

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The *Journal for Healthcare Quality (JHQ)* welcomes submissions by writers from all sectors of the healthcare quality field. The journal publishes articles on administration and management (including designing of organizations and roles), performance measurement and improvement, behavioral healthcare quality, compliance, evidence-based practice, pain management, accreditation issues and successes, information systems and management, knowledge management, innovations in healthcare, conceptual articles, education's move to quality, government affairs and policy making, patient and staff safety, research in healthcare quality, continuum of care, and global and international issues. A detailed list of topics of special interest can be found on the NAHQ Web site at www.nahq.org/journal/resource/.

Established in 1979, *JHQ* is the official journal of the National Association for Healthcare Quality (NAHQ). Its audience is the healthcare quality professional responsible for promoting and monitoring safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, equitable, and evidence-based care.

JHQ and *JHQ Web Exclusives* content addresses all facets of quality across the continuum of healthcare delivery, including continuous quality improvement, healthcare safety, total quality management, disease management, utilization management, risk management, and care management. Articles on meeting, exceeding, or anticipating standards and practices as defined by private accreditation agencies, external regulatory organizations, and state and federal requirements are featured. *JHQ Web Exclusives* also includes reviews of new media (books, videos, software, CDs), new products and resources, and Internet sites of potential interest to quality and healthcare professionals. Together, these articles and reviews provide comprehensive coverage of

- new research in the art and science of healthcare quality
- state-of-the-science technology
- quality management and performance improvement principles and techniques
- utilization of quality improvement tools
- healthcare quality innovations.

JHQ's authors include nationally and internationally known experts on every aspect of healthcare quality, as well as professionals who have distinguished themselves in the field.

JHQ has a circulation of more than 5,000. *JHQ* is consistently identified by NAHQ members as the No. 1 benefit of membership.

Mission

Journal for Healthcare Quality is a professional forum that continuously advances healthcare quality practice in diverse and changing environments.

Copyright Policy

Consideration of submissions for print publication in *JHQ* and electronic publication in *JHQ Web Exclusives* is based on the assurance that the manuscript, in whole or in part, is not being considered by any other publication and has not been previously published in print or electronic form. NAHQ will hold the copyright on all submissions published in *JHQ*, both in print and on the *JHQ* Web site. All authors will be requested to sign a copyright transfer agreement upon approval of their submissions for publication.

Indexing

JHQ is indexed in *Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature (Cinahl)* and *PubMed*. *JHQ Web Exclusives* is indexed in *Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature (Cinahl)*.

Mentoring Program

JHQ offers new authors a mentoring program in which *JHQ* team members provide development, writing, and technical assistance. Contact the editor in chief if you are interested in this program.

Peer Review Process

Submissions are acknowledged upon receipt. They are carefully screened for professional, accurate, and timely content. Manuscript

evaluation is conducted through a blind review process and is completed by the *JHQ* editors and members of the editorial board and review panel, who are experts in the particular area of healthcare quality addressed in the manuscript. The review process for submissions usually takes 2–4 months, during which time the submission is evaluated for appropriateness, originality, clarity, the timeliness of the subject matter, and contribution to the art and science of healthcare quality. Manuscripts involving original research (including manuscripts that

Vision

Journal for Healthcare Quality is the first choice for creative and scientific solutions in the pursuit of healthcare quality.

describe improvements achieved through the application of a process improvement model) are also reviewed for the merit and rigor of their methodology and the significance of the findings. The editor in chief makes the final publication decision. The decision may be that the manuscript is accepted, that the manuscript should be revised for resubmission, or that the manuscript is not accepted. The editor in chief usually sends reviewers' comments to the author for consideration in revising the manuscript for resubmission. Authors submitting a revised manuscript should respond to all the comments received, using the "specific comments grid" sent with the initial decision letter.

Continuing Education Credits

By publishing their manuscripts in *JHQ* and *JHQ Web Exclusives*, healthcare quality professionals can earn continuing education credits required to maintain the Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ) designation.

