must be kept strictly confidential. (Refer to ICMJE/COXTRI guidelines for detailed guidance.)
- All submitted manuscripts are authors' private, confidential property and will be kept confidential.
- Peer Reviewers must also maintain the confidentiality of reviewed manuscripts during and after the publication process.
- The journal will keep a record of published articles for at least three years, and rejected articles are deleted from backup (ICMJE/COPE criteria).

Timeliness

- Editors will ensure the timely processing of manuscripts using the resources available to them.
- They are responsible for managing the workflow so that submissions progress through peer review, revision, and decision-making without unnecessary delay.
- Editors should communicate promptly with authors and reviewers, monitor review timelines, and take appropriate action if delays occur to maintain a smooth and efficient publication process.

Copyright

- Authors retain the copyright of their work and can deposit their publication in any repository.
- The work can be freely shared and adapted, provided appropriate credit is given to the actual source.
- JAFMDC is fully compliant with open access mandates, publishing its articles under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License.

Ethical Approval of Research:

Every original article submitted to JAFMDC should have ethical approval from the ethical review board of institution.

All case reports require approval from the head of the department. A statement showing informed consent prior to the publication of a case report must be included.

Integrity

Editorial decisions will be based on the relevance of the manuscript to the scope journal, as well as its originality, quality, and contribution to the existing body of evidence on important questions.

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Correspondence

The corresponding author is responsible for responding to any substantial criticisms or queries regarding their work, using the same communication channels through which the manuscript was handled. Editors may request formal responses when necessary. Authors submitting correspondence must also declare any competing or conflicting interests.

Dealing with Misconduct Retraction Policies

Authors found guilty of any form of misconduct—including falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism—will be dealt with according to COPE guidelines. Information on COPE Retraction Guidelines is available at: <https://publicationethics.org/files/retraction-guidelines.pdf>

Data Access & Retention

If any query arises regarding the accuracy or integrity of the research, the author is required to provide the original/raw data to verify the findings.

Image Manipulation

Authors must ensure that all images included in the manuscript concerning data as a part of research are free from inappropriate manipulation and accurately represent the data. Any suspicion of image manipulation will be handled according to COPE guidelines. Further details are available at: <https://publicationethics.org/files/image-manipulation-published-article-cope-flowchart.pdf>

Correction for Errors

In accordance with ICMJE recommendations, corrections are required for any factual errors.

Pre-Publication Corrections

During the proof stage and before publication, JAFMDC provides the corresponding author with the final PDF version of the article to review for any necessary corrections. The author is responsible for carefully checking the proof and identifying errors. The article will be published only after the author has approved the final version.

Post-Publication Corrections

If significant errors are identified after publication—either by the authors or by readers—they will be corrected in the PDF copy of the online version to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the scholarly record.

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Publication Schedule:

JAFMDC is published biannually with two issues per year. The journal is published on a regular basis and continually strives to improve its standards in terms of quality and content. In accordance with HEC guidelines, a minimum of five original articles are published in each issue. We also encourage the submission of case reports, systemic reviews, short communications/commentaries, and letters to the editor.

Appeal Policy

Authors have the right to appeal editorial decisions. An appeal must be submitted in the form of a written letter to the editor, clearly stating the reasons for the appeal and providing any supporting information. The editorial team will review the appeal and respond after appropriate discussion and evaluation. The final decision will be made by the editor.

Data Availability Statement

Authors are encouraged to include a Data Availability Statement in their manuscript, indicating whether the data supporting the findings of the article are publicly available, available upon request, or not available. This promotes transparency and enhances the reproducibility of research.

Digital Archiving Policy

JAFMDC supports digital archiving to ensure the long-term preservation of published content. The journal maintains archives through CLOCKSS, ensuring the security, integrity, and accessibility of the data.

Authors Eligible to Submit Manuscripts (Who Can Publish in the Journal)

1. Medical and dental postgraduate students
2. Researchers in the medical field
3. Faculty of basic medical sciences
4. Faculty of clinical sciences
5. Consultant physicians
6. Resident medical officers
7. General medical and dental practitioners
8. Medical and dental undergraduate students
9. Health care administrators
10. Allied health care professionals

Topic Coverage

The journal welcomes manuscripts covering a broad range of topics, including:

1. Articles on basic and clinical medical sciences
2. Updates and advances in dental disciplines
3. Continuing education in basic and clinical sciences
4. Emerging developments in the medical field

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5. Prevalent diseases in the country and their prevention
6. Biomedical ethics
7. Current trends in medical education
8. Allied health-related scientific research

Types of Manuscripts

The journal accepts the following types of manuscripts:

1. Editorial (invited)
2. Original Article
3. Review Article
4. Short Communication / Commentary
5. Opinion / Perspective
6. Case Report/case series
7. Letter to the Editor
8. Others (e.g., Students' Corner)

Processing & Publication Charges:

JAFMDC does not charge any processing or publication fees, as it aims to disseminate quality scientific research free of cost.

