

## Instructions for preparation of manuscripts for publication in supplements to BioMed Central journals

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### General information

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#### Publication

Manuscripts accepted by the Editor-in-Chief will be published online in a BioMed Central journal in fully browseable web forms and formatted PDF files. Articles will be available through BioMed Central websites and submitted for inclusion in PubMed.

#### Editorial policies

Submission of a manuscript to a BioMed Central journal implies that all authors have read and agreed to its content, and that readily reproducible materials described in the manuscript will be freely available to any scientist wishing to use them for non-commercial purposes. Nucleic acid sequences, protein sequences, and atomic coordinates should be deposited in an appropriate database in time for the accession number to be included in the article. Where appropriate, authors are encouraged to adhere to the standards proposed by the Microarray Gene Expression Data Society (<http://www.mged.org>) and to deposit microarray data in one of the public repositories.

Authors are required to ensure that no material submitted as part of a manuscript infringes existing copyrights, or the rights of a third party. The article should not already have been published in another journal or other citeable publication and should not be under consideration by any other journal, but it can already have been deposited on a preprint server. If articles have been published previously as extended abstracts then they must be significantly expanded, include novel methods, results, analysis or interpretation and cite the original abstract. For further guidance, please see BioMed Central's Duplicate Publication Policy <http://www.biomedcentral.com/about/duplicatepublication>.

Copying text from previously published work without acknowledging the source is plagiarism and such misconduct may be reported to the authors' institution(s). Any quotations must be clearly indicated by quote marks and the source must be cited.

#### Ethics and consent

Submission of a manuscript reporting experimental research on humans or animals implies that authors have obtained approval for their research from the appropriate ethics committee, or government body regulating animal or human research. A statement to this effect must be included in the Methods section of your manuscript. Experimental methods must be in compliance with the Helsinki Declaration ([www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/](http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/)). Where appropriate, a statement to this effect must be included in the Methods section of the manuscript.

For all articles that include information or clinical photographs relating to individual patients, written and signed consent from each patient to publish must also be submitted to BioMed Central. The manuscript should include a statement to this effect in the Acknowledgements section, as follows: "Written consent was obtained from the patient or their relative for publication of this study".

#### Competing interests and Declarations

Authors of manuscripts submitted for publication in supplements to BioMed Central journals must complete a declaration of competing interests (see "[Competing interests](#)"). Where an author has no competing interests, they should state this. See <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/supplements.html>. Authors should also include a Declaration stating who has provided the funding for publication of the article.

#### Special requirements – RCT registration and reporting checklists

BioMed Central supports prospective registration and numbering of randomized controlled trials (RCTs). Authors of reports of controlled trials of health care interventions must register their trial in a suitable publicly accessible registry prior to submission. The trial registers that currently meet all of the ICMJE guidelines can be found at <http://www.icmje.org/faq.html>.

BioMed Central also supports initiatives aimed at improving the reporting of biomedical research. We recommend authors refer to the [EQUATOR](#) network website for further information on the available reporting guidelines for health research, and the [MIBBI](#) Portal for prescriptive checklists for reporting biological and biomedical research where applicable. Authors are requested to make use of these when drafting their manuscript and peer reviewers

will also be asked to refer to these checklists when evaluating these studies. Checklists are available for a number of study designs, including randomized controlled trials ([CONSORT](#)), systematic reviews ([PRISMA](#)), observational studies ([STROBE](#)), meta-analyses of observational studies ([MOOSE](#)), diagnostic accuracy studies ([STARD](#)) and qualitative studies ([RATS](#)). For authors of systematic reviews, a supplementary file, linked from the Methods section, should reproduce all details concerning the search strategy. For an example of how a search strategy should be presented, see the [Cochrane Reviewers' Handbook](#).

Authors from pharmaceutical companies, or other commercial organizations that sponsor clinical trials, should adhere to the Good Publication Practice guidelines for pharmaceutical companies (<http://www.gpp-guidelines.org/>), which are designed to ensure that publications are produced in a responsible and ethical manner. The guidelines also apply to any companies or individuals that work on industry-sponsored publications, such as freelance writers, contract research organizations and communications companies.