Authors earn 4 hours of continuing education credit for each page published in *JHQ* and *JHQ Web Exclusives*. Continuing education articles are available in each issue of *JHQ*. Readers can complete an application form online at the *JHQ* Web site to receive continuing education credit.

Format of the Submission

The required formats for feature articles, letters to the editor, quality toolbox articles, brief reports, and quality viewpoints are as follows.

Feature Articles

Submissions of feature articles should be 1,500–3,000 words (6–12 double-spaced pages) and typed double-spaced, with 1-in. (2.54-cm) margins on all sides. Pages must be numbered consecutively, beginning with the title page. Because the review is a blind process, do not include the authors' names on manuscript pages or in running headers or footers.

Authorship

Only individuals who have contributed substantially to the conception, formulation, drafting, and revision of the submission should take public responsibility for its content and be listed as authors; other contributors (those who may have provided technical assistance or writing advice, for example) can be mentioned in an acknowledgment. In addition, all authors should have participated in the submission's final approval.

Title

The title should be no longer than 10 words. The title should compel a healthcare quality professional to read the entire submission and should describe the main point of the article.

Abstract

Authors should provide a paragraph of 100 words or fewer that summarizes the article and contains its essential elements. The abstract appears at the beginning of the article and should contain no bullets, references, tables, or figures. An abstract should include a brief description of the topic, the purpose of the submission, its importance and relevance to healthcare quality, and conclusions.

Key Words

Authors should provide 3–4 key words or short phrases that will assist indexers in cross-indexing the article and that will be published with the abstract. A sample list will be provided by the editorial offices if authors need assistance in identifying key words.

Biographical Sketch

A brief biographical sketch (2–3 sentences) must be provided for each author and should include a summary of the author's credentials, title, affiliation, city and state, and current roles and accountabilities. Please do not submit résumés, curricula vitae, or lists of job titles.

Graphics

JHQ welcomes the inclusion of tables and figures and encourages authors to send them with submissions. Tables and figures should be submitted in both hard copy and electronic format, if possible. Tables should be in only Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel formats. Figures are preferred as TIFF or JPEG files; Microsoft Word format is also acceptable.

- Be sure that the graphics are relevant to and help to clarify the article's major points.
- Refer to each table and figure in the text.
- Submit clean, clear, black and white originals of artwork. Photocopies are not acceptable.
- Do not include gray screens to highlight data in tables. If submitting bar graphs, use designs (cross-hatches, dots, etc.) for differentiation; do not use color or shades of gray or black for differentiation.
- Do not send content in Microsoft PowerPoint format (.ppt; PowerPoint graphics imported into Microsoft Word format are acceptable).
- Select graphics that can help tell the story and are self-explanatory. All elements should be included; the reader should not be confused about what graphics represent.
- If using a form from an organization or agency, be sure that the organization is identified, that permission for use has been obtained from the organization, and that the form is introduced and explained in the text.
- If a graphic is not original and presents information from another source, give full credit to the original source (i.e., list the name of the source and the publication, the publication's volume and date, and the source's page number). Authors are responsible for obtaining reprint permission for using copyrighted material

from another source. When submitting the manuscript, be sure to provide written permission from the source for *JHQ* to reprint the graphic.

- Double-check statistics for accuracy and correct interpretation.

References

References are a critical component of any submission. The style of references is also dictated by the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. References should be cited in the text by author's name and year of publication, in parentheses—for example, (Smith, 2004). Direct quotations should include page numbers—for example, (Smith, 2004, p. 14). All references cited in the text must be included in the reference list at the end of the manuscript, and every reference in the list must be cited in the text. Otherwise, the reference must be removed or, if appropriate, included in a list of suggested readings. The reference list should be double-spaced and in alphabetical order by author. (Do not number the references on the list.) The references must be verified by the author(s) against the original documents. In summary, the author(s) should ensure that references are

- current (generally not older than 5 years), though citations of classic works in the literature on quality may also be included
- appropriate to the concepts, interpretations, or conclusions being presented
- complete (see the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*).

