

Guidelines for Authors: Research Reports

Mission

The *International Journal of Athletic Therapy & Training (IJATT)* publishes peer-reviewed reports pertaining to clinical applications of research findings, procedures that been found effective for the prevention and treatment of sports-related injuries, and professional practice issues. *IJATT* will publish original research reports, but the content must have strong relevance to clinical practice.

Format

Manuscripts (main document file) must be double-spaced and in a single column with 12-point font, 1-inch margins, and numbered lines, and text should not exceed 7 pages (not including title page and references). Concise presentation of content (1,200–2,000 words; 4–7 pages) is required for publication. Author name(s) and/or affiliations should not appear within the manuscript file.

Research Reports

The 4 C's of *IJATT* research report submissions: Consistency, Clarity, Conciseness, Clinical Relevance

The main document file should include all of the following sections:

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- References

Title Page. The title page should include the title of the report and 3 or 4 “key points” (12 words or less). Further, the title page should also include 3–4 key words that do not appear in the manuscript title.

Abstract. For research reports, *IJATT* uses an unstructured abstract of approximately 100 words in length. Included information should be:

- 1–2 sentences setting the context
- 1 sentence to state the purpose of the study

- 1–2 sentences that give an overview of the main or most important results
- 1–2 sentences of interpretation

Introduction. The introduction should establish the purpose and importance of the study and should cite research that supports key points. References must be numbered consecutively in the order in which they are cited, using superscripted numerals within the text (AMA format). The Introduction section should be concise and reference some of the most relevant literature. Further, the Introduction should start out as more broad, highlighting the problem of interest, and then funnel to more specific details. The Introduction should be concluded with the purpose of the study and directional hypotheses, if applicable.

IMPORTANT: For the Introduction, and throughout the manuscript, please limit sentences that start with “In a study by Author,” or “Author and colleagues reported”... Sentences like this detract from the overall message of the statement you are making. Make the appropriate statement or fact, and then reference it. For example:

- Poor wording: McKeon & McKeon¹ reported that individuals with chronic ankle instability (CAI) have more proprioceptive deficits than those without CAI.
- Better wording: Individuals with chronic ankle instability (CAI) have more proprioceptive deficits than those without CAI.¹

Methods. The methods section should detail the procedures of the study, while still being mindful of the 1,200–2,000 word limit. While *IJATT* does try to limit the volume of very detailed Methods sections, there also should be the assurance as to what the authors did in order for the reader to comprehensively and critically appraise the Methods for sources of bias. Internal validity (bias) and external validity (generalizability) are important for the reader to be able to consume and digest. The Methods section should follow these subsections:

- Participants: A brief description of the participants in the study. The reporting of inclusion and exclusion criteria help to establish the ability for the reader to generalize the findings to specific populations.

- **Instrumentation:** A brief description of the instrument(s) used.
- **Tasks:** A brief description of the task(s) the participant performed in the study. Images or diagrams of tasks which help to illustrate a task are encouraged. The tasks are the measurements used to create the dependent variables.
- **Procedures:** A brief description of the sequence of the testing procedures. Concise descriptions of certain fairly standard procedures such as the consent process, warm-up, data processing, and any considerations such as randomization and investigator or participant blinding should be included.
- **Statistical Analysis:** The independent variables should be specified to help define what is being compared in the study. Following, a brief description of how the dependent variables were reduced from the data generated from the tasks should be reported. For example, if a dependent variable was calculated by taking the mean of 3 trials, then this is reported here. Following, a brief detail of the statistical procedures used should be reported.

Results. The Results section should concisely report results with minimal text (tables and graphs are preferred). Results should be reported directionally. Relevant point estimates (e.g., means, correlations, values, medians, effect sizes) and measures of variability (e.g., standard deviations, standard error, confidence intervals) should be presented in the text or in figures or in a table. While *p*-values should be reported, associated *F*- or *t*-values and degrees of freedom do not need to be included.