The involvement of medical writers or anyone else who assisted with the preparation of the manuscript content should be acknowledged, along with their source of funding, as described in the European Medical Writers Association (EMWA) guidelines on the role of medical writers in developing peer-reviewed publications (<http://www.emwa.org/Mum/EMWAguidelines.pdf>). If medical writers are not listed among the authors, it is important that their role be acknowledged explicitly. We suggest working such as "We thank Jane Doe who provided medical writing services on behalf of XYZ Pharmaceuticals Ltd".

### Copyright

Author(s) will retain copyright on articles published in supplements to BioMed Central journals. Authors grant BioMed Central a license to publish the article and identify itself as the original publisher. Authors also grant any third party the right to use the article freely as long as its integrity is maintained and its original authors, citation details and publisher are identified. Author(s) will be asked to sign a BioMed Central Copyright and License Agreement that formalizes these and other terms and conditions of publishing articles in the supplement.

## Style and language

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### General

Currently, BioMed Central can only accept manuscripts written in English. Spelling should be US English or British English, but not a mixture. Full stops rather than commas should be used to indicate decimal points.

BioMed Central will not edit submitted manuscripts for style or language, so please ensure that inconsistencies in style, and incorrect grammar, spelling and punctuation have been addressed prior to submission.

Gene names should be in italic, but protein products should be in plain type.

Generic drug names should generally be used. When proprietary brands are used, include the brand names in parentheses.

There is no explicit limit on the length of articles submitted for publication in a supplement, unless otherwise instructed by the supplement organizers, but authors are encouraged to be concise. There is also no restriction on the number of figures or tables, but note that these should be limited to a reasonable number for the length of the article. Authors should include all relevant supporting data with each article.

### Typography

- Please use double line spacing.
- Type the text unjustified, without hyphenating words at line breaks.
- Use hard returns only to end headings and paragraphs, not to rearrange lines.
- Capitalise only the first word and proper nouns in the title and headings.
- All pages should be numbered.
- Use the BioMed Central reference format (see [References](#) section in [Manuscript preparation](#)).
- Greek and other special characters may be included. If you are unable to reproduce a particular special character, please type out the name of the symbol in full. Please ensure that all special characters used are embedded in the text, otherwise they may be lost during conversion to PDF.
- Genes, mutations, genotypes and alleles should be indicated in italics and authors are required to use approved gene symbols, names and formatting. Protein products should be in plain type.

### Units

SI units should be used throughout (litre and molar are permitted, however).

## Manuscript preparation: text and sections

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### Preparing text

#### File formats

The following file formats are acceptable for the main text document:

- Microsoft Word (version 2 and above) – see below for template
- Rich text format (RTF)
- Portable document format (PDF)

TeX/LaTeX - please use BioMed Central's TeX template: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/ifora/tex> and submit your file as a PDF file.

#### Microsoft Word template

We have designed a MS Word template that can be used to generate a standard style and format for your article. It can be used if you have not yet started to write your article, or if it is already written and needs to be put into BioMed Central journal style.

The template (<http://www.biomedcentral.com/download/templates/BMC154d.dot>) consists of a standard set of headings that make up an article manuscript, along with dummy fragments of body text. Follow these steps to create your manuscript in the standard format:

- Replace the dummy text for Title, Author details, Institutional affiliations, and the other sections of the manuscript with your own text (either by entering the text directly or by cutting and pasting from your own manuscript document).
- If there are sections that you do not need, delete them (but check the rest of the Instructions for Authors to see which sections are compulsory).
- Please include a [Competing interests](#) section, as these are compulsory for all Supplement articles.
- If you need an additional copy of a heading (e.g. for additional figure legends), just copy and paste.
- Please note you can put the Methods section after the Conclusion if you prefer.
- Enter the references using the reference style given, see [References](#) section.