Provision of Printed Copies:

Complimentary printed copies are provided to all authors of articles published in JAFMDC at no cost.

Subscription Details

All subscribers receive free hard copies of the journal.

Website/Online Publication

This journal has an active website: <http://journal.afmdc.edu.pk>

Open Journal System (OJS):

Submissions, peer review, and all article processing are conducted through the OJS platform. OJS is a comprehensive journal management and publishing system that supports every stage of the refereed publishing process, from manuscript submission to online publication and indexing.

Online Access and Archiving:

- Updated issues of the journal will be made available online.
- The citation record of the journal will be regularly updated on the website.
- Archives of published issues from the previous ten years will be accessible on the journal website.

Important Links

- **HEC Ethical Guidelines for Journals and Editors:**
<http://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/faculty/SSAH/Documents/JCR/HEC%20Approved%20Ethical%20Guidelines.pdf>

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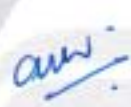


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- **HEC Guidelines on How to Interpret Originality Reports (Plagiarism Guidelines):**
<http://hec.gov.pk/english/services/faculty/documents/plagiarism/guidelines%20on%20turnitin.pdf>
- **ICMJE Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals:**
<http://www.icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf>
- **COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers:**
<https://publicationethics.org/files/Peer%20review%20guidelines.pdf>
- **COPE Guidelines for Retraction:**
COPE Guidelines for Retraction:
<https://publicationethics.org/retraction-guidelines>

Appendices

- **Appendix I:** Editorial Processing Flow Chart
- **Appendix II:** Authors' Agreement Form


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Editorial Processing Flow — Description

The editorial workflow of the *Journal of Aziz Fatimah Medical & Dental College (JAFMDC)* follows a structured, step-by-step sequence to ensure quality, transparency, and ethical review:

1. Article Submission

- The author submits the manuscript through the **OJS (Open Journal System)**.

2. Initial Editorial Triage

- The editorial office performs:
 - **Plagiarism check**
 - **Internal review**
- Manuscripts not meeting basic requirements are **rejected at screening**.

3. Peer Review Process

- Manuscripts that pass screening are sent to:
 - **Peer Reviewer 1**
 - **Peer Reviewer 2**

4. Editor's Assessment of Review

- Based on reviewers' reports, the editor decides:
 - **Rejected**, OR
 - **Revision Required** (Minor or Major), OR
 - **Accepted**

5. Revision Stage (if required)

- Authors revise the manuscript and **resubmit**.
- Revised manuscripts undergo reassessment.

6. Post-Acceptance Processing

- **Layout Editing**
- **Copy Editing**
- **Author Proofreading**
- **Final Format Conversion**

7. Final Publication

- The article is prepared for print and online publication.

