

African Journal of Nephrology

AUTHOR INSTRUCTIONS AND STYLE GUIDE

This document sets out all requirements for manuscripts submitted to the African Journal of Nephrology (AJN). Authors and editors should ensure their text conforms to every convention below before submission or during revision.

1. About the Journal

The *African Journal of Nephrology* (*Afr J Nephrol*) is the official journal of the African Association of Nephrology (AFRAN). It publishes peer-reviewed papers on clinical or basic research in nephrology and hypertension, and on nephrology education. The Journal considers original articles, review articles, case reports, technical reports, practice guidelines, images in nephrology, teaching points, congress proceedings and letters to the Editor.

2. Submission Requirements

Manuscripts may only be submitted online via the Journal website. They must not be under consideration by another journal and must not have been published previously except as a poster or abstract. We recommend scanning manuscripts with a plagiarism checker before submission. Permission from the copyright holder must accompany any previously published material such as figures or tables. Manuscripts that do not satisfy the requirements in this document may be rejected without further review. Authors are referred to the ICMJE uniform requirements (www.icmje.org). Authors should consult a recent issue of the Journal to familiarise themselves with AJN conventions in practice.

Language

Articles may be submitted in English or French. French articles must include an English title, abstract and keyword list.

Covering letter

All manuscripts must be accompanied by a one-page cover letter specifying the article type and summarising the contribution to the scientific literature. The letter should confirm that the manuscript is not under consideration elsewhere and has not been previously published. It should include an author contribution statement and a conflicts of interest statement.

3. Authorship

All authors must have made a significant contribution and must have approved the final manuscript. A signed authorship statement must be completed by each author to confirm that all listed authors meet authorship criteria and that no others meeting the criteria have been omitted. These statements must be submitted by the corresponding author. Avoid titles (Dr, Prof) and degrees or qualifications in the author line and Acknowledgements. Use full names where available.

Incorrect	Correct
Dr MR Davids MMed, PhD	MR Davids
Prof Alain Assounga	Alain Assounga

NB: In the body text, cite authors by surname only (e.g. 'Martins et al. [12] found...').

4. Types of Contributions

Original articles

New research results. Maximum 4 000 words (excluding abstract, tables and references) and 30 references. Sections: Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, Acknowledgements, Conflicts of Interest, References.

Review articles

Usually invited; liaise with the editor before submission. Maximum 5 000 words and 50 references.

Reports of clinical trials

Must comply with CONSORT guidelines and include a participant flow diagram (see consort-statement.org). The trial must be registered before commencement, and the Methods section must cite the registration number.

Case reports

Maximum 800 words (excluding abstract and references), 100-word abstract, one table, up to two images and 15 references. Must include an ethics approval statement or confirmation of patient/family consent.

Images in Nephrology

One or two high-resolution images of exceptional interest, with up to 300 words of text, a brief abstract and a maximum of 6 references.

Congress proceedings

Abstracts from national or regional congresses, submitted by the organisers. Published as received without peer review, as a single searchable PDF.

Letters to the Editor

Maximum 250 words, relating to papers recently published in the Journal. Maximum 5 references.

5. Formatting Conventions

Submit as Microsoft Word files. Use Arial, font size 12, A4 pages numbered consecutively from the title page.

Spelling

Use UK/British spelling throughout. Set your spell-checker to English (UK).

Incorrect	Correct
program	programme
organized	organised
ischemic	ischaemic
anemia	anaemia
hemodynamic	haemodynamic
hemorrhage	haemorrhage
pediatric	paediatric
diarrhea	diarrhoea
edema	oedema
sulfate	sulphate

dialog	dialogue
e-mail	email

Terminology

Use current, preferred and inclusive terminology.

