

Reproductive Health Matters

Author Guidelines

An independent, non-profit, international journal, supported by grants and subscriptions, published in English twice a year in May and November. Editions in Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, French and Russian are also available.

Editorial policy

The journal offers in-depth analysis of reproductive and sexual health matters from a women-centred perspective, written by and for women's health advocates, researchers, service providers, policymakers, and those in related fields with an interest in women's health. Its aim is to promote laws, policies, research and services that meet women's needs and support women's right to decide whether, when and how to have children. A women-centred perspective is one that looks at experiences, values, information, and issues from the point of view of the women whose lives are affected. Such a perspective allows us to identify and understand women's reproductive health needs, and therefore evaluate and improve on existing policy and practice to women's benefit. Such a perspective is crucial to achieving reproductive health and rights for women.

In this light, the journal explores what is meant by women's needs and how these can best be met. It addresses fundamental concerns and dilemmas, acknowledging the multi-faceted nature of problems and solutions. Finally, it reflects on commonalities and differences in goals and points of view among those involved in the field – in order to foster increased communication and cooperation, new thinking and action, and new forms of consensus.

Contents

Each issue of the journal focuses on one main theme in diverse ways and contains an introduction, feature papers on the main theme, feature papers on other timely topics, a round-up of information from the published literature on law and policy, service delivery and research, and new publications.

Papers in the following categories are also published regularly: commentary, letters to the editor, issues in current research/service delivery/policy, research methodology and 'a page from history'.

Papers with a range of views by different authors on a controversial topic are also published as a roundtable. Submissions whose aim is to create a roundtable are also welcome.

Submissions

Original papers are welcome on the main themes of future issues of the journal and all other reproductive health matters, including sexuality, HIV/AIDS and population policy, written in a stimulating and thoughtful way, for a well-informed, multi-disciplinary, international audience, in keeping with the editorial policy of the journal.

Submission of an article implies that the work described has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis), that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, without the written consent of RHM.

Previously published papers may be considered if they appeared in a publication with specialist, national or limited circulation or are not easily accessible to our readers internationally. Papers published in languages other than English may also be considered in translation in English.

Submissions are considered twice a year following the submission date. Flexibility in these dates depends on whether space is available for late submissions; ask the editor. All papers will be acknowledged upon receipt.

Submission dates – submissions should ideally be received on or around:

- 1 September for May publication**
 - 1 March for November publication**
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Authorship

Contributions are welcome from women and men all over the world, from both developed and developing countries. However, more authors from developed countries than from developing countries have access to the resources to publish in international journals, including to do research and write articles about developing countries. To help to redress this imbalance, RHM will give preference to papers about developing countries by authors from those countries or written with authors from those countries.

All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship. The order of authorship should be a joint decision of the co-authors. The definition of an author is as follows: each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the content. Authorship credit should be based only on substantial contributions to: a) conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data; b) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and c) final approval of the version to be published. Anyone who does not meet all three of these criteria (e.g. someone who participated in data collection or analysis only) should be credited for their contribution in the acknowledgements.

One author must be appointed by the authors as corresponding author; she/he will be responsible for communicating with the editor and co-authors about revisions at all stages of editing and final approval of the text, proofreading, and assigning copyright to RHM. In general, the corresponding author should be available to take charge of revisions, copyediting and proofreading in the months following receipt of peer reviews and acceptance of the manuscript, up to publication.

Author intention to go to publication

Authors should be aware that arranging peer reviewers is time-consuming; a good peer review may take anywhere from 3–6 hours to prepare; and editorial review as an adjunct to peer review can take up to 1–2 days. Hence, submitting a paper "just to see what happens" without the intention of putting further work in to bring it to a high standard for publication wastes other people's time.

Asking if the editor is interested in a paper

Some people send the editor an abstract only or a few lines about a subject and ask if the journal is interested in the paper. This can only lead to one reply: without the full paper, no firm opinion can be offered, because the abstract may be boring but the paper excellent, or vice versa. If you want to know if RHM is interested in your paper, please submit the full paper.

Maximum length of submissions

(including abstract, footnotes, references, tables)

| | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| All full length papers | 5000 words |
| Letters to the editor | 600-1000 words |

Editorial review, peer review, editing and acceptance of papers

All submissions must go through the editorial review process described below, even though authors are sometimes invited to submit papers.

Papers on the theme of a particular journal issue are considered for inclusion in that issue only. Non-theme papers are published as soon as space allows. Almost all accepted papers are published within a year of submission, most in the first issue following the date of submission.

