

AUTHOR GUIDELINES



American Nurse Journal, a peer-reviewed journal published by HealthCom Media, is dedicated to integrating the art and science of nursing. As the official journal of the American Nurses Association, it serves as an important and influential voice for nurses across the country. The journal is committed to delivering authoritative research translated into practical, evidence-based literature and relevant content to keep nurses up-to-date on best practices, help them maximize patient outcomes, advance their careers, and enhance their professional and personal growth and fulfillment. If you're considering writing for us, use these guidelines to help choose an appropriate topic, learn how to submit your manuscript, and improve the likelihood that we'll accept your article for publication.

MANUSCRIPT ESSENTIALS

Following the author guidelines will help increase your chances of manuscript acceptance. Manuscripts that don't adhere to the following basic requirements will be automatically rejected:

- Word counts (see specific article types for individual word counts beginning on page 2 of the guidelines)
- Reference format (see page 2 of the guidelines)
- In-text reference style (see page 2 of the guidelines)

JOURNAL PROFILE

Overview: Peer-reviewed *ANJ* provides a voice for today's nurses in all specialties, practice settings, and organizational levels. Packed with practical information, it keeps nurses up to date on best practices, helps them maximize patient outcomes, and enhances their careers.

Distribution: The journal is sent to over 200,000 nurses who work in various settings and specialties, including staff nurses, advanced practice nurses, managers, educators, researchers, and administrators.

Indexing: *ANJ* is indexed in the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) Database.

EDITORIAL PROFILE

Overview: By transforming authoritative research and clinical data into clearly written prose, *ANJ* provides evidence-based information that readers can apply daily in their practice. It also serves as a forum for the discussion of professional development and career management issues.

As part of our commitment to enhancing readers' professional and personal growth and fulfillment, we also publish articles that guide nurses toward living healthier lifestyles and managing stress effectively.

ANJ offers compelling feature articles on clinical and professional topics, plus continuing nursing education (CNE) articles. Regular departments include:

- Healthy Nurse
- Leading the Way
- Practice Matters

- Rapid Response
- Strictly Clinical
- From Insight to Action

Topics: Our readers appreciate timely topics relevant to hands-on nursing care in all settings, as well as current professional and leadership issues. In particular, we're seeking articles that:

- present evidence-based clinical information
- discuss recent developments, such as new treatments, procedures, or diagnostic techniques
- provide step-by-step descriptions of new or difficult clinical procedures
- discuss new drugs or new drug regimens
- explore the legal and ethical issues that nurses face
- address important professional and career issues
- share strategies to improve patient safety and the quality of nursing care through best practices
- explore controversies in nursing and healthcare
- help nurses influence decision-making in their practice environments and organizations
- discuss how to better leverage technology to improve patient outcomes
- offer advice on enhancing mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being

PUBLICATION ETHICS

- *ANJ* adheres to the principles stated in the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Guidelines, which can be found at publicationethics.org/guidance/Guidelines.
- The submitted manuscript must be your own original work. Don't include material taken verbatim from a published source, except for brief passages, which you should put in quotes and attribute to the source.
- Manuscripts submitted to *ANJ* must not have been previously published or be under consideration for publication in another journal.
- In accordance with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, all listed authors must have made substantive intellectual contributions to the manuscript "without which the work, or an important part of the work, could not have been completed or the manuscript could not have been written and submitted for publication." Authors should read about Roles and Responsibilities at icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html

- Authors must disclose real and potential conflicts of interest.
- Authors must declare the use of generative AI in the manuscript preparation process. *ANJ* editors concur with the COPE position statement on authorship and AI tools, which reads, in part, “Authors who use AI tools in the writing of a manuscript or in the collection and analysis of data, must be transparent in disclosing how the AI tool was used and which tool was used. Authors are fully responsible for the content of their manuscript, even those parts produced by an AI tool, and are thus liable for any breach of publication ethics.” Read the full statement at publicationethics.org/guidance/cope-position/authorship-and-ai-tools.

