

Acta Chirurgica Belgica : Instructions to authors

The *ACTA CHIRURGICA BELGICA* publish the annals of the Royal Belgian Society for Surgery and selected original works, review papers and technical notes. Case reports are accepted providing they are of marked interest, or enlighten some recent advances in surgery. Letters to the Editors concerning papers previously published in the *ACTA CHIRURGICA BELGICA* are welcome. Original articles are published upon the understanding that they have never been published before, nor are presently under consideration elsewhere, excepting as an abstract.

The *ACTA CHIRURGICA BELGICA* subscribe to the policy of uniform requirements for manuscripts. Authors should consult "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals" published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* 1991 ; 324 : 424-8 and in the *British Medical Journal* 1991 ; 302 : 338-41.

Articles are written in English, British spelling. They should not exceed 15 pages, figures and tables included ; longer papers can only be published by special arrangement with the editorial board. The manuscripts must be typewritten or printed on A4 paper (210 x 297 mm) with double-spacing, 3-cm margins and on one side of the paper only. Three copies of the manuscript, including a "**blinded**" copy on which the name of the author(s) and of his centre does not appear, each with a complete set of original illustrations (no photocopies) must be sent to : The Editors, *ACTA CHIRURGICA BELGICA*, avenue Circulaire 138 A, B-1180 Brussels, Belgium. Manuscripts that do not conform to these requirements will be returned to the authors.

A **zip or diskette** must be joined to the three copies of the manuscript. Most of the word-processing softwares could be accepted, with preference for MS-Word or WordPerfect, PC or Mac. The softwares used should be clearly identified on the diskette, including mention of the version. The text itself, the tables and figures should be separated in different files, clearly identified. The diskette does not replace the required printed copies of the manuscript. The manuscripts and the covering letter also be submitted by e-mail on the following address : amb@skynet.be.

A covering letter must accompany all submissions, signed by all authors. This letter should state that : (1) the present manuscript is original, is not under consideration by another journal and has not been previously published; (2) all authors have read and approved the manuscript, and take public responsibility for it ; (3) (when applicable) the design of the study has been approved by local ethics committees or conforms to standards currently in application.

Each page will be numbered in the upper right corner (beginning with the title page) and marked with the complete name of the first author. Each of the following sections should begin a new page : title page ; abstract ; text ; acknowledgments ; references ; tables ; legends for illustrations.

The **Title page** should include : (1) the title of the paper, (2) the names of the authors with their departmental and/or institutional affiliation, (3) a running title of less than 40 spaces, (4) the name and address of corresponding author, (5) the number of pages, tables and figures of the paper. The title must make it possible to understand the content of the article : it must be clear, accurate and short (no more than 15 words, if possible).

The second page should carry an **Abstract**. It should summarize the purposes of the study, the material and methods, main results and significant conclusions. It must be comprehensible without reference to the text. It should be no longer than 20 lines. The abstract should be followed by a list of three to ten **Key words**, as listed in the Medical Subjects Headings of the Index Medicus.

The body of the paper starts on the third page. It is divided into chapters. The **Introduction** clearly states the purposes of the work. **Material and methods** describe the clinical or experimental subjects for the study and the techniques and equipment used. When appropriate, statistical methods are described in details. **Results** are given in text, tables, and figures, with minimal redundancy between them. The **Discussion** stresses the original and important aspects of the study and ends with a conclusion. **Original case reports** could be submitted for publication in the *Acta Chirurgica Belgica*. The Presentation should be strictly limited to the clinical description of the case and to the discussion of its particular aspect. Review of the literature should be omitted and only references that underline the specificity of the case in its presentation or in its management should be mentioned. Case reports should be limited to a maximum of 8 pages, with a maximum of 10 references, 1 figure and 1 table, and no more than 3 authors.

Words or sentences to be stressed will be underlined and written in italics.

Abbreviations should be limited to the minimum. They must be avoided in the title and the abstract. In the text, the full term for which an abbreviation stands should first appear in full with the proposed abbreviation within brackets.

Each **Table** with an appropriate short title should be typed on a separate page. The tables are designated by Roman numerals. The legend of a table is placed as a footnote, under the table concerned.

The legends of the **Figures** will be listed on a separate page, typed double-spaced. They must be short and comprehensible without reference to the text. Good quality illustrations help to understand the text. Drawings and graphs must either be done in Indian ink or printed on a high quality printer, and be scaled as to remain readable on photography. Photographs must have sharp contrast and be submitted on glossy paper. All illustrations must be numbered with Arabic numerals, oriented and carry the name of first author and the title of the paper on an adhesive label on the backside. Colour illustrations will be charged to the author.

References will be typed with double spacing on a separate page. They will be listed consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text, using the Vancouver style (see above : Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals). Each reference of a standard journal article will include in order : author(s) with initial(s) of first name(s) (list all authors when six or less ; when seven or more, list only first three and add "et al."), complete title in the original language, journal name abbreviated as in Index Medicus, year of publication, volume number, first and last pages. For example : VAN SCHIL P, VAN MEERBEECK J, VANMAELE R, EYSKENS E. Role of thoracoscopy in pleural and pulmonary pathology. *Acta Chir Belg* 1996 ; **96** : 23-8. The sequence for a chapter of a book should be : author(s) with initial(s) of first name(s), chapter title, editors, book title, place of publication, publisher, year of publication, first and last pages. For example : WEINSTEIN L, SWARTZ MN. Pathogenic properties of invading microorganisms. In : Sodeman WA, eds. Pathologic physiology : mechanisms of disease. Philadelphia : WB Saunders, 1974 : 457-72. In the text, the references will be numbered consecutively by Arabic numerals between brackets.

Rejected manuscripts and illustrations will not be returned to the authors, except when this has been specifically requested.

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