All submissions are reviewed by the editor first. Only papers being considered for publication will be sent for peer review. Two peer reviews will be obtained prior to a decision on acceptance. If the editor thinks a paper needs substantial re-writing before it can be sent for peer review, she will suggest how it should be revised.

RHM operates a system of open peer review, so that authors and reviewers know each other's names. Most reviewers and authors find this a positive experience; reviews are much more constructive, and new contacts and mutual sharing of information can take place. However, there are legitimate reasons why a review might better be done anonymously and RHM is happy to honour such a request.

Papers will be provisionally accepted, returned for further revision and re-submission, or rejected following peer review, depending on the peer reviews and the editor's own review of the paper. Authors are expected to take account of peer reviewers' comments when revising. Reasons for rejecting a paper will be given.

One or more rounds of revision and editing by the author may be required. Following this, copyediting and 'polishing' for style and language will be done by the editor, with the approval of the text by the authors. Closer to publication, some cuts may be necessary because of length, repetition of points made in other papers, or typeset text overrunning a page by a few lines.

Proofreading

All co-authors must check, correct and approve the final version, which must be arranged by the corresponding author. The corresponding author will receive a PDF copy of the typeset text for correction; ideally, all co-authors should also be able to suggest and approve any corrections via the corresponding author. Prior to printing, the editor will also proofread and reserves the right to make changes, e.g. if typos are found or if text overruns a page.

Photographs and other visuals

RHM often includes a photograph in papers when space allows. We believe photos make a statement about the issues that words cannot make. Photographs and other appropriate visuals such as posters may be submitted by the authors. If the authors do not submit any visuals, the RHM editor may choose a photograph from the archives of international agencies, usually at the last minute. Because there are a very limited number of appropriate photographs available, unless there is more than one that is appropriate for the paper concerned, we do not always ask for the author's approval. If you feel this may be a problem for you, let the editor know in advance of proofreading.

Copyright

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Copies of the published paper

All co-authors will be sent a PDF of the published paper by e-mail, from which they can print as many copies as they need, and all co-authors will receive a year's free subscription that includes the journal issue in which their paper is published. Offprints are not provided.

Posting the published paper on your workplace website

All co-authors are welcome to post the PDF of their paper, with credit to RHM and if possible RHM's web URLs, on their personal or work website. Permission from RHM is not required (see the RHM copyright assignment form for further information).

RHM in translation: Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, French and Russian editions

RHM's NGO partners in China, Egypt, Peru, Brazil, India, Burkina Faso and Russia publish and distribute editions of the RHM journal in translation, once or twice annually, on an independent basis. They are also posted on those NGOs' websites.

If your paper is published in RHM in English, it may be translated into any or all of these languages and published by our partners with RHM's permission. The editor of that language edition will inform authors if their papers have been translated and send them a copy. Authors who speak that language may request to check and correct the translation. The copyright remains with RHM.

Publication timetable *(one issue, approximate)*

| <i>Timetable</i> | <i>No. of weeks</i> |
|---|----------------------------|
| Submissions read, peer reviewers found | <i>8-12 weeks</i> |
| Peer review, revision, acceptance/rejection, editing to final text | <i>15-19 weeks</i> |
| Typesetting and proofreading | <i>8-12 weeks</i> |
| Web, print, mailing | <i>8 weeks</i> |

Reproductive Health Matters

Submission Guidelines

Manuscript submission

- The covering letter and the entire manuscript (including references and tables) should be in one file in Word 7 or .docx, in the order listed below.
- The file should be sent to the editor by e-mail only. The filename should be the corresponding author's surname.doc (e.g. berer.doc).
- The items in these guidelines are all requested for good reasons. Please supply them and follow the guidelines fully.

Covering letter

The covering letter should be signed by all co-authors (or a copy sent by each co-author by e-mail if signatures are difficult to arrange). It should state that the manuscript has been read and approved by all authors; and name the corresponding author. It should also include details of prior or duplicate publication or submission elsewhere of any part of the work.

Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce any copyrighted material in their papers. A copy of any permission must accompany the submission.

Title page

- Title about 8-10 words.
- Names of all co-authors, in desired order for publication.
- Corresponding author indicated.
- Position/title, institution, postal address, phone, fax and e-mail of all co-authors.
- Suggested peer reviewers: 2-3 possible peer reviewers from the country and with expertise in the subject area of the paper. Give name, institution/organisation, country and e-mail address.

Abstract (maximum 200 words)

The abstract should be a highly condensed version of the paper; its structure should tightly follow that of the paper itself, and reflect what is most important in the paper. It should include a background statement; main subject of the paper; methodology and

sources of information; the most important findings, actions, events or points made; most important outcomes, conclusions and recommendations. Use and condense sentences from the article itself as much as possible.

