

THE PRACTISING MIDWIFE

Guidelines for contributors

We welcome contributions from any midwife or student, or other professionals connected with pregnancy, birth and postnatal concerns, whether you have been regularly in print or are a novice author. Before you submit an article, please read the guidelines carefully.

Feature articles (maximum 1,700 words including references)

We welcome contributions that offer a personal viewpoint or description of life as a midwife 'at the coalface' of today's profession. These may be humorous, controversial, analytical or reflective. We are particularly interested in current issues, new developments, reflective practice and controversial topics, and we are keen that articles are very much about the *practice* of midwifery, about how articles are saying something new that can be used by midwives to further their practice.

We are also interested in new developments in your maternity unit, community practice or university. These might include innovations in midwifery practice, courses, research, staffing or the structure of maternity service provision. We are particularly keen to publicise developments that affect autonomous midwifery practice and woman-centred care. If you have experience of working as a midwife in another country we would also be pleased to receive your reflections.

Your submission must include an abstract of up to 150 words (generally 100 words for articles of around 1000 words and 150 for 1,500 words). 'Last word' articles and 'Viewpoint' (700 words) do not need an abstract.

Research and review (maximum 2,200 words including references)

We are pleased to consider original research papers. Occasionally, larger pieces of research may be broken down into two or more consecutive articles.

Your article should include:

- an abstract of up to 150 words
- an introduction, including appropriate references to literature to support the reasons for the study
- a brief but clear outline of the methodology, making clear the study setting, the sample, the hypothesis (where relevant) and the reason for the chosen method
- consideration of any ethical concerns
- results, which may be displayed in clearly labelled tables/graphs, as appropriate
- a discussion of the findings, with particular focus on their relevance to midwifery practice
- the limitations of the research

- implications for practice and further research

We also welcome review articles describing secondary research. These include detailed literature reviews and assessments of other people's research. Review articles should provide a thorough consideration of the subject, again with emphasis on any implications for practising midwives.

Writing style – some tips

A journal article should be written in a different style from that of an academic essay. Aim for a clear, readable and accessible style, remembering that your readers will be busy, practising midwives. If this is the first time you have submitted an article to a journal it may help to ask a colleague or tutor to read it. You may also ask editorial advisory board members or the Editor for support and advice.

As you write, ask yourself:

- Is my article relevant to, and aimed at, practising midwives?
- Does my article say something new?
- What question(s) am I trying to answer?
- Have I answered the question(s) accurately?
- Have I made clear what is personal opinion and what is evidence/research-based fact?
- Does the article flow in a logical progression?
- Could I improve it by rewriting or moving certain paragraphs?
- Have I helped the reader through the article with regular (short) subheadings?
- Is my language and level of argument appropriate for the broad readership?
- *Are all the references complete and correct?*

Please check your writing carefully for accuracy and ambiguity. A final edit, prior to submission, is essential to check spelling and remove any superfluous words or phrases. You may find it helpful to look at past issues to get an idea of the journal's overall style and focus. The editorial team reserves the right to edit any article. Your article will be sent to you to check in its final form shortly before publication.

Referencing

Please do not go overboard with referencing! The purpose of including references is to provide an authoritative source to support your stance, which the reader can then access if they want to find out more. Please be selective and use key references, rather than a multitude that could detract from the main message.

It is your responsibility to verify that references are accurate against the original documents. Plagiarising others' work will be taken very seriously and has legal implications.

The journal uses the *Harvard* style of referencing. Publications are referred to in the text by giving the author's surname and the year of publication in brackets, eg (Tappero and Honeyfield 2010). If there are more than two authors: in the text the surname of the first author only should be given, followed by et al (Caramlau et al 2011); in the 'References' section, the first three authors should be listed followed by 'et al'.

Authors are listed in the 'References' section by surname and initial, followed by the date of publication, in alphabetical order.

Where the reference is to a journal, please ensure that the whole catalogue number is included – with the volume (the first number), **the issue number (the number in brackets after the volume – this does sometimes get missed by authors, but please include it in order to feature a complete reference)** and the page numbers.

Web based references: these are very welcome IN ADDITION to the paper reference but it is common for these references to disappear by the time readers try to access them and they are not reliable in the same way as paper references. If you only have a web based reference, please find the document concerned and list the title, publisher, year and catalogue number in the same way as other references, giving the reader the means to access the reference.

● A typical reference to a paper is:

Reading C (2014). 'Emergency time: caring in Congo'. *The Practising Midwife*, 19(1): 17-19.

● Typical references to books are:

Walsh D (2012). *Evidence and skills for normal labour and birth*, Abingdon: Routledge.
Levene M, Tudehope D and Sinha S (2008). *Essential neonatal medicine*, 4th edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

● A typical reference to a contribution to a book is:

Gordon M (2011). 'Examination of the newborn abdomen and genitalia'. In: Lomax A (ed). *Examination of the newborn: an evidence based guide*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Illustrations

Please try to provide good quality photographs (high res jpegs), diagrams or illustrations to go with your article. If you want to use or adapt illustrations from another source, ***it is your responsibility to obtain written permission to reproduce the material and to credit it accordingly***. Photographs need the permission of both the photographer and ***all*** subjects within the pictures.

All illustrations and photographs are submitted at the owner's risk. While we make every effort to return them, the Publisher accepts no liability for loss or damage while in possession of the material. Wherever possible, duplicates should be retained by the author.

Please submit all pictures and other illustrations as high res jpegs or pdfs – we are unfortunately unable to use embedded images.

Confidentiality

Please be aware of issues of confidentiality. You may require permission from individuals/institutions discussed in your article. We reserve the right to anonymise where appropriate before publication.

Copyright

All material is accepted for publication on the understanding that it *has not been published before and is not due for publication elsewhere*. Please do not send your article to multiple journals for consideration at the same time. **The copyright of all material accepted for publication lies with the Publisher**. While welcoming all contributions, The Practising Midwife does not offer payment for unsolicited articles.

Peer review process

All original research and review papers are subject to external peer review. Papers are acknowledged and assessed for general suitability for publication. Articles are then sent for anonymous external peer review by experts in the relevant field. This ensures that research midwives may include these articles in assessment for the Research Assessment Exercise. Following the review, the Editor reserves the right to revise material or to return it to the author for amendments before accepting it for publication. We also reserve the right to amend material during production in accordance with house style and the demands of space and layout. The Practising Midwife is cited in PubMed, Medline and MIDIRS databases.

Promotion of products or services

Please be aware that we cannot include references to private companies, products or services. This means that if you are writing as owner or employee of a company, brand names etc will be changed to be more generic. Where a further resources section is included, this is designed to provide sources of information to the reader, not to list or promote products, companies or even particular books.

Charities can appear within the further resources, but only alongside a variety of alternatives, usually based in the NHS or equivalent.

How to submit your work

If possible, please send your work by email to laurayeates@virginmedia.com. Otherwise, send in disk format with a printed copy. Use only the simplest layout. Tables, diagrams or illustrations should be displayed on a separate page. Your name should appear on the title page only, which should be a separate page at the front of the article. This is to ensure anonymity if your article is peer reviewed. The title page should include the following information for each author: full name, qualifications, current post, current place of work, address for correspondence, home address, daytime and evening telephone numbers and email address.