### Sections of the manuscript

All manuscripts must be structured and include a title page and abstract. Manuscripts should be divided into sections as appropriate to the article - please do not number the sections or any subheadings. The following sections are required:

#### Title page

#### Abstract

#### Background or Introduction

#### Main body of text

- Research articles must include **Methods**, **Results** and **Conclusion** sections in the main text, with an optional **Discussion** section
- Review articles – please include appropriate headings and subheadings

#### Conclusions

#### List of abbreviations used (if any)

#### Competing interests

#### Authors' contributions (research articles only)

#### Acknowledgements

#### Declarations

#### References

#### Figure legends (if any)

#### Tables and captions (if any)

#### Description of additional data files (if any)

**Please note: footnotes and text boxes are not allowed**

**Title page**

This should include the title of the article, the full author names (with no titles or qualifications), institutional addresses (Department, Institute, City, Post/Zip code, Country), and email addresses for all authors. Authors and affiliations must be linked using superscript numerals. The corresponding author should also be indicated. The title should be in bold, sentence case with no full stop at the end and no underlining. Please note, abbreviations in the title should be avoided.

**Abstract**

This should not exceed 350 words and, for research articles, should be structured into separate sections headed Background, Methods (if applicable), Results and Conclusions. (Background: the context and purpose of the study; Methods: how the study was performed and statistical tests used; Results: the main findings; Conclusions: brief summary and potential implications.) Please do not cite references, figures or tables in the abstract, and minimise the use of abbreviations.

**Background or Introduction**

The Background section should be written in a way that is accessible to researchers without specialist knowledge in that area and must clearly state – and, if helpful, illustrate – the background to the research and its aims. Reports of clinical research should, where appropriate, include a summary of a search of the literature to indicate why this study was necessary and what it aimed to contribute to the field. The section should end with a brief statement of what is being reported in the article.

**Main body of text**

The main text should be arranged under appropriate subheadings *typed in sentence case*. Research articles should include the following sections: ('Methods' may be placed before 'Results' or after 'Conclusions'):

**Methods**

The Methods section should include the design of the study, the setting, the type of participants or materials involved, a clear description of all interventions and comparisons, and the type of analysis used, including a power calculation if appropriate. Generic drug names should generally be used. When proprietary brands are used in research, include the brand names in parentheses. The section should be divided into subsections if several methods are described.

The accession numbers of any nucleic acid sequences, protein sequences or atomic coordinates cited in the manuscript should be provided in square brackets with the corresponding database name; for example, [EMBL:AB026295, EMBL:AC137000, DDBJ:AE000812, GenBank:U49845, PDB:1BFM, Swiss-Prot:Q96KQ7, PIR:S66116].

The databases for which we can provide direct links are: EMBL Nucleotide Sequence Database (EMBL, <http://www.ebi.ac.uk/embl/>), DNA Data Bank of Japan (DDBJ, <http://www.ddbj.nig.ac.jp/>), GenBank at the NCBI (GenBank, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genbank/>), Protein Data Bank (PDB, <http://www.pdb.org/pdb/home/home.do>), Protein Information Resource (PIR, <http://pir.georgetown.edu>) and the Swiss-Prot Protein Database (Swiss-Prot, <http://us.expasy.org/sprot/>).

For studies involving human participants, a statement detailing ethical approval and consent should be included in the methods section.

**Results**

The Results and Discussion may be combined into a single section or presented separately. Results of statistical analysis should include, where appropriate, relative and absolute risks or risk reductions, and confidence intervals. The Results and Discussion sections may also be broken into subsections with short, informative headings, typed in sentence case.

**Conclusions**

This should state clearly the main conclusions and give a clear explanation of their importance and relevance. Summary illustrations may be included.

**List of abbreviations used**

If abbreviations are used in the text they should be defined in the text where first used and a list of abbreviations provided.

**Competing interests**

A competing interest exists when your interpretation of data or presentation of information may be influenced by your personal or financial relationship with other people or organizations. Authors should disclose any financial competing interests but also any non-financial competing interests that may cause them embarrassment were they to become public after the publication of the article.

