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What We Publish

Research Articles

Research Articles present the results of original research that address a clearly defined research question and contribute to the body of academic knowledge.

PLOS One considers Research Articles in all areas of the natural sciences, medicine, and engineering, as well as the related social sciences and humanities.

In keeping with our mission to publish all methodologically and ethically rigorous research, we will consider Research Articles reporting negative and null results.

Research Articles typically consist of the following headings:

- › Abstract
- › Introduction
- › Materials and Methods
- › Results
- › Discussion
- › Conclusions

Submitted Research Articles are evaluated against the *PLOS One* [criteria for publication](#) and should also adhere to the author [submission guidelines](#).

Articles reporting new methods

PLOS One considers Research Article submissions which report new methods, software, databases and tools as the primary focus of the article. These should also adhere to the utility, availability and validation criteria in the [guidelines for specific study types](#).

Systematic reviews and meta-analyses

PLOS One considers Research Article submissions which report systematic reviews and meta-analyses: reviews of a clearly formulated research question that use explicit, systematic methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyze data from the included studies. For more information see our [submissions guidelines for systematic reviews and meta-analyses](#).

Clinical Trials

Clinical Trials report the results of studies in which participants are prospectively assigned to a health-related intervention in order to evaluate the effects on health outcomes. *PLOS One* assesses Clinical Trials manuscripts against the same [publication criteria](#) as Research Articles, but they must also meet the additional requirements outlined in the [submissions guidelines for Clinical Trials](#).

Lab Protocols

Lab Protocols are peer-reviewed articles comprising detailed step-by-step descriptions of experimental and computational techniques. Lab Protocols have been developed as part of a [partnership between PLOS and protocols.io](#), a dedicated platform for developing and sharing reproducible methods, and consist of:

- › A step-by-step protocol posted to [protocols.io](#), utilizing specialized tools for communicating methodological details, including reagents, measurements, formulae, video clips and dynamic flow charts.
- › A peer-reviewed *PLOS One* article contextualizing the protocol, with sections discussing applications, limitations, expected results and sample datasets from using the protocol.

PLOS One considers Lab Protocols submissions in all areas of the journal [scope](#). For more information on submissions requirements and evaluation criteria see [the Lab Protocols submission guidelines](#).

Study Protocols

Study Protocols describe detailed plans for conducting research, including the background, rationale, objectives, methodology, statistical plan, and organization of a research project. *PLOS One* accepts submissions of Study Protocols for any study type within the journal's scope.

Read the Study Protocols [submission guidelines](#) for more information about submission requirements and evaluation criteria.

Registered Reports

Registered Reports are research articles that undergo peer review at the study design or protocol stage, prior to conducting experiments, data collection or analysis. The Registered Report format aims to support a strong methodological approach, increase the reproducibility of results, and address publication bias. [Read more on our blog](#).

Assessment takes place in two stages and results in two linked publications:

1. **Registered Report Protocol:** an article describing the study design, rationale, timeline, proposed methodology for data collection and analysis, and where applicable ethical approval for the work. Registered Report Protocols report the study proposal prior to conducting experiments, data collection or patient recruitment, and they undergo peer review to ensure that the planned research will meet *PLOS One*'s [publication criteria](#). Accepted Registered Report Protocols are published in the journal, and receive an in-principle accept for the future article reporting the results of the study after completion.
2. **Registered Report:** a Research Article describing the full study and its findings upon completion, including the methods information originally outlined in the Registered Report Protocol. Peer review focuses on adherence to the protocol and the appropriateness of any deviations. If accepted, the published Research Article and Registered Report Protocol are linked on our website.

Scope and submission requirements for Registered Report Protocols and Registered Reports are similar to those for a regular research article submission. Read the [Registered Report Protocol and Registered Report submission guidelines](#) for more.

Commissioned Article Types

PLOS One does not consider unsolicited submissions of the article types below - these articles must be commissioned or invited by the *PLOS One* editors, or, in the case of Collection Reviews and Collection Overviews, by Guest Editors of Collection partners.

Collection Reviews

PLOS One considers Collection Review articles within pre-planned [Collections](#) with the goal to provide deeper insight into one or more of the topics covered in the Collection. These articles are compelling narrative reviews that discuss current developments in a particular field under the Collection's scope and draw meaningful conclusions adding to knowledge in the field. They should be balanced, coherent, representative of the literature on the topic covered, and clearly positioned in the subject of the Collection.

PLOS One staff editors will not consider unsolicited Collection Reviews. Collection Reviews will be considered within a pre-planned Collection subject to prior approval by journal editors, or they may be commissioned by staff editors. *PLOS One* staff editors will not consider unsolicited Collection Reviews. Collection Reviews should include:

- › An **introduction** summarizing the background of the topic and the purpose of the review.
- › A **conclusion** succinctly outlining the key points.
- › Where possible, discussion of implications to the field and recommendations based on the evidence presented.

Collection Overviews

PLOS One considers Collection Overview articles within planned Collections. Collection Overviews discuss the relevant history and scientific background of a Collection, and place the articles included in the Collection within the context of knowledge in the field.

PLOS One staff editors do not consider unsolicited Collection Overviews. Collection Overviews will instead be commissioned by Guest Editors or Collection partners, or may be commissioned by staff editors.

Formal Comments

Formal Comments are invited by *PLOS One* editors to promote scientific discourse about *PLOS One* articles. They provide additional perspectives or context on a publication, especially in areas of policy, societal relevance, or ongoing scientific debate.

PLOS One may invite a Formal Comment as:

- › A response to scientific criticism or re-analysis by authors whose work is disputed in a *PLOS One* publication.
- › An article that offers an expert, broad and balanced perspective on a *PLOS One* publication, or adds context on the potential editorial, societal or policy implications of the findings.

Formal Comments should be concise, coherent, well-argued and of timely relevance to the field. Formal Comments undergo peer review, and the journal may also invite the authors of the article under discussion to provide a signed review or to submit a response to the Formal Comment. *PLOS One* editors do not consider unsolicited Formal Comments.

Formal Comments are not meant to address concerns around publication ethics. Direct ethics concerns about *PLOS One* to the [PLOS Publication Ethics team and cc the journal](#).

Topic Pages

Topic Page articles are intended to increase the coverage of scientific topics in Wikipedia. Topic Pages are written in the style of a Wikipedia article and, after open peer review on the [PLOS Wiki](#), become a published copy of record with a dynamic version of the article posted on Wikipedia.

While Academic Editors most often solicit Topic Pages from researchers in their areas of expertise, we also welcome new proposals and inquiries for editorial consideration. Proposals should address topics that are of interest to the scientific community and wider general public and that are not yet covered or are currently under-developed, in Wikipedia. To propose a Topic Page, please contact our editorial office at plosone@plos.org.

Post-Publication Notices

PLOS publishes Editorial Notes, Corrections, Expressions of Concern, and Retraction notices, as needed, to address issues that arise after a PLOS article has been published.