



JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT CAPSTONES

Author Guidelines

The Journal of Public Health Student Capstones (JPHSC) is a faculty/practitioner-reviewed public health journal dedicated to publishing scholarly work completed by undergraduate and graduate public health students as part of their field work and capstone experience. Published quarterly, the JPHSC offers a virtual home to critically review and publish the field work and capstone experiences completed during a student's public health education. Please use the guidelines below to structure and inform your writing process.

Main Checklist

1. A title page which includes the title of the manuscript, JPHSC submission type, author names, author affiliations, and the full abstract. Structured abstracts include an objective, methods, results and conclusion section. Unstructured abstracts are written in paragraphs and don't have any titles specific for different parts of the abstract.
2. A blinded manuscript file that does not include: acknowledgements, author information, institutional affiliations or contributions, disclosures of conflict, identification of funding source(s), and names of IRB granting institutions (if appropriate for the type of manuscript). Manuscript filenames should not include any author names or initials. Please see below for more details on formatting your manuscript according to your specific submission type.
 1. All blinded manuscripts (regardless of submission type) should contain the following elements
 1. i) title of manuscript, JPHSC submission type, and abstract
 2. ii) page numbers
 3. iii) numbered lines (in Word, > Page Setup > Line Numbers > Continuous) throughout the text of the manuscript; with a font size of 12
 4. iv) Tables and figures embedded at the end of the manuscript, OR uploaded as separate file
3. An attestation form which may be found [here](#).

4. A cover letter with concise text (maximum 150 words) that addresses the following topics:
 1. A) a description of what the paper adds to current public health knowledge base, and if systematic reviews exist on the topic.
 2. B) one to three bulleted sentences summarizing the main message(s) of the paper. This is important as it may be used on social media (e.g., JPHSC Twitter, etc.) to highlight the findings of your field experience or capstone work.

Your submission should be indicated as a specific submission type. A description of each of the submission categories, as well as what the reviewers of your manuscript will be evaluating can be found below.

Types of Submissions

There are 8 submission categories: 1) Program Evaluation; 2) Public Health Reviews (i.e., Systems Analysis Review, Literature Review, Topical review, Historical Review); 3) Secondary data analysis; 4) Policy Assessment; 5) Design of Research Proposal; 6) Economic Evaluations; 7) Research Project; and 8) Current Opinion. Word totals apply to the main body of the paper and exclude citations, tables, and figures unless otherwise specified in the section below.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation manuscripts report on evaluations conducted to determine whether a public health program or practice has met its goals. You should follow the relevant [Equator Network reporting guideline](#) for the study type. 3000-word limit, 250-word structured abstract (objectives, methods, results, and conclusions), no more than 5 tables or figures. Program evaluation manuscripts should include a structured abstract. Sections should include a structured abstract, introduction, description of the program being evaluated, purpose of the evaluation (including evaluation criteria), methods, results, lessons learned, references, and tables/figures.

Introduction

- Is the problem clearly defined?
- Is the aim or goal of the evaluation clearly stated?

Description of the program being evaluated

- Is the population that the program serves, the components of the program, the time frame or length of the program, the location or setting of the program, and the purpose of the program clearly stated?

Purpose of the Evaluation

- Does the author state why the evaluation of the program is important?

Methods

- Are the procedures of the data collection and analysis of the data clear?
- Is the analysis appropriate for the type of data collected and for the study question at hand?
- Has the author walked the reader through the analysis that was conducted, so much so that the reader understands how to repeat the analysis/procedure of the evaluation if desired?

Results

- Are the findings of the primary and secondary study question(s) stated and clear and concise?
- Did the author determine whether a public health program or practice has met its goals?

Lessons Learned

- Did the author summarize the importance of the evaluation findings and offer suggestions for either program improvement, state the importance of this evaluation to the field of public health, or state what public health professionals may learn from this program evaluation?

Public Health Reviews

This category of manuscript, includes several types of public health reviews, including: Systems Analysis Review, Literature Review, Topical review, Historical Review.