All authors are required to complete a declaration of competing interests. All competing interests that are declared will be listed at the end of published articles. Where author(s) have no competing interests, please state 'The author(s) [or certain named authors] declare that they have no competing interests'.

When completing your declaration, please consider the following questions:

#### *Financial competing interests*

- In the past five years have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future? Is such an organization financing this manuscript or funding you directly for preparation of this manuscript? If so, please specify.
- Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organization that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future? If so, please specify.
- Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript? Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript? If so, please specify.
- Do you have any other financial competing interests? If so, please specify.

#### *Non-financial competing interests*

Are there any non-financial competing interests (political, personal, religious, ideological, academic, intellectual, commercial or any other) to declare in relation to this manuscript? If so, please specify.

If you are unsure as to whether you, or one your co-authors, has a competing interest please discuss it with the editorial office.

#### **Authors' contributions** (*research articles only*)

In order to give appropriate credit to each author of an article, the individual contributions of authors to the manuscript should be specified in this section.

An "author" is generally considered to be someone who has made substantive intellectual contributions to a published study. To qualify as an author one should 1) have made substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; 2) have been involved in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and 3) have given final approval of the version to be published. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content. Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of the research group alone, do not justify authorship.

We suggest the following kind of format (please use initials to refer to each author's contribution): AB carried out the molecular genetic studies, participated in the sequence alignment and drafted the manuscript. JY carried out the immunoassays. MT participated in the sequence alignment. ES participated in the design of the study and performed the statistical analysis. FG conceived of the study, and participated in its design and coordination and helped to draft the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in an acknowledgements section. Examples of those who might be acknowledged include a person who provided purely technical help, writing assistance, or a department chair who provided only general support.

#### **Acknowledgements**

These should be brief. Authors should obtain permission to acknowledge from all those mentioned in the Acknowledgements. The role of a medical writer must be included in the acknowledgements section, including their source(s) of funding.

Please acknowledge anyone who contributed towards the study by making substantial contributions to conception, design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data, or who was involved in drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content, but who does not meet the criteria for authorship. Please also include their source(s) of funding. Please also acknowledge anyone who contributed materials essential for the study. Please list the source(s) of funding for the study for each author, and for the manuscript preparation in the acknowledgements section. Authors must describe the role of the funding body, if any, in study design; in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; and in the decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

## Declarations

The publisher will include a declaration in this section stating that the article is published as part of a supplement. The source of the idea for the supplement and sources of funding for publication will also be acknowledged, where appropriate. For supplements which are not funded via sponsorship, a statement will be included reading "This supplement has not been supported by sponsorship."

Where authors are paying a publishing charge to BioMed Central for their article, it is important that any sources of funding used to cover this charge are acknowledged by the author (e.g. the conference or organising society, a grant used by the author, an external sponsor, etc).

For supplements funded with sponsorship, authors should state in this section any products of the sponsor which are considered in the article, e.g. "Drug A is in development by Sponsor."

## References

If you have referenced other articles included in the Supplement that you are contributing to, please highlight them in red in the reference list of the submitted manuscript so that we can insert the correct publication details.

All references must be cited consecutively (in square brackets) in the text, followed by any in the tables or figure legends, and accompanied by a correspondingly numbered list of references. Reference citations should not appear in abstract, titles or headings. Each reference must have an individual reference number. Please avoid excessive referencing.

URLs should ideally be included in the reference list (especially if very long) and given a numbered reference in the main text. They should be provided in the following format: **Title of URL** [URL].

Only articles, datasets and abstracts that have been published or are in press, or are available through public e-print/preprint servers, may be cited; unpublished data and personal communications should not be included in the reference list, but may be included in the text and referred to as "unpublished data", "unpublished observations", or "personal communications" giving the names of the involved researcher. Obtaining permission to quote personal communications and published data from the cited author(s) is the responsibility of the author. Journal abbreviations should follow Index Medicus/MEDLINE. Citations in the reference list should contain all named authors up to the first 30, followed by *et al.* There should usually be no more than 50 references per article.

