

Manuscript Guidelines

The *Townsend Letter* welcomes unsolicited manuscript submissions. We appreciate your consideration of our magazine for the publication of your articles, patient reports, letters, and review.

- All submissions must be typewritten and double-spaced with pages numbered. Keep the formatting simple. We have to undo all of your formatting, no matter how good it looks, before using it in the magazine.
- Please include, on disk or CD, a Microsoft Word file and all photos, images, charts, and graphs as separate files. Also print out a hard copy of the manuscript and all accompanying illustrations; include them in the package. If you do not use Microsoft Word, please save the document in RTF (Rich Text Format). If you insert photos, graphics, etc. into the Microsoft Word document, also include the print-quality version of the image on the CD. Inserting images into Word degrades their quality. We need 300 dpi at the size the image will appear in the magazine. To be safe, allow us 300 dpi at 3x5 inches. Disks will not be returned unless specified. You may also email accepted articles as attachments in Word to editorial@townsendletter.com. Please review **Style Guidelines** below before submitting.
- Submission of any text or image to us implies you are its creator, or you have written permission from the creator to use the copyrighted material. The creator (or employer of the creator) holds the copyright, regardless of whether or not an "official" request for a copyright is filed with the government. Please submit a copy of any release with your manuscript.
- We do not notify in advance of publication. We do, however, send a copy upon publication to the correspondence address accompanying your letter, article, or review. When sending articles by email, please include your mailing address. Your full correspondence information will be published with your article, unless we are notified that you do not wish this information to appear in the magazine.

Requirements

Peer Review Requirements for Articles Written by Health Professionals

1. A signed affidavit that the article regarding treatment and diagnosis submitted underwent a truthful peer review process
2. A signed letter from another health professional in your field approving the article for publication
3. A signed letter on letterhead from an academic researcher, editor, or author approving the article for publication
This researcher must be fully independent of the author.
4. All three requirements must be submitted with the original article for consideration by the *Townsend Letter*. *Townsend Letter* will not review articles without peer review completion.

Peer Review Requirements for Articles Written by Patients

1. All patient reports regarding treatment and diagnosis must state that the letter is a "patient report." It will be listed as such when the report is published.
2. The author must attest that a peer review process has been completed.
3. The patient report must be reviewed by the doctor providing the treatment, and the doctor must sign a letter approving the report for publication.
4. The patient report must be reviewed by one other unrelated health professional. A letter is required approving the report for publication.
5. The patient report must be accompanied by the above letters of approval. No patient letters will be considered without undergoing this peer review.

Truth in Referencing Requirement

1. Do all references listed directly support the statements and assertions of your article?

2. Is the conclusion or summary statement of any reference in opposition to your premise?
3. If any reference summary does not support the article's premise, the reference opposing statement must be presented in the text of the paper with full description of the opposing viewpoint. Otherwise, the reference may not be cited.
4. All author statements must be referenced. Otherwise, the statement that this is the author's opinion must be made.

Financial Disclosure Writing Guidelines

Writers and columnists are requested to provide financial disclosure when submitting manuscripts, columns, and letters. The following questions are to be answered:

1. Have you been paid to write this article by a source outside the *Townsend Letter*? Please describe all details if affirmative.
2. Do you work for a proprietary company that will benefit by publication of this article through future sale of their product, service, technology? Please provide all details.
3. Do you sell or provide a product or service that will be benefited by publication of this article?

The *Townsend Letter* will publish manuscripts and letters written for the publicity of proprietary concerns, if the above disclosures are provided honestly. The writer must disclose all details, but an abridged statement of sponsorship is sufficient for publication with the article. Such a statement might read, "This article has been sponsored by a grant from XYZ company." (See also **Sponsored Articles** below.)

Letters to the Editor must also disclose any self-interest in the sale of products or services. Such letters must note, for example, that "the author has a financial interest in XYZ product."

Curriculum Vitae

Writers are required to provide a CV of their education and licensing for all initialed titles following their name. Also please state exact wording for obscure initialing.

Sponsored Articles

Sponsored articles are informational pieces submitted by our advertisers to introduce a new product or explain a complicated one in greater detail than possible in a one-page advertisement. Often, these articles are authored by professionals in their respective fields who have had success with a product and wish to share their experiences with and knowledge of the product. These articles, however, have not undergone peer review and do not necessarily include caveats. Sponsored articles generally are accompanied by paid advertising. Such articles are published in Helvetica typeface, and the phrase "Sponsored Article" appears at the bottom of each printed article page.

Style Guidelines

Citing References

An author cites references for several reasons: to supply proof of facts, provide the reader with a path toward further research, or otherwise document research.

If you provide only a vague reference, something like

1. *Lancet*, 2005.
2. *JAMA*, 1997.

you're not helping anyone, and you may be harming your own credibility. If you don't have the pertinent source data, you shouldn't cite the source, plain and simple. To do so would be the equivalent of someone saying, "I read this article in the *Times* about how sugar keeps you healthy. Can't remember the date, the author, or when exactly it was published, but it was definitely in the *Times*. You go find it." Please be as accurate as you can when citing sources. Incomplete source listings will be omitted from references.

