

Torture Journal: Journal on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Prevention of torture

Guidelines for authors

Editorial policy - general

There is growing awareness of the need to explore optimal remedies to restore the physical, psychological and social well-being of torture victims. Torture Journal is intended to provide a multidisciplinary forum for the exchange of original research among professionals concerned with the biomedical, psychological and social interface of torture. The journal seeks to produce state-of-the-art knowledge on methodologies, approaches and disciplines available to provide health-based rehabilitation as well as educational and preventive aspects related hereto. Furthermore, the editors wish to encourage dialogue among experts whose diverse cultures and experiences provide innovative and challenging knowledge to existing practice and theories.

Selection of manuscripts will, amongst other things, be on the basis of the subject being worthy of investigation, as well as on the suitability and soundness of the research methodology and the soundness of the conclusions. Additionally, priority will be given to articles that provide original knowledge and information, particularly those with comparative and interesting or new perspectives. Articles categorised as clinical trials, research methodology papers, data based population examinations, critical or explaining case descriptions may in some incidences be preferred.

The Torture Journal fulfils the international standards expected of a scientific journal and follows best practice guidelines, as set out by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) and Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Scientific articles from Torture are listed in PubMed and EBSCO.

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Guidelines to authors

The Torture Journal welcomes all submissions, and has a wish to promote submissions particularly from low and middle income countries. Where possible and if necessary, we will assist those working for the rehabilitation of torture

survivors and the prevention of torture to make their submissions more publishable, especially those from non-English native speaking countries. (Please note, however, that publication of scientific articles cannot be guaranteed due to the integrity of the double-blind peer review system).

The Torture Journal will endeavour to provide succinct, relevant and timely feedback to authors on a manuscript, even when it is rejected. The editors reserve the right to reject a manuscript at any time up to publication.

Guidelines - general

Authors should endeavour to fulfill the guidelines for each type of contribution (see below) wherever possible. Please also note the Formatting and submission guidelines. All contributions are peer-reviewed unless otherwise stated.

Guidelines - contributions by type

1. Editorial
2. Research & Scientific Papers
3. Review Articles
4. Case Reports
5. Perspectives
6. Research News
7. Statements
8. Book and Media Reviews
9. Comment
10. Correspondence —letters to the editor
11. Formatting and submission guidelines
12. What will happen to your manuscript?
13. Corrections

1. Editorial

Editorials are usually completed by the Editor in Chief or a guest editor. See the sections on commenting and correspondence below if you wish to respond to something in the journal.

2. Research and Scientific articles

Research and scientific articles include an abstract, introduction, methods, results and discussion. Ideally, please include text to be in a box with key ideas and practical implications for the reader.

A long article can be up to 6000 words with a maximum of 40 references (the word count is for the manuscript text only) and a short article can be up to 2500 words with a maximum of 20 references. If a long article is submitted, but the editors consider it can be reduced to a shorter article, then the authors will be notified.

Short abstract or summary: Between 200 and 300 words outlining the paper and indicating its principal conclusion should accompany the typescript. Use a semi-structured format if possible, mentioning introduction, methods, results and discussion.

Population: Make explicit which definition of torture was used (e.g. UNCAT). If you work with a general population of survivors (i.e. migrants or refugees), provide wherever possible separate data and analysis for the sub-sample of torture survivors, the way you screen, explore, document or measure torture and relevant specific ties of the group analysed.

Methods: Describe procedures and measures so as to make the study replicable. It is not necessary to include a full description of instruments with psychometric data. This can be sent as an annex for peer-reviewers and made available to readers on request. Torture Journal encourages Participatory Action Research methods that involve survivors in the design and implementation of the research, gathering of data or discussion of results. It is important that the approval of an ethical committee is included in the text as the absence of such approval may be grounds for exclusion.

Results: Select essential data relevant to the main hypothesis. It can be made clear to readers that additional data can be sent on request, or it can be uploaded to the Torture Journal website upon agreement. Tables are generally intended to summarise results, so it is not necessary to describe them in the

text, but just highlight main findings. Try to be reader-friendly in your description of results.