Examples of the BioMed Central journal reference style are shown below. Please take care to follow the reference style precisely; references not in the correct style may result in links to PubMed abstracts/Publisher full-text versions not being created.

### Article within a journal

1. Koonin EV, Altschul SF, Bork P: **BRCA1 protein products: functional motifs.** *Nat Genet* 1996, **13**:266-267.

### Article within a journal supplement

2. Orengo CA, Bray JE, Hubbard T, LoConte L, Sillitoe I: **Analysis and assessment of ab initio three-dimensional prediction, secondary structure, and contacts prediction.** *Proteins* 1999, **43**(Suppl 3):149-170.

### In press article

3. Kharitonov SA, Barnes PJ: **Clinical aspects of exhaled nitric oxide.** *Eur Respir J*, in press.

### Published abstract

4. Zvaifler NJ, Burger JA, Marinova-Mutafchieva L, Taylor P, Maini RN: **Mesenchymal cells, stromal derived factor-1 and rheumatoid arthritis [abstract].** *Arthritis Rheum* 1999, **42**:s250.

### Article within conference proceedings

5. Jones X: **Zeolites and synthetic mechanisms.** In *Proceedings of the First National Conference on Porous Sieves: 27-30 June 1996; Baltimore*. Edited by Smith Y. Stoneham: Butterworth-Heinemann; 1996:16-27.

### Book chapter, or article within a book

6. Schnepf E: **From prey via endosymbiont to plastids: comparative studies in dinoflagellates.** In *Origins of Plastids. Volume 2*. 2nd edition. Edited by Lewin RA. New York: Chapman and Hall; 1993:53-76.

### Whole issue of journal

7. Ponder B, Johnston S, Chodosh L (Eds): **Innovative oncology.** In *Breast Cancer Res* 1998, **10**:1-72.

### Whole conference proceedings

8. Smith Y (Ed): *Proceedings of the First National Conference on Porous Sieves: 27-30 June 1996; Baltimore*. Stoneham: Butterworth-Heinemann; 1996.

### Complete book

9. Margulis L: *Origin of Eukaryotic Cells*. New Haven: Yale University Press; 1970.

### Monograph or book in a series

E&OE October 2012

10. Hunninghake GW, Gaddek JE: **The alveolar macrophage**. In *Cultured Human Cells and Tissues*. Edited by Harris TJR. New York: Academic Press; 1995:54-56. [Stoner G (Series Editor): *Methods and Perspectives in Cell Biology*, vol 1.]

*Book with institutional author*

11. Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification: *Annual Report*. London; 1999.

*PhD thesis*

12. Kohavi R: **Wrappers for performance enhancement and oblivious decision graphs**. *PhD thesis*. Stanford University, Computer Science Department; 1995.

*Link / URL*

13. **Mouse Tumor Biology Database** [[http://tumor.informatics.jax.org/cancer\\_links.html](http://tumor.informatics.jax.org/cancer_links.html)]

*Dataset with persistent identifier*

Zheng, L-Y; Guo, X-S; He, B; Sun, L-J; Peng, Y; Dong, S-S; Liu, T-F; Jiang, S; Ramachandran, S; Liu, C-M; Jing, H-C (2011): Genome data from sweet and grain sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*). *GigaScience*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5524/100012>.

## Figure preparation

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### General

Figures should be provided as separate files, not embedded in the text file. Please note, BioMed Central does not redraw figures submitted for publication, so please ensure that the versions you submit are as high quality as possible. Figures should be sequentially referenced in the text. If a figure consists of separate parts, it is important that a single composite illustration file should be submitted which contains all parts of the figure. Photographs should be provided with a scale bar if appropriate. Figure files should not include the figure number, title or legend, these should be included in the manuscript file.

Figures may be submitted in colour. Each figure should be closely cropped to minimize the amount of white space surrounding the illustration.