Systems analysis review manuscripts report on reviews conducted of public health systems or related entities to critically evaluate the design, development and impact of the system. This type of manuscript breaks down a public health system into its component pieces for the purpose of the studying and evaluating how well those component parts work and interact to accomplish their purpose. 3000-word limit, 250-word structured abstract (objectives, methods, results, and conclusions), no more than 5 tables or figures. Sections should include a structured abstract, introduction, description of the public health system being evaluated, purpose of the review (including review criteria), methods, results, lessons learned, references, and tables/figures.

Literature reviews assess current knowledge of a particular public health field experience or capstone project topic using secondary sources. Although new conclusions can be made, this type should not report new or original experimental work.

3000-word limit, 250-word structured abstract (objectives, methods, results, and conclusions), and no more than 5 tables or figures. Sections should include a structured abstract, introduction, methods (if relevant), discussion, public health implications, and references, and tables/figures. Literature reviews should incorporate previously published work to address key points of the manuscript and provide an historical perspective of the topic. It should also, discuss literature search strategies including databases used and MeSH terms, includes rationale for inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as the level of detail required to replicate study.

Topical reviews are narrative summaries of a topic relevant to public health field experiences and capstone projects, including a comprehensive survey of the public health topic, often including a review of the existing literature and knowledge base, and an update on the current understanding and state-of-the art of the topic. 3000-word limit, 250-word unstructured abstract, no more than 5 tables or figures. Sections should include an unstructured abstract, introduction, methods (if relevant), discussion, public health implications, references, and tables/figures. The editors review topical review submissions in accordance with whether the manuscript: 1) provides a comprehensive presentation and synthesis of the topic and, if included, a review of the existing literature and knowledge base, 2) leaves the reader with an update on the current understanding and state-of-the art of the topic, and 3) uses plain language and statistical presentation relevant to a broad range of public health professionals.

Historical reviews similar in format/layout to the abovementioned topical review, should include a summary of important events in public health history as they relate to a student field experience or capstone project. Historical reviews will include events that have shaped and transformed public health practice. These types of reviews are not a summary of the events that lead to a field experience or capstone project, rather a review of major historical public health events that motivated and inspired the field experience. Authors should consult with the editors on this type of submission. 3000-word limit, 250-word unstructured abstract, no more than 5 tables or figures. Sections should include an unstructured abstract, introduction, methods (if relevant), discussion, public health implications, references, and tables/figures.

Introduction

- Is the problem clearly defined?
- Is the aim or goal of the review clearly stated?

Description of the public health system being evaluated (if evaluating public health system)

- Does the author clearly discuss who the system serves, the purpose of the system, the components or brief break down of the system?

- Overall, is the system clearly defined?

Purpose of the review (including review criteria)

- Does the author state why the review is important?

Methods (if required)

- Are the procedures of the review and analysis of the clear?
- Has the author walked the reader through the analysis that was conducted, so much so that the reader understands how to repeat the analysis/procedure of the review if desired?
- Is the analysis appropriate for the type of data collected and for the study question at hand?

Results

- Did the author clearly state the findings of the review?

Discussion (if required)

- Did the author clearly summarize the overarching findings of the review?
- Are the strengths and limitations of the review stated?

Lessons learned or public health implications (if required)

- Did the author summarize the importance of the review findings and state the importance this review has to the field of public health? Or state what public health professionals may learn from this review?

Secondary data analysis

Secondary data analysis articles report on the results of secondary data analysis using data from a public health project or public health surveillance system. 3500 words in the text, a structured abstract, up to 4 tables & figures combined, and no more than 35 references. The structured abstract must provide the date(s) and location(s) of the data collected. The text must have an introduction and separate sections for Methods, Results, Discussion, and Implications for undergraduate and graduate public health students working on field experience and capstone projects.

Introduction

- Is the public health problem clearly defined?
- Is the aim or goal of the analysis clearly stated?

Methods

- Has the author clearly stated where the data has come from, who was sampled, during what time and for what reason?