Incorrect	Correct
Caucasian	White
low and middle income countries	low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)
end stage renal disease / ESRD	kidney failure (preferred); end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) if required by context
renal	kidney (preferred); 'renal' acceptable in established terms such as 'renal biopsy', 'renal artery'

NB: The terms 'kidney failure', 'end-stage kidney disease (ESKD)' and 'kidney replacement therapy (KRT)' are preferred over older equivalents. 'Renal' remains acceptable in anatomical and established compound terms.

Numbers, units and statistics

Spell out numbers one to nine; use numerals for 10 and above. Use decimal points (not commas). Use SI units throughout; report blood pressure in mmHg. Use capital L for litre (mL, not ml). Use non-proprietary (generic) drug names. When reporting percentages derived from small samples, round to whole numbers or one decimal place; do not imply spurious precision (e.g. reporting 25.00% in a group of four participants is misleading).

Incorrect	Correct
>50mmHg	> 50 mmHg (space after operator; space before unit)
6 – 12 ng/ml	6–12 ng/mL (en-dash, no spaces; capital L)
19.95±6.46	19.95 ± 6.46 (spaces around ±)
p value	P value (capital P, roman, no italics)
P=0.003	P = 0.003 (spaces around =)
P < 0.01 (imprecise)	P = 0.008 (exact value to 3 decimal places where possible)
(see Fig. 1)	(see Figure 1) — spell out in full

NB: When a qualifier (P, mean, SD) precedes a number, space on both sides: $P = 0.003$; $\text{mean} \pm \text{SD} = 4.2 \pm 0.3$. Without a qualifier, no space: the P value was >0.001 ; SD was ± 10 .

Punctuation and dashes

Avoid unnecessary full stops in abbreviations and initials (MR Davids, not M.R. Davids; Dr not Dr.; et al. retains its stop; i.e. and e.g. retain theirs). Use an em-dash (—) for parenthetical information, with no spaces. Use an en-dash (–) for numerical ranges, with no spaces. Hyphens are for compound adjectives (stone-forming risk, 79-year-old woman) and prefixes (peri-operative).

Incorrect	Correct
3.7 - 4.5 (hyphen or spaced dash)	3.7–4.5 (en-dash, no spaces)

19th to the 22nd July	19–22 July
stone forming risk	stone-forming risk
multi centre study	multicentre study (standard prefix, no hyphen)
well known finding	well-known finding (before noun); the finding is well known (after noun)

Abbreviations

Define all abbreviations at first use in both the abstract and the main text (separately in each). If a paper has numerous abbreviations, include a separate Abbreviations section before the References. Do not include common units (mL, mmHg) in the abbreviations list.

6. Manuscript Structure

Title page

Include the article title in sentence case (no abbreviations), all authors with institutional affiliations, a running title of up to 50 characters, the word count (excluding abstract, tables and references) and the corresponding author's name, address and email.

Abstract and keywords

Structured abstracts for original articles must use bold subheadings followed by a colon: **Introduction:**, **Methods:**, **Results:**, **Conclusions:**. Maximum 250 words for original and review articles, 100 words for case reports. No figures, tables or references in the abstract. The abstract should make clear the novelty and significance of the findings. List 4–8 keywords below the abstract, separated by semicolons, in lowercase except for proper nouns.

Section headings

AJN uses a three-level heading hierarchy. Do not add full stops to headings.

Level	Use	Format	Example
Level 1	Major sections	Bold, ALL CAPS	INTRODUCTION; METHODS; RESULTS; DISCUSSION; CONCLUSIONS; REFERENCES
Level 2	Subsections	Bold, title case	Clinical and Blood Parameters; Data Analysis; Ethical Approval
Level 3	Sub-subsections (sparingly)	Bold, sentence case; may run in	Study design. Participants were ...

Standard heading sequence for an original article: Abstract → Introduction → Methods → Results → Discussion → Conclusions → Acknowledgements → Conflicts of Interest → Use of AI in Manuscript Preparation → References.