Discussion. The Discussion section is the opportunity to interpret the results. A good way to start is within the context of your hypotheses. Did you find what was expected? Why or why not? The discussion must include interpretation of all results that are reported. If you find that certain results throw your discussion off topic or are not relevant to the overall message, do not report on those results. A common error is to report everything, while only discussing 1 or 2 key results. Concise, clean, and streamlined is better than broad generalizations of too much information. The discussion **must** address the contribution that the study makes towards **theory**. The discussion **must** address limitations (see below), clinical implications (see below), and future research (see below). **DO** put

your results in perspective with your expectations (hypotheses).

- **Limitations:** Please be sure to discuss the limitations of your study with respect to internal and external validity. **Internal validity** is the ability to establish a causal link between the independent and dependent variables. Internal validity issues to be addressed include limitations in drawing causal conclusions between what was observed and what was manipulated. Factors such as *study perspective* (retrospective, prospective), *blinding* of participants and/or investigators, availability of *measurement error estimates*, and/or *randomization* (if applicable) should be addressed. **External validity** is the ability to generalize the findings from your sample back to the target population, and this validity should be addressed. Factors such as *population validity* (Did the sample reflect the target population proposed?) and *ecological validity* (Would these findings potentially be found in an uncontrolled clinical environment?) need to be addressed.
- **Clinical implications:** *IJATT* is a clinical journal—whenever appropriate, include how the results could be applied (they must fit within the scope of the scientific design of the study). Make sure that you are making clinical recommendations/interpretations that are aligned with your actual study, without overstepping the constraints of the study.
- **Future research:** Based on the findings from the study in the context of the limitations identified, discuss the relevant future research directions.

Conclusion. Please provide a brief concluding paragraph (3-4 sentences) that connects the purpose of the study to the findings. When formulating your conclusion, keep statements within the context of the study limitations and clinical implications.

References. A properly formatted reference list must be provided in the same file as the manuscript text (AMA format for sequence of elements and punctuation).

Tables and Figures. Tables and figures should be included in separate files for each, and submissions should include graphic elements (photos, tables, line art, charts) that are identified in the text with consecutive figure or table numbering. A brief caption must

be provided for each figure and table at the end of the manuscript text. All graphics should be submitted in separate files, with file names that correspond to the numbered text reference. JPEG or TIFF images should be 300-dpi resolution at full size for photos and 600 dpi if scans of line art. Authors must obtain written permission from the original publisher to reprint any previously published material (table, figure, or quote of more than 200 words), and must pay any associated fees. Documentation of permission to reproduce copyrighted material must be submitted to Human Kinetics before the manuscript can be published.

Author Information. In a file separate from the main document (designated as Author Info), provide the following information: manuscript title, author name(s) (including middle initials), credentials of author(s), and a brief biographical note (~ 30 words) for each author, including titles and institutional affiliations.

Submission and Review Policies

Submission: All materials must be uploaded to the following website: mc.manuscriptcentral.com/hk_att. A **single file containing the title page (without author identification), text, and reference list** should be submitted, along with the separate file containing author information. Also include the title as the first

element of the blinded manuscript, followed by the abstract (if it is a research report), and/or key points (which should be included with all manuscripts). Tables, graphs, photographs, and figures should be submitted in separate files.

Review policy: An editor and at least 1 other reviewer will assess the content of each manuscript. A topic that requires more than 1,200–2,000 words might be approved for publication as a 2-part report (which may be published together in the same issue or separately in 2 successive issues). A 2-part report must be presented in 2 separate manuscripts (1,200–2,000 words each) that are submitted together. A manuscript submitted to *IJATT* must **not** be submitted to any other journal while under review. When a manuscript is accepted for publication, an editorial board member will work with the author to improve the presentation of the work. *IJATT* editors reserve the right to edit all content to correct grammatical errors, to ensure accuracy of the information presented, and to fit space restrictions.

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