- e.g. “This secondary data analysis was derived from the XYZ study, which examined the prevalence of xyz among this population during this time in order to better understand how xyz effects this population.”
- Has the author walked the reader through the analysis that was conducted, so much so that the reader would know how to repeat the analysis?
- Is the analysis appropriate for the type of data collected and for the study question at hand?

Results

- Are the findings of the primary and secondary research question(s) stated and clearly reported?

Discussion

- Did the author clearly summarize the overarching findings of the review?
- Are the strengths and limitations of the secondary data analysis discussed?

Implications for undergraduate and graduate public health students working on field experience or capstone projects

- Did the author discuss how a secondary data analysis may impact students working in the field of public health?

Policy Assessment

Policy assessment articles uses a range of research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of policy interventions, implementation and processes, and to determine their merit, worth, or value in terms of improving the social and economic conditions of different stakeholders. Policy assessment manuscripts will evaluate principles and methods that examine policy content, and implementation or impact of a policy. A policy assessment exercise would be an activity through which we develop an understanding of the merit, worth, and utility of a policy. These types of articles will require some level of analysis (e.g., system or community level for policy evaluation) and increased emphasis on the use of surveillance and administrative data. 3500-word limit, 250-word structured abstract, no more than 5 tables or figures. Sections should include a structured abstract, introduction, methods (if relevant), discussion, public health implications, references, and tables/figures.

Introduction

- Is the public health problem clearly defined?
- Is the aim or goal of the policy assessment clearly stated?

Methods (if relevant)

- Has the author walked the reader through the assessment that was conducted, so much so that the reader would know how to repeat the assessment?
- Is the assessment appropriate for this study and for the study question at hand?
- Did the author use principles and methods that examine policy content, and implementation or impact of a policy?

Discussion

- Has the author determined the policies merit, worth, or value in terms of improving the social and economic conditions of different stakeholders?
- Has the author clearly summarized the overall findings of the assessment?
- Are the strengths and limitations to this assessment discussed?

Public health implications

- Did the author summarize the importance of the assessment findings and state the importance this assessment has to the field of public health? Or state what public health professionals may learn from this policy assessment?

Design of Research Proposal

The goal of a research proposal is to present and justify the need to study a public health problem and to present the practical ways in which the proposed study should be conducted. As part of their field experience and/or capstone project, public health students may have worked on designing a research proposal that address a public health problem. The JPHSC will consider manuscripts that describe the design of a research proposal. This type of manuscript should specify the research goal, the proposed research approach and the educational goal of the research proposal. The intellectual merits (the contribution your research will make to your area of public health) should specify the current state of knowledge in the field, and where it is headed. The manuscript should state what your research proposal (if successful) will add to the state of knowledge in the field. Furthermore, important to state is what your research will do to enhance or enable other public health practitioners in the field. Finally, one should answer why your research proposal is important for the advancement of the field. These manuscripts should be organized with the following headers: Introduction/Background of problem or scientific/practice gap; proposal approach; expected outcomes; and future/next steps. 3500-word limit, 250-word structured abstract, no more than 5 tables or figures. Sections should include a structured abstract, introduction, methods (if relevant), discussion, public health implications, references, and tables/figures.

Introduction

- Is the public health problem clearly defined?
- Is the aim or goal of the research proposal design clearly stated?

Methods (if relevant)

- Has the author discussed how the design of this research proposal came to fruition?
 - e.g. “The inception of this research proposal design began with a literature review of xyz. After this review, the problem of xyz was better understood and the need for this type of research study was shown to be needed. Thus, this research proposal aims to address the existing problem within this population.”
- Was how the research goal(s) the proposed research approach and the educational goal of the research proposal discussed?

Discussion

- Did the author state what the research proposal (if successful) will add to the state of knowledge in the field?
- Did the author propose possible strengths and limitations of their research proposal?

Public health implications

- Did the author answer why the research proposal is important for the advancement of the field?

