

Value in Health Regional Issues Focusing on Asia



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The criteria of an article to be considered:

- *One of the authors of an article submitted to *Value in Health Regional Issues (Asia)* must reside in Asia

- * The empirical study article submitted to *Value in Health Regional Issues (Asia)* must include subjects from population(s) in Asia



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How to improve your manuscript:

- In full compliance with the CHEERS guideline

Specifically:

- Study design must be appropriate
- Data sources: clearly disclosed and appropriate
- Statistical analysis: must be transparent and results properly presented
- Good use of language
- Discussion: detailed and unbiased
- Conclusion: specific and relevant
- References: accurate and presented in the right format



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ViHRI (Asia) editorial decision criteria:

- Well-written
- Of relevance to the region
- Of sufficient scientific value
- Meet the manuscript submission format

Usual reasons for rejection before review

- The question being asked is not interesting
- The question being asked has been adequately answered already
- The question being asked has not been previously asked, but the answer is obvious from what is known in the field (e.g. “Is mother a female?”)
- The hypothesis is wrong
- The methodology cannot possibly address the hypothesis
- The study is obviously underpowered
- The manuscript does not answer the hypothesis
- The manuscript contradicts itself
- The conclusion is not supported by the data

(Source: Volker Wenzel, Martin W. Dünser, Karl H. Lindner, 2010)



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Well-written: Use of language

- **Accurate, Clear, and Concise**

Accurate: correct and exact

Clear: understandable at first sight, if you cannot explain it to your mother, then you do not understand what you did

Concise: are there long paragraphs (more than half a page) and sentences (more than three lines)?



Good writing skills

- The materials and methods should describe the study in sufficient detail for replicability
- Contains no misspellings - always employ an electronic spell-check as one of the final steps
- Grammatically correct
- Does not contain personal anecdotes or stories - your scientific peers only care about what you did, and what you found
- Do not try to be clever—research manuscripts are no place for story telling, only reporting of facts
- **AVOID OVERDRAWN CONCLUSION** - conclusion must be supported by data. Understate your conclusions, as well as overblown or speculative conclusions will annoy reviewers and invite letters to the editor

Conclusion

- Should present a concise and clear "take home" message avoiding repetition of concepts already expressed
- Use of cautious language, academics are generally careful not to make claims that could easily be proved wrong, and use qualifiers and "hedging" expressions ("some", "may", "possibly", etc.) to do this

References

- Follow the journal's policies and formatting instructions, including those for books and web-based references
- Avoid “personal communications”, abstracts or “unpublished data” as much as possible

Improving language in article writing

- It is often useful to also have an interested senior scientist review the paper and offer editorial suggestions
- For authors who are not fluent in English, it is absolutely essential to have an editor who is fluent in scientific English read their paper before submission
- Many journals strive to not have language issues impair the peer review process. But when a reviewer struggles to read the paper, the annoyance will likely reduce the reviewer's enthusiasm hence reducing the chance of acceptance

Choice of words

- Verbs are important for science, and a lot of professionals often mix them up
- For example, what is the difference between “examine” and “analyze”?
- Examine: the author is describing an activity to gain knowledge
- Analyze: the author is describing the analysis of that knowledge
- One examines a scene to find facts – then analyzes those facts to draw conclusions

Choice of words in literature evaluation

The research:

- disregarded
- neglected to consider
- overlooked
- underestimated
- has been limited to
- overestimated
- suffered from
- has taken no account of



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Example of well-written health policy paper

**Burden of Disease Studies in the Asia-Pacific Region: Are There Enough
being Performed to Provide Information for Evidence-Based Health Policy?**

Fei-Li Zhao, PhD, Lan Gao, MS, Shu-Chuen Li, PhD

Winner of the ViHRI Excellent Article Award for 2016



Objective:

To review published studies of Burden of Disease (BOD) performed in the Asia-Pacific (AP) region

Methodology: Overlapping strategy of searching four electronic databases was used to identify studies of BOD published during 1993-2009. The quality of identified studies was assessed according to the categories of burden reflected and scope of BOD information included. Chronological and regional distributions of research output were analyzed.



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Comments from reviewers:

- This paper is for the most part, pretty **well written, clear and concise**. The authors do a good job of discussing the design approached used to develop the list of articles.....The improvement of these studies might have a **strong impact** on decision making in this region so the study idea is very relevant
- The manuscript is **well organized** and **addresses an important topic**. The title and abstract accurately reflect the content of the manuscript and the objective is clearly stated. In general, **the manuscript is easy to read, coherent, and flows logically**.
- The discussion of the search strategy was **very informative** and would **enable replication** of the study if someone desired to do so.....The implications of the findings for public policy decision-making are discussed..... The implications are discussed, highlighting the importance of good studies for decision making, especially in the public policy arena.



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Example of poorly written health policy paper

“Improving use of medicines in the community through interventions for cost effective treatment”

Objective:

To determine the effect of an intervention on drug use pattern in a community for cost effective treatment.

Methodology: Retrospective review of prescriptions from a group of pharmacies



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Comments from reviewers:

- Overall quality was poor
- The **methodology is too brief and simple to draw “strong” conclusions** from this type of study
- **“30 prescriptions from 10 pharmacies”** would not provide a representative picture on the overall prescribing pattern.
- Because of study methodology, the study findings are not valid
- It is not meaningful to state that the percentage of antibiotic use declined, without evaluating the underlying disease that the patient was treated for
- **Not enough statistical analysis**
- The method is highly flawed.
- This study **is not controlled**. The authors do not control for seasonal variation, time from intervention, type of intervention, and most importantly the patient symptoms / diagnosis.

Summary

- Accurate, Clear and Concise
- Seek help from senior colleagues
- To improve use of language – seek professional support if necessary