When electronic references are used, follow APA guidelines for citing information from the World Wide Web: www.apastyle.org/electref.html.

Examples of Reference Citations

Standard journal article (list all authors, but see APA manual for citation of works with six or more authors)

McCartney, J. R., & Campbell, V. A. (1998). Confirmed abuse cases in public residential facilities for persons with mental retardation: A multi-state study. *Mental Retardation*, 36(6), 465–473.

Book or monograph

Byers, J. F., & White, S. V. (2004). Patient safety: Principles and practices. New York: Springer.

Online information (include retrieval date)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1999). *Guideline for the prevention of surgical site infection*. Retrieved May 30, 2007, from www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/gl_surgicalsite.html.

Technical or research report

Sing, M. (1998). The costs and effects of parity for mental health and substance abuse insurance benefits (DHHS Publication No. SMA 98-3205). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services.

Information for Authors can also be found on NAHQ's Web site: www.nahq.org/journal/resource/.

Summary of Tips for Writing Feature Articles

- Present information in a manner that is easy to read and understand.
- Give examples or use case studies to illustrate your points.
- Be clear and concise; offer practical advice and lessons learned.
- Focus on helping readers improve their skills and their organizations' quality, performance, outcomes, effectiveness, and efficiencies.
- Use headings within the text to aid comprehension. To divide the article into sections, insert succinct, meaningful subheadings into the text.
- Include visual aids such as bullets, lists, and tables and figures.
- Support conclusions with data or citations from the scientific and professional literature.
- Limit historical review of the literature unless a historical review is the focus of the article. *JHQ* readers typically are familiar with classic quality management and performance improvement literature.

Letters to the Editor

JHQ relies on feedback from NAHQ members and other readers and welcomes letters to the editor. Submit a brief letter outlining any comment, criticism, compliment, or idea to the *JHQ* editor in chief at the NAHQ office or via e-mail to jhq@nahq.org. Please include your name, title, address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address. Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication. The editor in chief reserves the right to edit all letters.

Quality Toolbox

JHQ is interested in receiving brief submissions that tell stories about significant, innovative efforts to improve healthcare quality. Send brief reports or success stories that clearly and succinctly describe the use of a quality improvement tool, a lesson learned, or other quality innovations. Follow the preparation and submission guidelines for feature articles. Brief reports and quality success stories are published as space permits.

Quality Viewpoint

Tell us how you would complete the phrase, "*Healthcare quality is . . .*" (one sentence only). Mail or fax your quote, along with your name, credentials, title, organization, address, and daytime telephone number to *JHQ* at the NAHQ office, or e-mail your definition to jhq@nahq.org. The editor in chief reserves the right to edit submissions.

Preparation and Submission

Submit manuscripts via an e-mail message with attachments to jhq@nahq.org. The message can be the submission cover letter, and the attachments should include, as separate files, the author identification page, the manuscript, figures, and tables. If any of the figures or tables are not in electronic format, send one set of original camera-ready graphics to the address below.

If using copyrighted material from another source, be sure to provide the written permission from the source for *JHQ* to reprint the table or figure.

Documents from any word processing program are acceptable, but the program should be identified in the cover message or letter. Use a minimum of formatting; do not use colors, unusual fonts, or a variety of type faces; do not insert headers or footers except for page numbers. Create a separate file for the tables and figures; do not insert them in the text. Any materials that cannot be submitted electronically should be sent to

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One author should be designated as the corresponding author in the cover message and on the author identification page. *JHQ* is

not responsible for lost submissions. Authors should retain electronic and hard copies of their submissions, as well as all correspondence with *JHQ* editorial staff.

Manuscripts Involving Research

Manuscripts involving research should generally include material under the following headings:

- Abstract
- Purpose (or Research Questions)
- Review of the Literature
- Study Design and Methods
- Institutional Review Board Approval (or discussion of waiver)
- Results (or Findings)
- Limitations
- Directions for Future Research
- Discussion
- Implications for Quality Management Practice

If research was conducted involving human subjects, a statement is required indicating that an institutional review board (IRB) approved the study. If IRB approval was not obtained, an explanation must be provided.