Discussion: Put the research into its context, citing briefly for example recent similar work or absence of it and any relevant systematic review. Avoid overgeneralising.

Conclusions: Authors should state the main conclusion, implications for practice or policy and future research of their study combined with existing evidence. As above, key ideas and practical implications for readers should be summarised for a box.

References: Include only essential references. Avoid overlapping references, over-citation and particularly unnecessary self-citation. Look for similar research already published in Torture Journal and try to contextualise your paper in previous works.

The Torture Journal supports the reporting guidelines set out on the Enhancing the Quality and Transparency of Health Research website (<http://www.equator-network.org>) as appropriate. However, it is acknowledged that some contributors operate in a resource-poor environment where not all guidelines may be met.

3. Review articles

Review articles provide a critical survey and examination of the literature of a particular subject of research which generally consist of Abstract, Introduction (including explanations of conflicts in the literature, and analysis of the field), Methods, Results, Conclusions and Outlook (including limitations of current knowledge and future directions to be pursued in research).

Authors wishing to submit an unsolicited review should submit a 200 word proposal to the Editor in Chief, summarising the scope, importance, and relevance of the proposed review.

Generally, full reviews that address a broad area of concern (e.g. efficacy of treatment) can be up to 6000 words (excluding references and tables) with generally up to 100 references with a maximum of six tables, illustrations or figures. The abstract can be an unstructured summary of about 150 words.

Short reviews that address a specific area (e.g. efficacy of testimony therapy in Africa) can be up to 2500 words and up to 50 references with three tables or figures.

Progress reviews that update recent previous reviews will normally be limited in scope to what is new in the last 5 to 10 years and can be up to 2500 words with up a maximum of 50 references and three tables, illustrations or figures.

4. Case reports

The Torture Journal welcomes the submission of case reports with respect to unusual cases for any specific reason (either social, nosological, clinical or therapeutic). If possible, the submission should include a short abstract, introduction, case presentation (clinical presentation, observations, test results, and accompanying figures), discussion and conclusion. It can be up to 5000 words (but may be much shorter) and up to 20 references.

5. Perspectives (not peer-reviewed)

A personal view or reflection in a clear narrative voice can also be submitted to the journal. It is intended that this section can add a more qualitative perspective to other scientific articles. Perspectives from torture survivors or field workers are particularly encouraged, although personal experiences and life accounts/historical perspectives of others may also be considered, as well ethnographic observations, personal diaries, individual or collective testimonies of special relevance.

Submissions should generally be up to 5000 words in descriptive prose (although there might be exceptions), and can be on any related topic. This can be used as an opportunity to shine light on a neglected area, highlight an experience, or share your insights.

Perspectives will generally be commissioned specifically, so please send a 250 word proposal to publications@irct.org before putting pen to paper.

6. Research news

Please let us know at publications@irct.org if there is something you believe is newsworthy for the Torture Journal. Examples include items which may be of use or interest to the wider sector, such as key or unusual papers published in

another journal that are worthy of wider dissemination, or, literature that your organisation has produced

7. Statements

Official declarations made by professional bodies or committees which may be of value or interest to the readers related to the torture field.

8. Book or Media Reviews (not peer-reviewed)

Readers who wish to contribute a book, film, TV, exhibition, or web review should contact us at publications@irct.org with a proposal of about 250 words. Book reviews are generally 1000 words and are commissioned and other reviews are generally under 300 words. Please contact us if you would like to write a review or have any useful ideas of what to review.

9. Debate/Comment (may be peer-reviewed)

Debates and comments are commissioned largely to contextualise a review or scientific paper published in the same issue (no more than 1000 words, ten references, and one figure, panel, or small table). If you have suggestions for a debate send a 250 words proposal to publications@irct.org. Debates and commentaries may be peer reviewed. Commentaries may be shortened in the interests of space. Proofs will be sent out to authors before publication.