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT AN ARTICLE (OPTIONAL)

Please send a brief email query to jnyhus@healthcommedia.com. In the email:

- Describe the topic of your proposed article, including why it would be of interest to *ANJ* readers.
- Briefly outline key components of the article.
- Briefly explain why you’re qualified to write on this topic.
- Provide your name, position title, employer, and phone number.

We’ll let you know if we’re interested in the article you’ve proposed and provide advice for focusing it.

TIPS ON WRITING FOR AMERICAN NURSE JOURNAL

Articles for our journal are written in informal, concise language. Follow these guidelines:

- Base your information on the latest nursing standards and clinical practice guidelines as evidenced in the literature.
- Be clear and concise; avoid convoluted sentences.
- Ensure all significant statements are sourced.
- Provide examples and practical points that can be readily applied to practice.
- **Don’t submit abstracts.** Instead, incorporate significant information that would appear in an abstract into the context of the manuscript.
- Address readers directly, as if you’re speaking to them. For example: “After turning on the power, connect the tube....”
- In general, use active—not passive—verbs. Active verbs engage the reader and make the writing simpler, clearer, and more interesting.

Examples

AVOID: Sentence with passive verb: Heart rhythm should be monitored closely.

USE: Sentence with active verb: Monitor heart rhythm closely.

- Clearly explain theoretical or complex terms in everyday language. Avoid medical and nursing jargon.
- Limit the use of acronyms. If necessary, spell them out at first mention. For example: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Don’t spell out abbreviations familiar to

every reader (such as I.V.).

- As appropriate, use trailing zeroes for diagnostic test results, as in “urine pH 5.0.” However, Do NOT use trailing zeroes for drug dosages; for example, use “15 mg,” NOT “15.0 mg.”
- Use generic names (not brand names) of medications. For example: acetaminophen, not Tylenol.
- Consider using boxed copy (sidebars) for points you’d like to emphasize, clarify, or elaborate on. Also consider putting appropriate information in tables (using Microsoft Word).
- Use inclusive language.
 - Use gender-neutral language: “they” as a singular pronoun, plural nouns to avoid pronouns (“nurses” vs “he/she” and “people” vs. “men and women”).
 - Use person-first language (“patient with diabetes” vs. “diabetic” or “diabetic patient”)

Resources for new authors:

- Redulla R. Writing clinical articles: A step-by-step guide for nurses. *Am Nurse J.* 2022;17(5)24-6. myamericannurse.com/writing-clinical-articles-a-step-by-step-guide-for-nurses
- Saver C. *Anatomy of Writing for Publication for Nurses*. 5th ed. Indianapolis: Sigma Theta Tau International; 2024.
- Saver C. The Writing Mind blog. (myamericannurse.com/category/the-writing-mind)
- Nurse Author & Editor (naepub.com)
- Writer’s Camp (<https://writers-camp.org/>)

Article length

Use the following as a rough guide (**word counts include tables, but not references**):

- Continuing education article: about 3,300 words
- Feature article (including those about QI projects): 1,800 to 2,800 words
- Department article (Healthy Nurse, Leading the Way, Practice Matters, Strictly Clinical, Working Smarter): 1,000 to 1,500 words
- Rapid Response article: no more than 550 words

References

Limit in-text citation to statistics, specific study findings, and significant statements from credible sources. Use a format such as:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cigarette smoking causes more than 480,000 deaths annually.
- Several studies (such as Jones and colleagues) found that...

You only need to provide sufficient information for readers to identify which reference corresponds with the information in the main text.

References must be from professionally reliable sources and should be no more than 5 years old unless they are “classics” or landmark studies.

List all references in alphabetical order at the end of your manuscript. **Do NOT use Microsoft Word footnote**

function. To format references in your list, use the *American Medical Association Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors (11th ed)*. If you don't have access to this book, simply follow these examples:

Item	Example
Journal*	Bassett AM, Ka-Chun S, Honaker JA. Using functional ability measures to assess fall risk in acute care. West J Nurs Res. 2020;42(12):1050-8. doi: 10.1177/0193945920924637
Book	Saver C. Anatomy of Writing for Publication for Nurses. 5th ed. Indianapolis, IN: Sigma Theta Tau International; 2024.
Chapter in book	Turner S. Pharmacology of pain. In: Hood P, Khan E, eds. Understanding Pharmacology in Nursing Practice. New York City, NY: Springer; 2020; 117-46.
Online reference	National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Encephalitis. November 26, 2024. ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/encephalitis
*In the event of more than six authors, cite the first three and then use et al.	