Editorial Policies

Editing

JHQ reserves the right to edit all submissions according to style and space requirements, to clarify content, and to meet standards of language use. Journal articles express the authors' views and are not necessarily the policy of NAHQ or the editors of the journal.

Publication

Publication and publication dates are not guaranteed. Authors will be notified of the disposition of their manuscripts. If a manuscript is accepted for print publication in *JHQ* or for electronic publication in *JHQ Web Exclusives*, a PDF file of the first layout of the pages will be sent to the corresponding author for review prior to publication.

Articles published in *JHQ Web Exclusives* are subject to the rigorous review process that other submissions receive. They are selected as Web Exclusives on the basis of their timeliness and relevance to the contemporary healthcare quality environment. They are available as either HTML or PDF files and are available to a wider audience. They are indexed by Cinahl, as are the journal's print articles.

Reprints

Submissions that are published in the print and electronic versions of *JHQ* become the property of NAHQ, and permission to reprint or reproduce them must be obtained from the association. Address all reprint requests in writing to jhq@nahq.org or to

Reprint Request

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CHECKLIST FOR AUTHORS

Use this checklist prior to submitting your manuscript.

Submission and Revision Cover Letters

- Submission cover letter: The purpose of the submission and its significance to the art and science of quality management and performance improvement are described.
- Cover letter for revised manuscripts: The author's revisions related to reviewers' suggestions and comments are described. The Specific Comments Grid that was sent by the editorial office is submitted, with the author's portion completed.
- Submission includes the electronic version of the manuscript, typed and double-spaced, and the graphics (or originals of graphics if they are not in electronic format).

Submission

- Authors' names and other identifying information have been removed from text, headers, and footers.
- The submission is being sent exclusively to the *Journal for Healthcare Quality*.
- The submission is original and has not been published previously.
- The submission is sent electronically to jhq@nahq.org.
- The manuscript has a logical flow.
- The manuscript contains an introduction, a brief review of the literature or support (literature citations) for the main points of the paper, description of thesis, and conclusions. For manuscripts involving research, please see page 5 for the required content.
- Acronyms are spelled out the first time they are presented in the text.
- Facts are presented in a logical sequence.
- Conclusions are supported by data or citations from the scientific and professional literature.
- Transition sentences guide reader to the next topic.
- Headings and subheadings logically divide the text into easily readable sections and guide the reader through the content.
- Issues, implications, and conclusions are summarized at the end of the article.

Title/Author Identification Page

- Title of the submission (no longer than 10 words), the authors' names and credentials, work affiliations, daytime telephone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses are included.
- Complete address, daytime telephone number, evening telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the corresponding author are included.

Abstract, Key Words, and Biographical Sketch

- An abstract of no more than 100 words describes the purpose and essential elements of the article. The abstract does not include references.
- 3-4 key words that will assist indexers in indexing the article are listed.
- A brief biographical sketch (2-3 sentences) includes a summary of author's credentials, title, affiliation, city and state, and current roles and accountabilities. A separate biographical sketch is provided for each author.

References

- References follow guidelines of the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.
- Text citations and the reference list at the end of the submission are in agreement.
- All references in the text are included in the reference list and vice versa.

Figures and Tables

- Figures and tables accurately reflect the information presented in the text.
- Figures and tables are mentioned in the text.
- Figures are not submitted in Microsoft PowerPoint format (.ppt).
- Numbers and percentages noted in figures and tables have been checked against each other and the text.
- Figures and tables that are taken from a published source or are the property of a person or organization other than the author have been approved for reproduction by the copyright holder in writing; a copy of the written permission is enclosed with the submission.
- Statistics are double-checked for accuracy.
- Clean, clear originals of artwork are submitted if electronic versions are not available.

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