10. Letters to the Editor (not usually peer-reviewed)

Letters should be written in response to previous content published in the Torture Journal and should generally reach us within eight weeks of online publication of the original item and should be between 500 and 1000 words. All accepted letters are edited, and may be shortened in the interest of space.

Letters of general interest, unlinked to items published in the journal, can be up to 400 words long. Correspondence is not usually peer reviewed, but the authors may be invited to reply, or we may pass on letters to the relevant authors. Only one table or figure is permitted, and there should be no more than five references. Proofs will be sent out to authors before publication.

11. Corrections

Any substantial error in any article published in the Torture Journal should be corrected as soon as possible. Blame is not apportioned; the important thing is to set the record straight.

12. Formatting and submission guidelines

The Torture Journal generally requires manuscripts for submission to comply with the guidance set down by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors with respect to biomedical articles.

Authors should note the following:

- Covering letter: Please include the name, address, telephone and/or fax number, as well as e-mail address, if available, of the corresponding author, and provide any additional information that may be helpful to the editor.
- Conflict of Interest: If an author is aware of a conflict of interest, or believes there may be one, then this should be stated clearly. Authors of accepted articles will be expected to sign a detailed Conflict of Interest form. [Please also see our Conflict of Interest policy].
- Literature references: These should comply with the APA citation. We have recently change from Vancouver Standard, so manuscripts with Vancouver will still be accepted.
- Key words: Three to six key words preferably taken from the Terms from the Medical Subject Headings list of Index Medicus.
- Authors' contributions and signature: Where necessary, the corresponding author should state that he or she had full access to all the data in the study and has had final responsibility for the decision to submit for publication. Authors of articles, clinical trials and research papers must declare their individual contribution by signing a statement, such as, "I declare that I participated in the... (here list the contributions made to the study/examination/trial/article)... and I have seen and approved the final version".

- Ethics: Subjects of research must remain anonymous and the guidelines following set out clearly, such as, the ethical standards of the responsible institutional or regional committee on human experimentation and/or the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised.
- Copyright: Authors will be asked to sign a transfer of copyright agreement, which recognises the common interest that both journal and author(s) have in the protection of copyright. We accept that some authors (e.g. government employees in some countries) are unable to transfer copyright. The copyright covers both the Torture Journal and the IRCT web site. The publisher will not put any limitation on the personal freedom of the author to use material contained in the paper in other works which may be published, provided that acknowledgement is made to the original place of publication.
- Similar work: When submitting a paper, the author should make a statement to the editor about all submissions and previous reports that might be regarded as part of, redundant or duplicate publication of the same or very similar work. If your research is the subject of different papers, please state clearly any previous or simultaneous submissions of the same research.
- Material submitted elsewhere: It is assumed that the material submitted for publication in the Torture Journal has not been presented anywhere else for consideration with a view to publication. Please provide copies of correspondence from other journals and reviewers, if previously submitted elsewhere.

13. What will happen to your manuscript?

Manuscripts undergo an initial in-house assessment. Some will be rejected at this stage, for example, because they do not fall within the scope of the Torture Journal.

The Torture Journal operates a double-blind peer review process which means that the manuscript, after a successful initial assessment, will be reviewed by two peer reviewers anonymously. The editors of Torture identify reviewers based on

registered publication activity within the torture field in general and in the area addressed specifically by the manuscript.

The Torture Journal will endeavour to provide succinct, relevant and timely feedback to authors on a manuscript, even when it is rejected. Even if the Torture Journal has commissioned and/or assisted with a contribution, it may be rejected on the basis of peer review.

The editors reserve the right to reject a manuscript at any time up to publication.

14. Appeal

If you are unhappy with a decision about your submission, then you have the right to appeal. Please submit your complaint in writing and send it to publications@irct.org. The Torture Journal will ensure that a member of the editorial board who has not been involved in the original decision reviews your complaint, along with the associated relevant documents. We will endeavour to get back to you within two months.