



# Gender-Inclusive Research Author Instructions:

## A Cross-Sectional Study of Otolaryngology Journal Submission Guidelines

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### Introduction

- Recent policy-level rollbacks in North America have intensified focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).
- Sex and gender, often conflated, remain poorly differentiated in academic literature. This contributes to the underrepresentation of gender-diverse populations and perpetuates structural barriers to care.
- Otolaryngology (ENT) plays a central role in gender-affirming care, yet inclusivity in ENT research remains underexplored.
- Author submission guidelines are key gatekeepers, shaping study design, identity representation, and data prioritization

### Objective

- Assess the prevalence of gender-inclusive practices in ENT journal author guidelines using six predefined criteria.
- Evaluate whether inclusive journals differ in research impact metrics to explore the relationship between inclusivity and academic influence.

### Methods and Materials

- Study Design:** Adapted from prior studies in Ophthalmology & OBGYN
- Data Source:** ENT journals indexed under “Otorhinolaryngology” and “Otolaryngology” in Journal Citation Reports (Clarivate Analytics), as of October 2024.
- Submission Guidelines Review:**
  - Author policies were retrieved from journal websites or via direct editorial contact.
  - 2 independent reviewers assessed each journal based on 6 validated inclusivity criteria from prior published studies:
    - Examples of gender-inclusive language
    - Recommendations for its use
    - Distinction between sex and gender
    - Author educational resources
    - Name change policies
    - Inclusivity statements.
- Extracted Journal Metrics:** journal characteristics, impact metrics, normalized metrics, source characteristics.

\*Journals meeting ≥1 criterion were classified as “inclusive.”

### Results

- A total of 74 ENT journals were included.
- Overall, only 36 journals (48.6%) met criteria for inclusivity.

**Table 1:** Journal Characteristic Comparison of inclusive versus non-inclusive journals.

Journal Characteristic	Total N=74 (%)	Rated as Inclusive N=36 (%)	Rated as Non-Inclusive N=38 (%)
<b>Publication Language</b>	<b>74 (100.0%)</b>	36/36 (100%)	38/38 (100%)
English	62/74 (83.8%)	34/36 (94.4%)	28/38 (73.7%)
Spanish	2/74 (2.7%)	1/36 (2.8%)	1/38 (2.6%)
German	1/74 (1.4%)	0/36 (0.0%)	1/38 (2.6%)
Multi-Language	9/74 (12.2%)	1/36 (2.8%)	8/38 (21.1%)
<b>Publisher (Top 10)</b>	<b>44/74 (59%)</b>	20/36 (56%)	24/38 (63%)
Wiley	8/74 (11%)	6/36 (17%)	2/38 (5%)
Sage Publications Inc.	6/74 (8%)	6/36 (17%)	0/38 (0%)
Springer	5/74 (7%)	0/36 (0%)	5/38 (13%)
Taylor & Francis Ltd.	5/74 (7%)	0/36 (0%)	5/38 (13%)
Wolters Kluwer	5/74 (7%)	0/36 (0%)	5/38 (13%)
Aves	3/74 (4%)	3/36 (8%)	0/38 (0%)
Elsevier	3/74 (4%)	3/36 (8%)	0/38 (0%)
Georg Thieme Verlag	3/74 (4%)	0/36 (0%)	3/38 (8%)
Karger	3/74 (4%)	1/36 (3%)	2/38 (5%)
Lippincott Williams	3/74 (4%)	1/36 (3%)	2/38 (5%)

**Table 2:** Comparison of inclusive versus non-inclusive journals, stratified by journal metrics.

Journal Characteristic	Rated Inclusive N, % Median, IQR	Rated Non-Inclusive N, % Median, IQR	Bootstrapped Difference Median, 95% CI
<b>Absolute Metrics</b>			
Total Citations	2060	973	1088 [-242, 3204]
Citable Items	169	116	53 [-10, 151.5]
Total Items	1376	675	734 [-341, 2274]
2023 Journal Impact Factor	1.7	1	0.7 [0.2, 1.4]*
JIF Quartile			
Quartile 1	13/36 (36.1%)	4/38 (10.5%)	Not applicable
Quartile 2	10/36 (27.8%)	9/38 (23.7%)	Not applicable
Quartile 3	7/36 (19.4%)	8/38 (21.1%)	Not applicable
Quartile 4	5/36 (13.9%)	17/38 (44.7%)	Not applicable
Not Assigned	1/36 (2.8%)	0/38 (0.0%)	Not applicable
5 years JIF	1.85	1.25	0.60 [-1.4, -0.1]
Immediacy Index	0.30	0.15	0.15 [0.001, 0.3]*
<b>Relative Metrics</b>			
2023 Journal Citation Indicator	0.91	0.44	0.47 [0.18, 0.78]*
Normalized Eigenfactor	0.42	0.13	0.2892 [0.027, 0.570]*
Article Influence Score	0.43	0.13	0.2990 [0.033, 0.478]*
JIF Percentile	60.80	31.55	29.25 [9.2, 48.75]*
Open Access Gold (%)	0.42	0.2542	0.1644 [-0.17, 0.48]

JIF: Journal Impact Factor; JIC: Journal Citation Indicator; IQR: Interquartile Range; 95% CI: 95% Confidence Interval; \*Indicates statistical significance

**Table 3:** Summary of the domains of inclusivity assessed across inclusive journals.

Characteristic	Inclusive Journals Satisfying Criteria N (%)
Provides examples of gender inclusive language	10/36 (27.8%)
Recommends use of gender-neutral language	15/36 (41.7%)
Distinguishes definitions of sex versus gender	12/36 (33.3%)
Provides resources for authors	14/36 (38.9%)
Name change policy option	8/36 (22.2%)
Inclusivity statement for research	22/36 (61.1%)

### Discussion & Conclusions

- This study links gender inclusivity to better journal performance. Inclusive journals ranked higher on scientometric indices, suggesting inclusivity boosts performance and reach. Institutional support, editorial rigor, and diversity awareness drive both inclusivity and academic excellence, working together to enhance research quality and visibility.
- Submission policies act as gatekeepers. Lack of inclusive guidelines may discourage gender-diverse authors and influence study design and participant inclusion—they are central to shaping equitable scientific inquiry. Inclusive author guidelines promote equity, attract diverse voices, and support representation in mentorship and leadership. We need institutional & global support for inequities in publishing practices. Surgical societies can lead standardization gender-inclusive guidelines
- Gender-inclusive author guidelines remain the exception across ENT journals (only 48.6% met ≥1 criterion). Journals with inclusive policies show higher academic influence, supporting the link between inclusivity and excellence. Without inclusive research, ENT risks overlooking critical opportunities to improve outcomes for all patients.

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#### References