Limit the number of references to no more than 12 (20 for a CNE article).

WRITING ABOUT QUALITY-IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (WORD COUNT: 1,800 TO 2,800)

All quality improvement manuscripts should adhere to the Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence (SQUIRE) guidelines ([squire-statement.org/](https://www.squire-statement.org/)). When structuring your QI project article, create a clear path that other nurses can replicate. Briefly describe the framework you used (for example, the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle).

The following format helps readers understand the general topic, the challenge or problem you faced, the research you conducted to learn more, the implementation steps you took, and the outcomes you achieved. Be succinct, avoid jargon, and use active voice to engage readers and ensure they gain as much practical knowledge as possible.

1. **What's the overall issue?**
Example: "All organizations work to prevent catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI)." Include a

few statistics on the topic to provide context. (Keep this section brief—no more than one to two paragraphs. Readers likely know this information, but setting the stage helps highlight the relevance of the topic to a broad audience.)

2. **What was your specific challenge?**
Example: "The surgical oncology unit in our community hospital saw an increase in CAUTI from May 2020 to May 2021." Provide a few details on the increase and describe initial steps, including, if applicable, the formation of a committee (for **example:** "We formed a committee that consisted of the unit manager, a nurse educator, and two staff nurses.") to investigate the problem and devise a solution.
3. **What research did you conduct?**
Example: "The CAUTI committee conducted a literature review to uncover best practices." (Keep this section brief. Don't go into detail about each step of your research. Instead, highlight the information that seemed most relevant to your specific challenge.)
4. **Who did what?**
"The nurse educator created a learning module [describe the module components]. The unit manager collected and analyzed participant feedback [describe how they collected the feedback—pre- and post-implementation survey, via email, etc]. The staff nurses tracked CAUTI incidence [describe how they did this, over what period of time, who analyzed it and how]."
5. **What was the outcome?**
Provide pre- and post-implementation data showing effect, if possible. Include information about any challenges or limitations you encountered.
6. **What's the return on investment?**
How much did the project cost in terms of time, supplies, etc. compared with the benefits achieved?
7. **What are potential problems?**
Let readers know of potential pitfalls they may encounter if they implement the program. Be honest about any difficulties you had that others could learn from.
8. **What other key advice can you provide readers interested in implementing the program?**
Maybe you encountered challenges with staff engagement. Offer suggestions for overcoming them.
9. **What are the key implications for nursing?**
Include a summary and thoughts on use in nursing practice and next steps. If you believe more research is needed on this topic, say so.
10. **Where can readers get more information on the overall topic and best practices?**
Provide a list of resources, including books, journal articles, videos, webinars, relevant organization websites, etc.

WRITING A RAPID RESPONSE ARTICLE (WORD COUNT: 500 TO 550, NOT INCLUDING REFERENCES)

When writing a Rapid Response article, address each point below. Typically, the scenario takes place in a non-acute care setting, such as a med-surg unit, labor & delivery, orthopedic unit, etc.

1. Describe the series of events/assessments from the nurse's perspective (include diagnosis, hospitalization status, and any significant history), beginning with the first encounter until the call for a rapid response. Start with vague complaints, including a valuable assessment finding, if possible, to show how the nurse uses critical thinking and analytical skills to identify the need for a closer follow-up
2. As the patient's condition worsens, describe nurse actions that demonstrate critical-thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. Do they modify their assessment, increase surveillance? What steps do they take until the Rapid Response team arrives? What discussion, if any, do they have with the provider?
3. Include detailed intervention/treatment steps (including drugs, doses, routes, etc.) taken by the nurse or rapid response team to prevent further deterioration.
4. Provide an outcome/explanation for the scenario with the patient either stabilizing or being transferred to the appropriate acute care setting (ICU, CCU, OR).
5. Give a brief overview of the diagnosed condition. For example, describe what it is (how it occurs, etc.), what could have happened if it remained undiagnosed and untreated. Keep this brief explanation to one paragraph.
6. Outline patient/family education, and offer reader education (such as clues to assessment findings or lab values)
7. The scenario doesn't always have to be about a nurse calling the rapid response team, but it should demonstrate how the nurse's assessment skills, intervention, critical thinking abilities, and effective communication contribute to positive patient outcomes.