Below are the basic AMA style guidelines for citing sources. Please follow them closely, noting the punctuation as well. If you have any questions about citing information from source types not listed below, please feel free to contact us.

BOOKS

Author's last name, Author's first initial(s). *Book title*. Place of publication: Publisher's name; Year of Publication.

Example:

LaFollette M. *Stealing into Print: Fraud, Plagiarism, and Misconduct in Scientific Publishing*. Berkeley: University of California Press; 1992.

[Note: If a book is self-published, provide as much information as you can, e.g., the place of publication, the year, ISBN – if available]

When citing a **chapter of a book**, capitalize the chapter title as you would an article title. Do *not* use quotation marks. Inclusive page numbers of the chapter should be given.

Example:

Nahas GG, Goldfrank L. Marijuana and toxicology. In: Goldfrank L, Flomenbaum NE, Lewin N, Weisman R, Howland MA, Hoffman R, eds. *Goldfrank's Toxicologic Emergencies*. 5th ed. Norwalk, Conn: Appleton & Lang; 1994:889-898.

JOURNALS

Author's last name, Author's first initial. Title of article, written in sentence capitalization (i.e., only the first word capitalized) without quotation marks. *Title or Abbreviation of Journal Name*. Year; volume:inclusive pages.

Example:

Carlston AH, Hoelzel F. Apparent prolongation of the life span of rats by intermittent fasting. *J Nutrition*. 1946;31:363-367.

GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

Name of author (if given). If no author, name of agency. *Title of bulletin*. Place of publication: Name of issuing bureau, agency, department, or other governmental division; Date of publication. Page numbers (if specified). Publication number (if any). Series number (if given).

Example:

Food and Drug Administration. *Jin Bu Huan Herbal Tablets*. Rockville, Maryland: National Press Office; April 15, 1991. Talk Paper T94-22.

WEB SITES

If you are referring to a web site within the text or including a web address as an additional source of information for the reader *within the text*, you do not need to provide a full reference, **but if you are using information from a web site to support your text, you must provide a complete citation.**

A web citation looks like this:

Name of author (if available); title of article (if applicable), name of web site, URL or web address, and the date you accessed the information.

Examples:

1. Rosenthal S, Chen R, Hadler S. The safety of acellular pertussis vaccine vs whole-cell pertussis vaccine [abstract]. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* [online]. Available at: http://www.ama-assn.org/sci-pubs/journals/archive/ajdc/vol_15/no_5/abstract/htm. Accessed November 10, 1996.
2. Health on the Net Foundation. Health on the net foundation code of conduct (HONcode) for medical and health web sites. Available at: <http://www.hon.ch/Conduct.html>. Accessed June 26, 1997.

It is important that you include the date you accessed the material. Since information on the Internet may come and go quickly, listing the access date protects you and validates the information you claim to have found on that site. You should also double-check any web links included in your article. We advise that you cut-and-paste URL addresses directly from the address bar to prevent typographical errors that will make your web reference unusable.

Please include the size of .pdfs, .mp3s, .movs and the various other multimedia formats. Readers with slow Internet connections bog down or freeze up trying to access large files.

It is never okay to simply list a web address in your references. You must include a full citation, including your date of access.

A FEW GENERAL STYLE NOTES

We use the serial comma. In other words, in a series of three or more terms, separate the elements by commas. Wrong: Each patient was asked to complete a questionnaire, partake in a consultation and return for frequent check-ups.

Right: Each patient was asked to complete a questionnaire, partake in a consultation, and return for frequent check-ups.

Tables, charts, figures, graphs, and other graphics

If you need/want to include graphics in your article or column, please label each one (e.g., Table 1, Figure 1, etc.) and attach a title as well. Make sure you refer to the graphic within your text, but do *not* say “see figure below” or “table on next page.” You can’t know how your article will be laid out in the magazine, so to prevent confusion, please label your graphics and refer to them as such within the text (e.g., See Figure 3).

Numbers

We follow the standard AMA style. Within the text, numbers one through ten are written out; above ten, the numbers are represented numerically (e.g., 11, 25, 200, etc). When referring to a percentage with numbers one through ten, you must write out the figure in words (e.g., two percent). Anything over ten should be accompanied by the percent symbol instead, e.g., 11%, 25%, 200%.

Common fractions are expressed with words. Hyphens are used only if the fraction modifies a noun.

Examples:

Of those studied, nearly three fourths achieved significant results.

We required a two-thirds majority for consensus.

For less precise measurements, measures of temperature, and measures of currency, the numbers should be represented numerically:

The treatment lasted 12¼ hours.

The plates were cultured at 20° C, 3° C lower than usual.

The study cost \$1.5 million.

In general, when measurements are presented, all numbers should be written numerically.

Example:

One patient group was given 25 mg; another patient group only received 8 mg.

A Note on Clarity

As with all good writing, please remember that **clarity is key**. Watch out for wordiness that gets in the way of your point. Get to that point. Be direct.

Example:

Overly wordy: There are many people who are allergic to shellfish of all kinds.

More direct: Many people are allergic to shellfish.