

Western Pacific Surveillance and Response Journal

Instructions to authors

ABOUT WPSAR

The aims of WPSAR are:

1. to provide an open access journal to publish articles on the surveillance of and response to public health events and emergencies in the WHO Western Pacific Region; and
2. to build capacity in communicating epidemiological and operational research within the WHO Western Pacific Region.

Scope

WPSAR covers all activities related to the surveillance of and response to public health events and emergencies, with a focus on topics that are relevant to the Western Pacific Region. Public health events may be acute or ongoing and can fall under any of the following areas: communicable diseases, natural disasters, food safety, bioterrorism, and chemical and radiological events. Other events and topics may also be considered. Response activities include those for acute events, e.g. responding to natural disasters, or for response to cases or epidemics of disease.

Why publish in WPSAR?

WPSAR is not limited to conventional research articles. It publishes a broad range of articles, including short outbreak investigation reports, lessons from the field, analyses of surveillance data, evaluations of surveillance systems and risk assessments for public health events. There are limited opportunities to publish these types of articles in other journals. We also accept the more traditional original research, perspectives and case reports/case series articles.

WPSAR is free of charge for both readers and authors. It is also a continuous publication, which means articles are published as soon as they have completed the review and editing process.

WPSAR accepts all articles that fit the scope of the journal and that meet the minimum publication standards. We are especially interested in field epidemiology and operational research.

WPSAR also aims to build capacity in scientific writing and encourages submissions from authors with little or no experience in publishing in peer-reviewed journals. The Coordinating Editor often works with new authors on their submissions to ensure that articles fit the scope of WPSAR and meet the minimum standards for publication.

ARTICLE TYPES

Outbreak Investigation Report

A short article describing a field or outbreak investigation including how it was detected, investigated and controlled.

Rapid risk assessments undertaken during these investigations are also encouraged. These articles may be considered for rapid publication.

- Structured article with an abstract of ≤ 250 words and sections for introduction, methods, results and discussion
- Structured abstract with sections for objective, methods, results and discussion
- Word limit: ≤ 1500 words
- ≤ 15 references
- ≤ 2 figures/graphs/pictures

More comprehensive investigations can be submitted as Original Research.

Surveillance Report

A summary and interpretation of surveillance data over a given period of time. A description of the surveillance system and the limitations of the data collected must be included.

- Unstructured abstract of ≤ 250 words
- Word limit: ≤ 2000 words
- ≤ 15 references
- ≤ 10 figures/graphs/pictures

Surveillance System Implementation/Evaluation

An article describing the implementation of a new surveillance system or an evaluation of an existing surveillance system used to detect public health events.

- Unstructured abstract of ≤ 250 words
- Word limit: ≤ 2000 words
- ≤ 15 references
- ≤ 3 figures/graphs/pictures

Risk Assessments

An article detailing a risk assessment of a public health threat or event.

- Structured article with an abstract ≤ 250 words and sections for introduction (including risk question/s), risk assessment methodology, results, discussion and recommendations
- Structured abstract with objectives, method, results and discussion
- The results should include an assessment and/or characterization of the hazard, exposure and context, as well as the level of risk or risk characterization. The limitations must also be included. Risk management may be included in the discussion.
- Word limit: ≤ 3000 words
- ≤ 30 references
- ≤ 3 figures/graphs/pictures

Original Research

Original research articles may include epidemiological studies including outbreak investigations.

- Structured article with an abstract of ≤ 250 words and sections for introduction, methods, results and discussion
- Structured abstract with objective, methods, results and discussion
- Word limit: ≤ 3000 words
- ≤ 40 references
- ≤ 5 figures/graphs/pictures

Lessons from the Field

An article describing a problem faced in field epidemiology or during a public health event and the experience in trying to overcome the problem.

- Structured article with an abstract ≤ 250 words and sections for problem, context, action, lesson(s) learnt or outcome and discussion
- Structured abstract with the headings of problem, context, action, lesson(s) learnt and discussion
- Word limit: ≤ 2000 words
- ≤ 15 references
- ≤ 3 figures/graphs/pictures

Perspectives

An unstructured article discussing an issue regarding the surveillance of and response to public health events. The scope of the discussion must be clearly defined.

- Word limit: ≤ 1000 words
- ≤ 10 references
- ≤ 1 illustration

Brief report

A short report describing any aspect of the surveillance of and response to public health events and emergencies. These can be unstructured, or structured as per an original research article.

- Word limit: < 1000 words
- < 10 references
- < 1 figure/graph/picture/table

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

Please submit your article in a Microsoft® Office Word file or a compatible file in English. Double-spaced, 12-point Arial font should be used to format your article. Please remove all automatic formatting including automatic numbering and referencing before submitting.

ARTICLE SUBMISSION PROCESS

Submit articles to the Coordinating Editor through the online journal management system on the WPSAR website. When submitting the article, you will be requested to provide the following:

- a cover letter describing the article and why it should be published;
- a title page with:
 - the article title,
 - a short title,

- a brief description of the article of ≤ 50 words,
- ≤ 7 keywords,
- full names of all authors and institutions,
- full contact details of the corresponding author,
- data in an MS Excel spreadsheet for any graphs
- names and e-mail addresses of two suggested reviewers (optional but recommended);
- acknowledgements, conflicts of interest, ethics statement and funding information (attached as a separate file to ensure a blind review);
- an MS Word file or equivalent of the article; and
- a scanned copy of the WPSAR licence for publication signed by all authors.

With the online journal management system, you will be able to track the progress of your article through the editorial process. If you encounter any difficulties with this system, please refer to our *WPSAR online journal system – User guide for authors*.

PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Every article is initially screened by the Editorial Team to ensure it fits the scope of the journal. All articles then undergo external peer review by two reviewers. This blind peer review process ensures that the reviewer does not know the identity of the author(s) and the author(s) do not know the identity of the reviewer. Significant effort is made to make this process timely, but since it relies on the availability and cooperation of persons external to the journal, it can take considerable time.

Upon receipt of the reviews, the Coordinating Editor assesses the comments and recommendations made by the reviewers, and then decides on the outcome of the peer review process. One of four options will be chosen: accept submission, accept with revisions, submit for review, or decline submission. The corresponding author will be advised of this outcome.

If the article has been accepted or accepted with revisions, you will be invited to revise your article according to the reviewer comments. The revised submission will be assessed by the Coordinating Editor and may require further clarification from the authors. Once all comments have been adequately addressed, the article will commence the publication process.

If the outcome of the review process is “submit for review”, then the resubmitted article and responses to the reviewer comments are sent back to the original reviewers for another round of peer review. You will be asked to respond to a second round of reviewer comments, which will again be assessed by the Coordinating Editor. Once both sets of reviewer comments have been adequately addressed, the article will commence the publication process.

The publication process comprises rigorous editing for content and style by an external technical editor, followed by layout and proofreading. Authors may be asked to provide further information or clarifications during these stages. An article is not formally accepted for publication until these stages have been completed and approval has been granted by the Editorial Team. The authors will also have an opportunity to approve the final proof prior to publication on the WPSAR website. The article will be batched with others in the next quarterly issue.

For further information, please see www.wpro.who.int/wpsar/en or email us at WPSAR@wpro.who.int.