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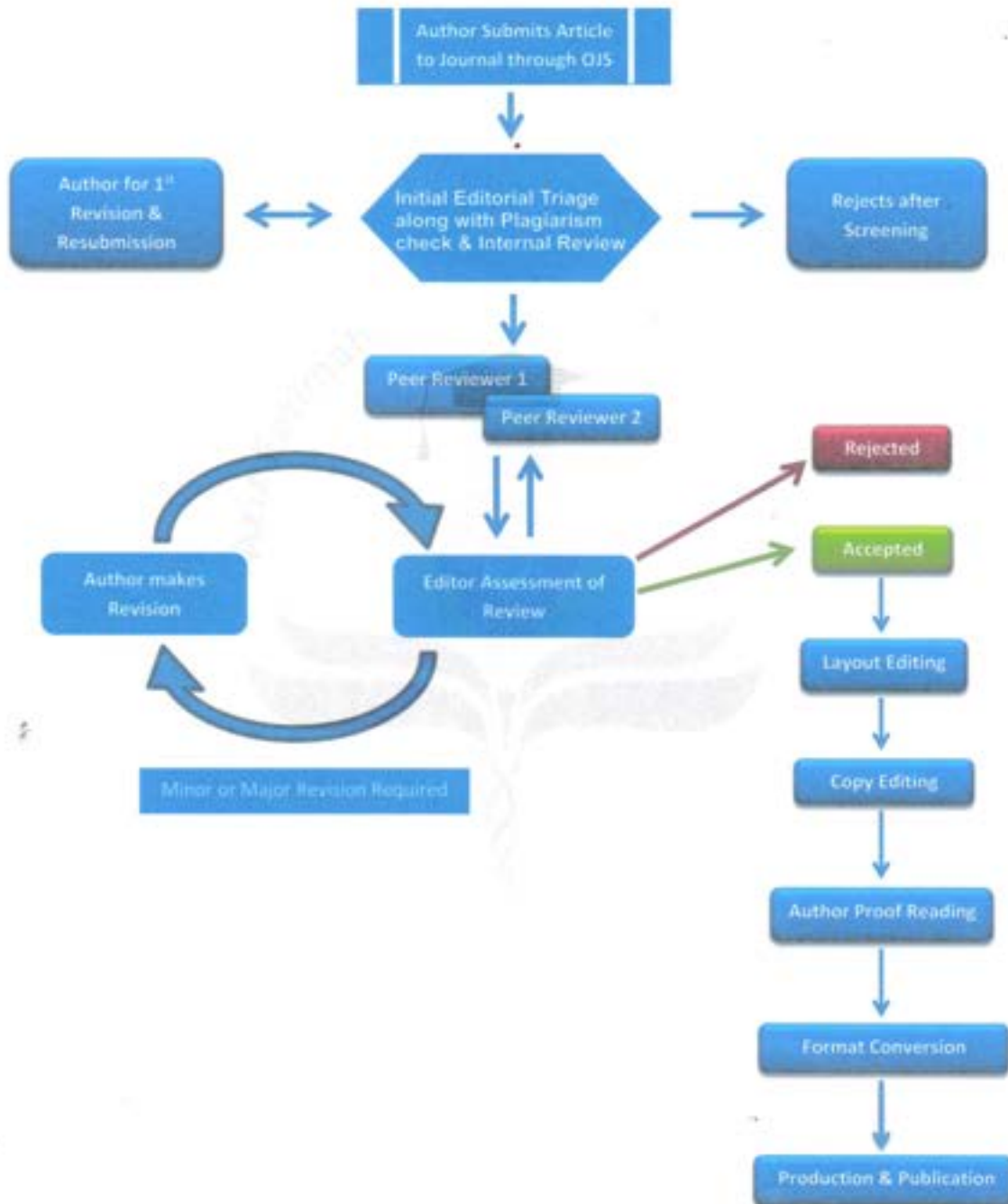


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EDITORIAL PROCESSING



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Authors Agreement Form

Ref No: JAFMDC/

Date: _____

It is hereby submitted that I/We have seen and approved the final version of the manuscript titled as:

Manuscript Title: _____

Article Type: _____

Undertaking:

The undersigned confirms that the manuscript submitted to JAFMDC is original, has not been submitted for concurrent consideration elsewhere, and has not been published in any other medical journal.

The editors of JAFMDC reserve the right to suggest changes, hold, or reject the manuscript at any stage. The editors also reserve the right to retract a published article in case of ethical misconduct, following COPE guidelines.

All human or animal studies undertaken as part of the research have been conducted in accordance with the regulations of the relevant institution(s) and comply with guidelines and policies governing such work.

Disclaimer:

Please declare if the abstract has been previously presented or published in a conference, or is part of any M.Phil., PhD thesis project, or other relevant information:

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- If Yes Specify _____

Conflict of Interest:

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- If Yes Specify _____

Funding Disclosure:

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- If Yes Specify _____

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Corresponding Author Declaration

I, the corresponding author of this manuscript, certify that all the information provided above is correct and approved by all co-authors.

ICMJE Authorship Criteria:

All authors must meet all four of the following criteria:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work, or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data.
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content.
3. Final approval of the version to be published.
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work, ensuring questions related to accuracy or integrity are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Contributors who do not meet all four criteria but assisted in the study may be listed in the Acknowledgements section.

Manuscript Formatting Guidelines

- **Software:** MS Word
- **Font Type:** Times New Roman
- **Font Size:** 14 for article title; 12 for article text
- **Line Spacing:** 1.5 throughout
- **Alignment:** Justified
- **Page Numbers:** Must be included
- **References:** Preferably from the last 5 years; in-text citations must be numerical and in superscript

Submission

Manuscripts should be submitted through our online journal management system:
<http://journal.afmdc.edu.pk/index.php/AFMDC>

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Sr #	Type of Article	Abstract Type & Word Count	Total Word Count (Max)	References (Max)	Tables / Figures (Max)
1	Review Article	Unstructured, 150 words	4000	35	5
2	Original Article	Structured, 250 words	3000	25	3
3	Short Communication / Commentary / Opinion / Perspectives	Unstructured, 150 words	1500	20	3
4	Case Report	Unstructured, 150 words	1250	10	2
5	Letter to Editor	-	400	5	1

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