WRITING A SHORT CLINICAL FEATURE (WORD COUNT: 1,200 TO 1,800 NOT INCLUDING REFERENCES)

Focus content on challenging assessment and clinical topics.

Include the following:

- Short anatomy and physiology section (no more than 500 words)
- Application to practice
- Nursing implications

Format options:

- **Frequently Asked Questions:** Use the FAQ format (with questions as subheads) to engage the reader.
- **Case Study.** Introduce the topic with a short case study and conclude the manuscript with patient outcomes. Applying

the topic to a case presentation helps the information come alive for the reader.

WRITING A PERSPECTIVES BLOG

If you're interested in sharing your opinion, you might consider writing for our Perspectives blog. Articles are 600 to 1,200 words and are not peer reviewed. Using our online submission process (see page 4), select Blog/Perspectives in the drop-down menu in the "Preferred Category."

ABOUT TABLES AND FIGURES

We encourage you to submit tables and figures for your article (although publication isn't guaranteed).

Figures

- Submit each figure in a separate electronic file, labeled with the number and brief name of the figure. For example: "figure 1, venous thromboembolism."
- In the text of your article, note where the figure should appear. For example, "Insert figure 1 here."
- Place the names of the figures at the end of the article and include a brief caption and the source for each. For example, "figure 1: venous thromboembolism. From American Cardiovascular Association, 2020."
- Submit images that go with figures as JPG files, with resolution 300 dpi at 4.5 inches wide.
- Save files of diagrams, drawings, graphs, and other line art at a resolution of at least 1,200 dpi. If these were created in a Microsoft Office program, please send the native (DOC, PPT, XLS) file.

Tables

- Put tables at the end of the document.
- Number each table and include a name and a brief introductory statement. For example:

Table 1. Risk factors for venous thromboembolism

Venous thromboembolism prevention requires early identification of risk factors.

- In the text of your article, note where the table should appear. For example, "Insert table 1 here."

Note: The author is responsible for obtaining permission for reprinting tables and figures from another source. If there is a fee, the payment can wait until after the article is accepted; simply note that you will obtain permission. If you have already obtained permission, please submit verification with your manuscript.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLE OR BLOG

Submit all documents (including tables, images, etc.) in Microsoft Word.

- Put the article title, your initials (not your name), and the date at the top of the first page of your article.
- Do **NOT** include extra hard returns between lines or paragraphs, extra spaces between words, or any special coding.

Visit myamericannurse.com/submit-a-manuscript to submit your manuscript and additional materials.

Please note that you will be asked to sign documentation including the author agreement, disclosure of conflicts of interest, and AI use disclosure.

If you have additional authors, we'll ask you to supply their names during the submission process. We'll give you a code and link to share with your coauthors after you complete the submission. They can then submit their author agreements and disclosures via the link.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR MANUSCRIPT AFTER SUBMISSION?

- We will confirm receipt via email.
- The editorial team reviews the manuscript as soon as possible. The process can take up to several weeks. Note that all author agreements and conflict of interest statements must be submitted before internal editorial review or peer review can begin.

- Manuscripts that don't adhere to the author guidelines will not be reviewed and will be rejected.
- If we're interested in publishing your manuscript, we'll send it for double-blind peer review (authors and reviewers do not know each other's identity). Peer reviewers are selected based on their areas of expertise.
- After peer review, we'll let you know whether the manuscript has been accepted, rejected, or recommended for revision.
- If accepted for publication, your article will go through our standard in-house editorial process to ensure adherence to our editorial style. Before it's published (in print and/or online), you'll have the opportunity to review the edited version.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for considering publishing in *American Nurse Journal*. If you have any questions, please contact Editorial Director Julie Nyhus, MSN, FNP-BC, APRN at jnyhus@healthcommedia.com.