Main text

Original articles should include Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion sections, each beginning on a new page. Statistical methods must appear in the Methods section. Methods not in common use should be described fully or supported by references. All original research involving humans or animals must include an ethical approval statement at the end of the Methods section, naming the approving committee and

reference number. State that participants provided written informed consent (or that a waiver was granted). For systematic reviews and secondary analyses of published data, state that formal ethical approval was not required and explain why.

7. Tables and Figures

Tables

Include tables in the manuscript file directly after the paragraph in which they are first cited. All tables must be editable (not pasted as images). Number consecutively. Table titles appear above the table: bold table number (e.g. **Table 1.**) followed by a brief descriptive title in sentence case. Define statistical markers and abbreviations in a footnote below the table, using the sequence *, **, ***, †, ‡.

Figures

Include figures in the manuscript file directly after the paragraph in which they are first cited. In addition, submit the figures as separate high-resolution files. Multipanel figures must be a single file. Number in the order cited. Figure titles and legends appear in the main manuscript (not in the graphic file), below the figure: bold figure number (e.g. **Figure 1.**) followed by a descriptive legend in sentence case. Identify all symbols, line styles, abbreviations and error bars. Photomicrographs must include a scale bar and staining details. Patient identity must be concealed or written consent obtained.

Incorrect	Correct
(see Fig. 1)	(see Figure 1) — spell out in full
Figures 1-3	Figures 1–3 (en-dash)
Figure1.	Figure 1. (space between word and numeral)

Supplementary material

Number supplementary items sequentially with the prefix S (Supplementary Table S1, Supplementary Figure S1). Cross-reference in the main text as ‘Supplementary Table S1’ (not ‘Table S1’). Include a LIST OF SUPPLEMENTARY FILES heading listing each item.

8. References

Maximum references: 50 for reviews, 30 for original articles, 15 for case reports, 6 for images, 5 for letters. We strongly recommend bibliographic software (e.g. EndNote, Mendeley). An *Afr J Nephrol* style file is available for EndNote users; the PLOS output style may also be used.

In-text citations

Cite by reference number in square brackets with no internal spaces: [1], [6,12], [1-3]. Leave one space before the bracket. Never use superscript. Write ‘et al.’ with a full stop after ‘al’.

Incorrect	Correct
superscript citation ¹	square-bracket citation [1]
[6, 12] (space inside brackets)	[6,12]
[1, 2, 3] (consecutive)	[1-3]
text[6] (no space)	text [6]

Reference list

Number references consecutively in the order they first appear. List the first six authors; for more, add 'et al.' after the sixth. Use sentence case for article titles. Abbreviate journal names per the NLM catalogue. Give full page ranges. Leave one space after the year; no space between volume and issue number or between issue number and colon.

Incorrect	Correct
2004;15(6): 1582-1588	2004; 15(6):1582-1588
Kidney Int. 2005;67:2089-100	Kidney Int. 2005; 67:2089-2100 (full page range)

Reference examples
JOURNAL ARTICLE:
Levey AS, Eckardt KU, Tsukamoto Y, Levin A, Coresh J, Rossert J, et al. Definition and classification of chronic kidney disease: a position statement from Kidney Disease: Improving Global Outcomes (KDIGO). <i>Kidney Int.</i> 2005; 67:2089-2100.
BOOK:
Halperin ML, Goldstein MB, Kamel KS. Fluid, electrolyte, and acid-base physiology: a problem-based approach. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders; 2010.
BOOK CHAPTER:
Topham PS, Chen Y. Renal biopsy. In: Floege J, Johnson RJ, Feehally J, editors. <i>Comprehensive clinical nephrology</i> . 4th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders; 2010. pp. 75-84.
REPORT:
Ghana AIDS Commission. National and sub-national HIV and AIDS estimates and projections. Available from: www.ghanais.gov.gh . Accessed 17 June 2021.
AI TOOL:
ChatGPT-4.0, OpenAI, accessed 16 September 2025.
WEB PAGE:
World Health Organization. Chronic kidney disease. Available from: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/chronic-kidney-disease . Accessed 12 March 2026.
THESIS/DISSERTATION:
Mboko M. Prevalence of chronic kidney disease among HIV-infected adults in northern Namibia [master's thesis]. Cape Town: Stellenbosch University; 2021.
CONFERENCE PAPER:
Naicker S. Kidney disease in Africa. In: <i>Proceedings of the 14th AFRAN Congress</i> ; 23–25 September 2025; Lagos, Nigeria.
PREPRINT:

9. End-matter Declarations

The following sections appear in order after the Conclusions and before the References.

