



Reporting Guidelines: A Tool to Improve Quality and Transparency of Health Research

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Manuscript is a document submitted for publication which has IMRaD (Introduction-Methods-Results and Discussion) format. Introduction tell why did you start the research and methods explain how did you conduct it, results present what did you find, while discussion is about what does it all means.

It is important that manuscript gives a clear and complete account of the research that researchers have done. Well reported research is more useful and complete reporting allows editors, peer reviewers and readers to understand what researcher did and how. Poorly reported research can distort the literature, and leads to research that cannot be replicated or used in future meta-analyses or systematic reviews.

To help with reporting research, there are reporting guidelines available for many different study designs. These contain a checklist of minimum points that researcher should cover in their manuscript.

The EQUATOR (Enhancing the Quality and Transparency Of health Research) Network is an international initiative that aims to improve the quality of research publications. It provides a comprehensive list of reporting guidelines and other material to help improve reporting.¹

The editorial will attempt to sensitise and encourage the authors to adhere to these reporting guidelines which will ensure quality and transparency of health research. Some of the reporting guidelines for common study designs are enlisted below:²

Guideline	Description
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
MOOSE	Meta-analysis of Observational Studies in Epidemiology MOOSE guidelines is used to improve the reporting of meta-analyses of observational studies in epidemiology.
SPIRIT	Standard Protocol Items: Recommendations for Interventional Trials SPIRIT Statement is a 33-item checklist that recommend a minimum set of data to include in a clinical trial protocol.
CONSORT	Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials CONSORT 2010 statement is a 25-item checklist containing the minimum recommendations for reporting Randomized Clinical Trials (RCTs).
TREND	Transparent Reporting of Evaluations with Nonrandomized Designs
STROBE	STrengthening the Reporting of OBservational studies in Epidemiology
CARE	Reporting guidelines for CAsE Reports
ARRIVE	Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments
COREQ	Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research
RATS	Qualitative research review guidelines
STARD	Standards for Reporting Diagnostic Accuracy

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CHEERS	Consolidated Health Economic Evaluation Reporting Standards
REMARK	Reporting Recommendations for Tumor Marker Prognostic Studies
MIAME	Minimum Information About a Microarray Experiment
SAGER	Sex and Gender Equity in Research (SAGER) guidelines
SQUIRE	Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence
CHERRIES	Checklist for Reporting Results of Internet E-Surveys

Figure 1: Reporting guidelines for health research.

Authors should use these guidelines while preparing and writing manuscript, and it may be required to provide a completed version of the checklist when authors submit their manuscript.

Peer reviewers may be asked to use these checklists when assessing the manuscript. If authors follow these guidelines, editors and peer reviewers will be able to assess manuscript better as they will more easily understand what the researchers did. It may also mean that they ask authors for fewer revisions.³

To conclude, reporting guidelines are important tools for all those involved in the process of research production and report writing. These guidelines detail what is expected to be found in each section of a report for a given study design.

The use of reporting guidelines has contributed to improved reports as well as increased quality of research methodology. Reporting guidelines need to be publicized in order to increase knowledge about these essential tools among health researchers. Encouraging their use by journals is the key to enhancing the quality of scientific publications.⁴

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