

Center for Research on Biotoxin Associated Illnesses Guidelines for Research Planning & Publication

Based on work written by:

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Publication in the peer-reviewed literature is essential for advancing the mission of the Center for Research on Biotoxin Associated illnesses (CRBAI). Publication categories include original scientific research (i.e., group and case studies), scientific literature review and evaluation, and policy review, evaluation, and proposal. General recognition that articles by CRBAI members are consistently of high quality will broaden and deepen the influence of CRBAI on research funding, education, and policy determination programs. Guidelines are offered below to help ensure that research conducted and reported by CRBAI members is consistently of high quality.

The guidelines establish a process through which CRBAI will sanction the following statement in the acknowledgment section of articles.

This article was reviewed by the Research Network of CRBAI for accuracy and quality. It is approved to serve as guidelines for journal submission. The article is consistent with CRBAI's mission of bringing sound science, effectual education and protective policy concerning the human health effects of indoor air particulates, toxins and inflammagens to the worldwide community, while exposing deceptive information and activities.

Members are encouraged to use these guidelines when designing a research study or review, and when preparing a paper for journal submission. The Research Committee is available for consultation when questions or problems arise.

We further encourage members to use the Research Network Paper Review Process when preparing a paper for journal submission. This process will provide recommendations for potential target journals and reviewer suggestions, a critical review and revision suggestions, and re-review and comments about the revised paper. Approval of inclusion of the above statement will only be granted after successful completion of the Paper Review Process. Use of the CRBAI Research Network Guidelines and Paper Review Process is meant to facilitate the journal review process, increase the probability of acceptance for publication, and ensure consistently high quality publications by CRBAI members.

The guidelines are separated into Research Planning and Research Reporting sections. The paper should demonstrate that research conduction was consistent with the research plan. The items are written from the perspective of a reviewer to emphasize the need to think like a reviewer.

Research Planning (each item may not apply to all research categories)

1. Is the research topic of direct relevance to protecting human health from the adverse effects of exposure to indoor air contaminants, toxins and/or inflammagens?
2. Describe the primary research objective (e.g., to develop evidence-based hypotheses; to test specified hypotheses; to evaluate or compare environmental or clinical intervention effectiveness; to perform a meta analysis; to assess the scientific basis of policy; to evaluate policy effectiveness; to evaluate the consistency of policy across organizations; to propose policy changes).
3. If the primary objective is met, will the research make an original and significant contribution to the literature on that topic?
4. If the primary objective is met, will the research be of broad international interest?
5. List the necessary and sufficient goals or milestones for meeting the primary objective.
6. If experimental research, describe the optimal and minimal experimental design elements needed to meet the goals and primary objective.
7. If experimental research or meta analysis, what are the minimal number of subjects per group or studies necessary to show a statistically significant difference at the anticipated effect size?
8. Describe the quality assurance or quality control process and how it will be documented.
9. Are the resources available to support at least the minimal experimental design elements and achieve the goals?
10. Do the research team members provide expertise in all areas relevant to this research?

Research Report (each item may not apply to all research categories)

1. Is the research topic of interest to a broad, international community?
2. Is the primary objective original? Has the primary objective been sufficiently met in previously reported research?
3. Is the research likely to have a significant impact in the scientific and/or policy communities?
4. Does the title succinctly capture the research essence?
5. Does the abstract succinctly describe the background, primary objective, methods, main results and conclusion?

6. Is the paper well organized with Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion/Conclusion sections and subsections as appropriate?
7. Do the syntax, grammar and punctuation meet high quality writing and grammar standards?
8. Is the writing style logical, concise, and easy to read and follow?
9. Does the Introduction describe the general field of inquiry, current topic of inquiry and how this research was intended to fill a gap in the literature or advance knowledge in the field?
10. Will this type of research test specific hypotheses? If so, are the hypotheses clearly stated in the Methods Section?
11. Is the study design best suited for meeting the primary objective? If not, is the study design sufficient for meeting the primary objective?
12. Are the analytical and procedural methods well described and referenced so that they could be replicated, and are the quality control procedures well described and adequate?
13. Are the statistical procedures appropriate and sufficient for describing and assessing the significance of the results?
14. Are all study results reported clearly and completely, and do they indicate that the study was conducted according to the study design and methods?
15. Is the use of tables and graphs appropriate? Could the results be presented more concisely by adding or subtracting tables and/or graphs?
16. Are methods presented only in the Methods Section, and results reported only in the Results Section?
17. Does the Discussion Section avoid a restatement of the results?
18. Are the current results sufficiently integrated with the existing literature to show important linkages?
19. Should topics be added to the Discussion Section to explore implications for future research?
20. Should topics be removed from the Discussion Section to avoid excessive and unfounded speculation?
21. Is a discussion of study weaknesses included?
22. Is a concise conclusion presented?
23. Are all statements of “fact” well referenced?

24. Should any references be added or removed, and do the citations in the text correspond exactly with the references in the bibliography?
25. Are adequate acknowledgments and conflict of interest statements presented?
26. Does the targeted journal provide a good balance between prestige (i.e., journal impact factor) and probability of acceptance?
27. Is the research topic of strong relevance to the targeted journal?
28. Does the paper match the format specified by the journal in every aspect (e.g., author contact information, key words, abstract length, citation and reference style and order, graphic format and quality)?
29. Have you identified appropriate peers to suggest as reviewers?
30. Does each listed author have a biographical sketch or curriculum vitae in case of requests from media or others? If media contact is anticipated, have you drafted a list of potential questions and answers?
31. Review documentation of validity of control groups paralleling cases with express delineation of age, gender, race and any other pertinent demographic elements. Verify control groups are not shown to have exposure to indoor environments with water intrusion and discuss how that determination is confirmed.
32. Clearly state pertinent literature that supports or does not support hypotheses and methods used. Clearly define influential agency/government opinion that impacts on study methods, results, discussion and conclusions.
33. Clearly state the actual case definition and the source of that definition. If the case definition is incorrect, then state the basis for your opinion.
34. If using a patient as his own control, state the basis for such use.
35. Document IRB approval for all studies done with humans, not just intervention studies.