The *AMA Manual of Style*, 11th edition: the ultimate guide to scholarly publishing in the digital age

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The *AMA Manual of Style* is a comprehensive guide for authors, editors, and publishers in the fields of medicine and science. It is published by the American Medical Association (AMA). Several academic style guides are used for different academic fields, and the *AMA Manual of Style* contains guidelines specifically for the fields of medicine and biomedical sciences. Nonetheless, its contents cover an unrivaled range and depth compared to other manuals or style guides, making it a useful reference standard for other academic fields, as well as having a significant influence on many prominent international publishing houses.

The manual covers various types of manuscripts and writing rules. It discusses all aspects of publishing, including manuscript preparation, citation and reference formatting, and text and table composition, as well as manuscript review and publishing. It also covers essential topics in science communication, such as ethical considerations, privacy, and copyright issues. Authors can use the manual to prepare and submit their manuscripts, while editors can use it to edit and format texts and references according to the rules. Publishers can use the manual to improve the quality of their publications, comply with writing rules, and produce publications that are beneficial to the medical and scientific communities.

The first edition of the *AMA Manual of Style* was published in 1962 [1]. Since then, it has undergone several revisions to keep up with the rapidly changing world of science and tech-
nology. The most recent edition of the manual, the 11th edition [2], was published in 2020 and includes significant updates and revisions from the previous edition.

One of the most notable changes in the 11th edition is the inclusion of new sections on data sharing and reproducibility. These sections emphasize the importance of making research data openly available and reproducible, in order to promote transparency and scientific progress. The manual provides guidance on how to cite data sets and repositories and encourages authors to make their data available through trusted repositories whenever possible.

Another important update in the 11th edition is the expanded coverage of ethical considerations in research and publication. The manual includes detailed guidelines on issues such as informed consent, conflicts of interest, and publication ethics, and it provides practical advice on how to navigate these complex issues. The manual also includes a new section on research involving human subjects, which provides detailed guidance on how to design, conduct, and report studies in accordance with ethical principles.

The 11th edition also includes updated guidance on the use of gender- and value-neutral language in medical and scientific writing. The manual provides examples of how to use gender-neutral language, including recommendations for using gender-neutral pronouns (such as “they” or “singular they”) when referring to individuals whose gender is unknown or irrelevant. It also recommends avoiding socioeconomic, ethnic, and genetic “labeling” in various contexts and provides several examples of how to do so. This guidance reflects a growing awareness of the importance of inclusive language in scientific communication, and the need to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes or marginalizing certain groups.

From the perspective of an editor who deals with and edits manuscripts, there are some noticeable changes. These include minor changes such as using a space between the unit for degrees Celsius (°C) and the preceding number, and no longer requiring location information along with the publisher in the references list or for manufacturers of products mentioned in the main text. In addition, while the AMA style previously avoided citing references with unclear bibliographic information, it now allows a wide range of references from various media, including electronic and online sources; the manual has greatly expanded its guidance on citation formats for these references. For editors of academic journals who take a somewhat conservative approach to the reference type the authors cite, this may be a point to consider regarding potential policy changes.

Furthermore, a new concept called “retraction and replacement” has been introduced as a method for handling corrections and errors to previously published studies, which is a topic of interest to editors who need to address modifications made to academic articles. This concept involves retracting the article and replacing it with a modified version if there are “pervasive errors” due to “honest” mistakes that do not compromise the scientific integrity or conclusions of the study. The point to note is that along with the replaced version, both the precorrection version with the errors highlighted and the post-correction version with the modifications highlighted should be provided as supplementary material.

Overall, the 11th edition of the AMA Manual of Style reflects the rapidly evolving landscape of scientific communication and the need for clear and transparent reporting of research. If the reader’s academic journal is based on this manual or at least references it, there is no reason to hesitate to review the updated guidelines in this recent edition and apply them to the reader’s journal.

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References