

EDITORIALS

Publishing your research study in the *BMJ*

We prioritize robust research that has the potential to impact on practice or health policy

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The *BMJ* is a high impact international journal that publishes research from all specialties of medicine and is read by clinicians, researchers, and policy makers from around the world. We publish research that translates scientific discoveries into practical applications and helps doctors make better decisions in the clinic and in research, public health, and health policy settings. If your research is novel, ethical, and methodologically robust, and it deals with questions that are directly related to clinical care, public health, or healthcare policy, we invite you to submit it to the *BMJ*.¹

To make better clinical and policy decisions, doctors and policy makers need information about risk factors for disease, the attributes of diagnostic tests, and the comparative effectiveness of different interventions (box). We value research that looks at outcomes that are relevant to patients and clinicians. We prioritize research studies that are “actionable” and may lead to changes in the way doctors advise and treat their patients. Negative studies contribute to the evidence base and are considered important if they are well designed and well executed, and if the results will help clinicians make treatment decisions. We are also interested in studies that examine robustly “why” and “how” doctors do things; those that explore how and why to offer services and specific types of care to patients; and studies that evaluate educational and quality improvement initiatives.

The *BMJ* also publishes articles that discuss research methods. These “Research Methods and Reporting” articles include manuscripts that describe innovative research and analysis methods and new ways to present research data.³ Our aim is to promote high quality clinical research. We intend our research studies to examine research methods and these articles will help researchers to design and carry out robust studies that provide good evidence. We hope, too, that they will help readers to understand research findings and editors to identify high quality studies. The *BMJ* wishes to promote transparent editorial practices and improve the process of peer review. Therefore, we also publish studies that examine the way journals, authors, and editors conduct themselves.

The *BMJ* places great emphasis on transparency because we want readers to know that the research we publish is trustworthy.⁴ In accordance with International Committee of

Medical Journal Editors guidance, the *BMJ* requires prospective clinical trial registration. When appraising a research paper, our editors look for evidence that the study’s reported outcome measures and analyses are concordant with those stated in the study’s protocol and the trial registration.⁵ The *BMJ* also supports the registration of protocols and results of observational studies.

To maximize usefulness and usage of data and to promote transparency, we now require that authors of clinical trials of drugs and devices commit to making their anonymised patient level data available on reasonable request. We encourage all authors of research to link the raw data from their studies to their papers. Although the *BMJ* has partnered with the Dryad Digital Repository to facilitate deposition and linkage of data to *BMJ* articles, authors are free to deposit their data in an institutional or other depository of their choice.⁶

All research published in the *BMJ* must adhere to internationally agreed ethical principles.⁷ We require full disclosure about authorship attribution and conflicts of interest.⁸ We have an open peer review system; this means that authors know who were the editors and peer reviewers involved throughout the review and editorial process. We believe this system ensures a transparent, fair, balanced, and thorough review process.

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Systematic reviews and meta-analyses of risk factors, outcomes, and treatments
Studies of the risks, advantages, and properties of diagnostic tests
Clinical and population based observational studies that look at the causes, prognosis, risks, and safety of common diseases or therapies
Clinical observational studies that provide support for inferences applicable to clinical practice or healthcare policy
Clinical trials that compare the effectiveness and safety of drugs, devices, or other interventions that are tested against the optimal current treatment at clinically valid doses

Competing interests: I have read and understood the BMJ Group policy on declaration of interests and declare the following interests: I am

Provenance and peer review: Commissioned; not externally peer reviewed.

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