

## How to write an article for Medicines Update

Every day we prescribe or administer medicines to children. But how well do we know the medicines especially in this ever-changing landscape of medication?

The aim of E&P Medicines Update is to produce a library of evidence-based resources informing readers about the safe and efficient use of medicines in children.

### Style of the article

The article should be brief, pertinent to clinical practice and informative. Imagine you are writing a guide for a general paediatrician to read in the 10 minutes before the start of a clinic or during some downtime. It should be enjoyable to read and easy to understand whilst still being evidence based.

An infographic that includes the key learning from your article may help readers to capture the information, especially on a digital platform. We could also share this on social media to promote your article.

### Topics

There is a huge variety of medicines used in children, however, rather than publishing “All there is to know about antibiotics” we want to publish articles that answer a specific clinical question, e.g. “what should I consider when prescribing prophylactic antibiotics for UTI in babies?”.

### Authors

Medicines Updates can be written by paediatricians or pharmacists of any experience, but we encourage involvement of senior clinicians who can give helpful perspective and act as guarantors for the article. Does your article address a clinically relevant question likely to be encountered by a general paediatrician, especially junior doctors/residents.

### Parent/patient involvement

We advocate parents/child and young person (CYP) partnership in articles and would encourage you to highlight this aspect by including a case experience, by including parents/CYP as a co-author (this might be difficult), pairing with a parent/CYP commentary, or by including information which can be used to signpost them.

If the included case is recognisable, you'll need formal written consent for every version which you submit to us. An alternative can be to provide a case experience about a “composite patient” allowing you to change details.

### Specific instructions for preparation of your article:

#### Background

Provide a brief and to the point (200 words) introduction to the subject. Consider what you would want to know when applying this in clinical practice. Detailed explanations of background physiology or technical information are rarely needed or useful.

One approach is to set the clinical scenario with a brief case that highlights a common issue or question. Then outline the options for treatment and any practical advice for prescribers. This is a helpful way for authors to discuss the treatment options, safety profile, desired

outcomes and patient-specific factors that need to be considered for a specific context or patient group.

### **Illustrations**

You should include at least two boxes, tables or figures. These must be clear and labelled appropriately. No more than four illustrations in total should be included.

Make full use of colour

### **References**

No more than 20 references. This is strictly enforced.

### **Word count**

The word count for the main text should not be more than 1500 words. This excludes references, boxes, tables, and diagrams.

### **Key Points**

Include a text box or diagram outlining 3-5 key learning points from the article. This is separate to the word count.

### **MCQs**

You must provide five extending, matching, multiple choice questions based on the content of your article, with which readers can test their understanding of your paper. Please include the answers.

### **Useful examples:**

Snelson E, Roland D, Munro APS. Throat and ear infections in children: URTI in the time of COVID-19 *Arch Dis Child Educ Pract Ed* 2021;**106**:172–174.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/archdischild-2020-318854>

This paper was good because:

- it unpacked an issue which was pertinent to the time
- it tackled a real-world clinical problem
- it gave readers a good model to help decision making.

Patel A, Meesters K. Macrolides in children: judicious use, avoiding resistance and reducing adverse effects. *Archives of Disease in Childhood - Education and Practice* 2021;**106**:216-219. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/archdischild-2020-320357>

This paper was good because:

- it addressed a specific issue
- it provided MCQs.

### **General advice**

- Please include other authors provided their contribution is significant and adds value.
- Remember Paper must be interesting and read in under 10 mins.
- A common pitfall is to write a textbook chapter or a standard review. Clues that you are doing this will include an overlong article, getting stuck in detail that only very expert

readers need to appreciate, and the need for very many references. If you're falling into this trap, and want help, then the Medicines Update editors should be able to assist you.

- Many authors find this advice helpful: <http://blogs.bmj.com/adc/category/practical-authorship/>
- Journal instructions regarding conflict of interest and other statements would apply, as will other instructions: <https://ep.bmj.com/pages/authors/>
- Your article will need to be submitted through the ScholarOne system. If you have been commissioned, please follow the instructions.
- Please note that as a peer reviewed journal, your article will undergo peer review. This allows us to ensure we are publishing high quality work, and our peer reviewers almost invariably help to improve papers.

### **Pre-submission**

At E&P we are keen to support novice writers and welcome ideas for Medicines Update articles. You can submit directly to the journal but we encourage you to contact us pre-submission with an outline of your proposal (half a side of A4) along with author details. Please include the specific clinical question you want to answer. We can provide feedback to further shape the article before submission and, if appropriate, issue a formal commission through the journal's online submission system. Once formally submitted your article will be sent for peer review.

Contact: [Louise.Bracken@alderhey.nhs.uk](mailto:Louise.Bracken@alderhey.nhs.uk) and [Andrea.Gill@alderhey.nhs.uk](mailto:Andrea.Gill@alderhey.nhs.uk) or via [info.adc@bmj.com](mailto:info.adc@bmj.com)