Remember that the abstract will appear in international databases and be read by people who may never see the paper. It will also appear at the end of the paper in French and Spanish, translated by RHM.

Keywords

– Up to five keywords + country/countries. Use keywords where possible from RHM's keyword list, which can be found with the Cumulative Index on the RHM website.

Text

– Amend Normal style in Format/Style so that the text has these parameters: Font Arial 11; left aligned; English UK; single-spaced; no indents.

– All text must be left-aligned.

– Do NOT indent or tab the first lines of paragraphs or quotes.

– Leave a blank line between paragraphs, using a hard return.

– Use brief headings (and sub-headings sparingly) in bold to break up text and identify contents.

– Put quotes as separate paragraphs, in italics and with double quote marks.

– Spell out the numbers one to ten. Use figures for higher numbers, measurements and time, e.g. 7 km.

– Do NOT use acronyms, except a few internationally well-known ones, such as WHO, UNFPA, HIV and PMTCT. Spell out all other names and text in full. Do not use SRHR; spell it out too.

– AVOID jargon, obscure and discriminatory language, long or complex sentence construction, and very long paragraphs.

– Limit and define specialist terms.

– Non-English words and phrases should be in italics and translated briefly in parentheses. Example: *ayah* (helper).

Tables and figures

Tables and figures should be numbered consecutively, in order of appearance, and EITHER placed in the text where they should appear OR at the end of the paper, one per page, with a clear indication in the text of where they should appear. They should

be designed to fit across one column if possible (7.5 cm) or at most two columns (15 cm). Aim for clarity and simplicity. Please refer in the text to all tables and figures like this: (Figure 2).

Tables

Use the table function in Word to present them. Use one row for each text item and for data about it. If you are listing demographic data, for example, age 15-24 and age 25-34, each should have their own row. Columns should also contain only one item, except for "28 (15%)", which can sit in one column.

Figures

Use only black, dark grey and white as colours, either plain or in patterns (RHM does not print in colour). Avoid complicated designs and three-dimensional displays. See previous issues of RHM for examples.

Acknowledgements

- Do NOT acknowledge peer reviewers. RHM will do that in the front of the journal.
- DO acknowledge advice or technical help with the paper, the study, data collection or interpretation, translator's name, sources of funding, etc.
- Acknowledge any previous publication, presentation at a conference or in a thesis/dissertation, of part or all of the work. State if the paper was translated, revised, updated, expanded or shortened for RHM.

Any named person must have given their permission to be acknowledged (but not donors).

Footnotes and personal communications

- Footnotes are comments or additional information on the text. If they include a reference, this should be numbered in or at the end of the footnote and appear in the reference list. Any footnotes to the text should be superscripted in the text, and appear on the page where they are noted, using the Word footnote function. Use the following sequence: *, †, **, ‡.

- Personal communications should be cited in the text as follows (Name, Position, Personal communication, date). They should not be treated as footnotes or references.

References (Vancouver style)

- References are bibliographic details of a publication. References should be in Vancouver style, numbered manually or using the endnote function in Word. Reference numbers should be placed in square brackets after punctuation marks, i.e. after commas and period/full stops with a blank space in between. Each reference should be assigned one and only one number when it is first cited. Re-use the number assigned to that reference each time it is cited in the text subsequently. Do not put reference numbers in the text into superscript.

- The accuracy of references is the responsibility of the authors, who should check them carefully; they will not be checked by the editor. If a paper is submitted to RHM with references in the wrong style, or any reference is incomplete, the authors will be responsible for putting them right before the paper can be typeset.
- Where there are more than three authors, cite the first three authors, et al.
- Do NOT use italics, underlining or quote marks.
- Spell out journal names. Use initial caps for book titles/journal names. Titles of chapters of books and journal articles should be in lower case except for proper nouns.
- If an article or book cited is on the web, include the full URL at the end of the reference like this: At: <web address>. Accessed 10 February 2007. Do not merely give the URL of the organisation but the URL that takes you directly to the page where the publication is found.
- Do NOT hyperlink URLs. Turn OFF the hyperlink function when working on the paper.

Examples of references

See a recent copy of the RHM journal for examples of references. Note when commas, semi-colons, n-dashes, periods/full stops and spaces are used (and when they are not).

Visuals (Optional)

Photographs or other camera-ready visuals (including slides) to illustrate articles are welcome – in black and white or colour with good contrast. Include a caption, the photographer's name and any agency that must be credited. Electronic images should be high resolution and sent in JPG format. Do not fold, clip or write on the back of prints.

SUBMISSIONS TO:

Marge Berer, Editor, Reproductive Health Matters

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RHM follows the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, 1994).