Acknowledgements

Declare funding sources and grant numbers. Acknowledge individuals by full name only — no titles (Dr, Prof) or degrees. Persons mentioned must have agreed to be acknowledged.

Conflicts of interest

If nothing to declare, write: “No conflicts of interest to declare.” Editorial roles should be declared here (e.g. ‘MRD is deputy editor of the AJN and MYC is an associate editor.’).

Declaration of AI use

Authors must declare any use of AI or AI-assisted tools. If AI was used in the research process, describe it in the **Methods section** (tool name, version, task, how outputs were verified). If AI was used in manuscript preparation, declare this under the heading **Use of AI in manuscript preparation**, placed after Conflicts of interest and before the References. Name the tool(s), version(s), access date for web-based tools, and purpose. Authors must confirm they have reviewed all AI-assisted content and take full responsibility for its accuracy. If AI image-generation tools were used to create any figure, state this in the figure legend. AI tools may not be listed as authors.

Example AI declaration statements
AI used in the research (declare in Methods):
<i>“Claude 3.5 Sonnet (Anthropic, accessed May 2026) was used to support thematic coding of qualitative interview transcripts. All AI-generated outputs were reviewed, verified and refined by the research team prior to inclusion in the analysis.”</i>
AI used for manuscript preparation:
<i>“ChatGPT-4.0 (OpenAI, accessed April 2025) was used to assist with editing and improving the clarity of the language in this manuscript. The authors reviewed all AI-assisted content and take full responsibility for its accuracy and integrity.”</i>
No AI used:
<i>“No AI tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.”</i>

10. Proofs, Copyright and Permissions

Upon acceptance, the article-processing fee is payable. The manuscript will be copyedited and PDF proofs prepared. The corresponding author will be notified by email and should respond within 72 hours. Only minor corrections are allowed at proof stage.

Copyright resides with the author(s). All articles are published under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence, permitting free and unrestricted reuse provided the original authors and source are properly cited.

Quick-Reference Checklist

Before submitting or returning a revised manuscript, confirm the following:

- UK spelling throughout (spell-checker set to English UK)
- Preferred terminology: 'kidney failure' not 'ESRD'; 'White' not 'Caucasian'; 'low- and middle-income countries'
- Author line: no titles (Dr/Prof), no degrees; full names used
- Numbers one–nine spelled out; 10 and above as numerals
- Decimal point (not comma); SI units; capital L for litre; spaces between numeral and unit
- P value: capital P, roman, spaces around operators, exact to 3 decimal places where possible
- En-dash for ranges (no spaces); em-dash for parenthetical use (no spaces)
- Section headings follow the three-level hierarchy (Level 1: ALL CAPS bold; Level 2: bold title case; Level 3: bold sentence case). No full stops on headings
- Tables editable, numbered consecutively, titles above; figures numbered, legends below with error bars and symbols described
- In-text citations in square brackets [1], no superscript; ranges for consecutive citations [1-3]; space before bracket
- Reference list: first six authors then 'et al.'; sentence case for titles; full page ranges; NLM journal abbreviations; space after year
- Ethical approval statement and informed consent documented
- Conflicts of interest declared
- AI use declared in Methods (if used in research) and/or in 'Use of AI in manuscript preparation' section (if used for writing/editing)
- Cover letter included with author contribution and conflicts of interest statements

— End of Author Instructions and Style Guide — July 2026 —