Economic Evaluations

Economic evaluation manuscripts can include cost-benefit analysis, cost-effective analysis, cost-minimization analysis and cost-utility analysis. Cost-benefit analysis compares monetary cost and benefits of alternative strategies. Cost-effective analysis compares the cost of alternative strategies that have different public health outcomes. Cost-minimization analysis compares the costs of alternative strategies that have public health-related equivalent outcomes, while cost-utility analysis compares the costs of alternative strategies using quality of life outcome measures. These manuscripts should be organized with the following sections: a structured Abstract; Introduction (i.e., Includes the type of economic evaluation and the comparative interventions in the aim of the study); Materials and Method (i.e., Includes the perspective (point of view) and time frame of the economic evaluation and adequately describe alternative strategies or interventions); Results (i.e., Present data both in aggregated and disaggregated forms; cost-benefit analyses should specify the type of evaluation [that is benefits-to-cost ratio, net present value, or net benefits as percentage of costs]; Express results of any break-even equation in monetary terms, and specify if human capital or willingness to pay approach is used in cost-benefit analyses). 3500-word limit, 250-word structured abstract, no more than 5 tables or figures.

Introduction

- Is the type of economic evaluation stated and clear?
- Are comparative interventions in the aim of the study mentioned?

Materials and Methods

- Did the author include the perspective (point of view) and the time frame of the economic evaluation and adequately describe alternative strategies or interventions?

Results

- Was data presented both in aggregated and disaggregated forms?
 - Cost-benefit analyses should specify the type of evaluation [that is benefits-to-cost ratio, net present value, or net benefits as percentage of costs]
 - Express results of any break-even equation in monetary terms, and specify if human capital or willingness to pay approach is used in cost-benefit analyses
- Are considerations of next steps or suggestions for future research suggested?

Original research

Original research manuscripts report on research or meta-analyses, conducted to increase knowledge of a particular public health concern, establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous work, solve new or existing problems, or support previous or develop new theories. You should follow the relevant Equator Network reporting guideline for the study type. 3000-word limit, 250-word structured abstract (objectives, methods, results, and conclusions), no more than 5 tables or figures. Structured abstract. Sections should be structured in the following order: introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusions, references, and tables/figures. For meta-analyses, please include a structured abstract, 3-question summary box, introduction, methods (data sources, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and criteria for assessing data), results, discussion, public health implications, references, and tables/figures.

Introduction

- Is the public health problem clearly defined?
- Is the aim or goal of the research proposal design clearly stated?

Methods

- Has the author walked the reader through the assessment that was conducted, so much so that the reader would know how to repeat the assessment?
- Is the assessment appropriate for this study and for the study question at hand?
- Did the author use principles and methods that examine policy content, and implementation or impact of a policy?
- For meta-analyses only: Were the data sources, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and criteria for assessing data summarized?

Results

- Are the findings of the primary and secondary study question(s) stated and clear and concise?

Discussion

- Did the author clearly summarize the overarching findings of the original research?
- Are the strengths and limitations of the research discussed?

Conclusions

- Did the author summarize the main findings of the study?
- Did the author state the importance the results of the study have to the field of public health? Or state what public health professionals may learn from this? Are there any recommendations for future research?

Current Opinion

These essays discuss on a current or emerging public health issue, policy issue, important scientific and programmatic development, new technology, or current scientific debate. It is expected that commentaries may take a personal viewpoint on a topic. 2500-word limit and no more than 2 tables or figures. These essays should include the sections: introduction, discussion, public health implications, and references; as well as tables/figures.

Introduction

- Is the public health problem clearly defined?
- Is the opinion on a current or emerging public health issue, policy issue, important scientific program or programmatic development, new technology or current scientific debate clearly stated?

Discussion

- Did the author make clear arguments for their opinion and considering opposing viewpoints to the subject at hand?

Public health implications

- Did the author summarize the importance of this opinion and state the importance this argument has to the field of public health?
- Optional: did the author suggest ways in which this issue may be addressed by public health professionals?

If you have any further questions regarding the submission process, please contact the managing editors at JPHSC@JPHSC.org.