### Scaling/resolution

Illustrations should be designed such that all information is legible when scaled to a horizontal width of 600 pixels, since this is the default size for a BioMed Central journal (and PubMed Central) illustration on the web. Therefore, image files should be submitted at a resolution of 300 dpi or greater. Note that lower resolution files might not reproduce clearly.

Text within figures should use either Arial or Helvetica fonts, although Courier may also be used if a monospaced font is required. Text should also be designed to be legible when the illustration is scaled to a width of 600 pixels.

### Formats

We would prefer to receive all figures as PDF files, but if that is not possible, the following file formats can be accepted: EPS, PNG, TIFF, JPG and BMP.

BioMed Central is not able to process figures submitted in GIF format. Please do not send figures created in graphing and technical drawing programs in their native format, export them as PDF files.

If the large size of a figure is an obstacle to submission, authors may find that conversion to JPEG format results in significantly reduced file size, while retaining acceptable quality. JPEG is a 'lossy' format, however. In order to maintain acceptable image quality, it is recommended that JPEG files be saved at High or Maximum quality.

Files should not be compressed with tools such as Zipit or Stuffit prior to submission. These tools will produce negligible file-size savings for JPEGs and TIFFs that are already compressed.

### Figure legends

The figure legends should be included in the manuscript file, immediately following the references, rather than being a part of the figure file. The following information should be provided for each figure: figure number (in sequence, using Arabic numerals – i.e. Figure 1, 2, 3 etc); short title of figure (maximum 15 words); detailed legend of to 300 words.

**Please note that it is the responsibility of the author(s) to obtain permission from the copyright holder to reproduce figures that have previously been published elsewhere.**

## Table preparation

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### General

Tables should be sequentially referenced in the text. Each table should be numbered in sequence using Arabic numerals (i.e. Table 1, 2, 3 etc.). Tables should have a title that summarizes the whole table, maximum 15 words. Detailed legends may then follow, but should be concise.

### Formatting

Small tables [less than one side of A4 (210mm x 297mm)] that are integral to the manuscript should be pasted into the end of the document text file in portrait form, and will be displayed in the final published form of the article. Tables may be subdivided into labelled parts, but each table should form a single unit. Such tables should be formatted using the 'Table object' in a word processing program to ensure that columns of data are kept aligned – do not use tabs to separate the columns. The title and legend should not be inside table cells, but appear outside the table.

Tables should not include shading or colour as this won't be reproduced in the online version. Tables should not include vertical rules, and horizontal rules should only be used within the body of the table if essential for clarity (horizontal rules under main headings/subheadings and at the end of the table should be included). Full stops rather than commas should be used to indicate decimal points.

Larger tables should be submitted separately as additional files. [Additional files](#) will not be displayed in the final, published form of the article, but a link will be provided to the files as supplied by the author.

**Please note that it is the responsibility of the author(s) to obtain permission from the copyright holder to reproduce tables that have previously been published elsewhere.**

## Additional file preparation

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### General

The maximum file size for additional files is 20MB each. Additional files will be linked to the final published article in the form supplied by the author, but will not be displayed within the article. If additional files are provided (e.g. movie files, original datafiles), each should be described in this section of the manuscript, providing the following information:

- file name: Additional file 1, Additional file 2 etc.
- file format (including name and URL link of appropriate viewer if format is unusual)
- title of data
- description of data

Additional data files must be referenced within the body of the article thus, e.g. "See Additional file 1 for the original data used to perform this analysis". Additional files are considered integral to articles published by BioMed Central journals; there is no distinction between the main article and 'supplementary material'. Files will be virus-scanned on submission.

### File formats

Ideally, files should not be platform-specific, and should be viewable using free or widely available tools. The following are examples of suitable formats:

- additional documentation - PDF (Adobe Acrobat) or TXT (plain text)
- animations - SWF (Shockwave Flash)
- movies - MOV (Quicktime) and MPG (MPEG)
- tabular data - XLS (Excel spreadsheet) and CSV (Comma Separated Values)

### File extensions

It is recommended that files be given the appropriate standard three-letter file extension for their file type (e.g. spreadsheet.xls or table.csv). This is especially important for Macintosh users, since the Macintosh operating system does not enforce the use of standard extensions.



## Author presubmission checklist for manuscripts for publication in supplements to BioMed Central journals

Before submitting the manuscript to your supplement organizer, please go through the list of points below, and refer back to the main instructions if necessary. You should be aware that we are not charging for access to your article and therefore require you to submit your files in the correct format to allow for efficient production. If we have to make any changes in proof due to incorrect formatting of the original files, these will be at the discretion of the Editors, and may incur a charge.

When you have checked each of the points, please make the required changes to your files.

***Wrongly formatted manuscripts cause problems and delays during the production process.***

### Title page of manuscript

1. Authors' affiliations should be in the following format: Department, Institute, City, Post/Zip code, Country.
2. Each affiliation must be linked to an author.
3. All authors must be linked to their corresponding affiliation(s) using superscript numerals.
4. Authors should not list their qualifications on the title page.
5. One corresponding author should be indicated.
6. A contact email address should be listed for each author.
7. The title should be in bold, sentence case with no full stop at the end and no underlining.

### Manuscript sections

8. Abstracts should be no longer than 350 words.
9. Abstracts should not cite references, figures or tables, and the use of abbreviations should be minimized.
10. Abstracts must be structured into sections for research articles.
11. All articles should include the following sections (in order): Abstract; Background; Main text with appropriate subheadings (for research articles these should include Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions); List of abbreviations used (if any); Competing interests; Funding; Acknowledgements; References; Figure legends (if any); Tables (if any); Additional data files (if any). Do not number the sections. For more information, see [Manuscript preparation](#).
12. **Please use sentence case for titles, headings and subheadings, with no unnecessary initial capital letters.**
13. Figures must be supplied as separate files (see below).
14. Do not include footnotes or text boxes.
15. Avoid including long URLs in the main body of the text, put them in the reference section with the name of the website (see [References](#) section in [Manuscript preparation](#)).

### References

16. References must be cited in the text using consecutive numbers in square brackets.
17. References to other articles from within the same Supplement as your article must be highlighted in red.
18. The reference list should be provided in the correct format so that the links to the article's abstract on PubMed (and/or the full text on the publisher's website if applicable) can be created (see [References](#) section in [Manuscript preparation](#)).

### Figures

19. **Each figure must be provided as a separate file, not embedded in the main manuscript file.**
20. If a figure consists of separate parts e.g. A and B, it is important that these parts are submitted in a single figure file and not as individual figure files.
21. The image file should not include the figure number, title or legend; these should be included in the manuscript file after the references. Sub-labelling (e.g. A, B, C) may be included in the figure file.
22. Figures must be closely cropped so that only a small white border appears around the image.
23. Figures should be of adequate resolution to ensure good reproduction online (see [Scaling/resolution](#)).
24. Please name figure files so it is easy to identify which manuscript they belong to and which figure number they are.

### Tables

25. Tables smaller than one side of A4 (210mm x 297mm) can appear within the main article and should be included at the end of the manuscript file, in the order that they are referred to in the text.
26. Tables must be divided into cells/fields - tables generated with tabbed text are not acceptable.
27. Tables should not include colour or shading
28. Horizontal rules should only be used under main headings and the end of the table and not between rows, unless essential for clarity.

### Additional files

29. These may consist of larger tables or other files, such as movies, PDF files, etc, that are not intended to appear within the body of the article.
30. If authors have included additional files, they must include a separate section in the manuscript that lists: file name(s), file format(s), title(s) of data and short description(s) of data.
31. Additional files **must** have the appropriate three-letter file extension for the programme you have used to generate them (e.g. .xls for Excel; .pdf for Acrobat files etc). Additional files must be cited in the text in the following way, eg: "see Additional file 1".