

## **JAACAP Registered Reports – Guidelines for Authors**

Registered Reports are a form of empirical article in which the methods and proposed analyses are pre-registered and reviewed prior to research being conducted. Authors submit their study methods and analytic plan prior to the commencement of data collection (in the case of intervention research and most other studies) or prior to the commencement of data analysis (in the case of secondary analysis of existing data). This is also known as study preregistration. The goal of publishing Registered Reports is to increase the overall quality of the research literature by creating a peer review and publication pathway for papers by investigators who commit to conducting hypothetical-deductive research.

Registered Reports are open to a variety of empirical designs including clinical trials, observational studies, and systematic reviews and meta-analyses. All Registered Report submissions must be approved by the editors in advance. Inquiries about potential topics are welcome at [support@jaacap.org](mailto:support@jaacap.org).

The cornerstone of the Registered Reports process is that a significant part of the manuscript will be assessed prior to data collection, with the highest quality submissions accepted in advance. This is referred to as study preregistration, or Stage 1 Peer Review. To request study preregistration, authors submit a manuscript consisting of the Introduction and Method sections for their study, along with a study synopsis, for peer review.

If the study preregistration is approved, the *Journal* will issue an in-principle acceptance to the authors and the study synopsis will be published in *JAACAP* as a registered study protocol. The Introduction and Method sections will be also available to readers as an online supplement to the study synopsis.

When the study is completed, the authors will submit a scientifically complete manuscript, using the Introduction and Method sections that have already been reviewed and accepted, as well as newly drafted Results and Discussion sections. This scientifically complete manuscript will undergo peer review (Stage 2 Peer Review), and, if accepted, will be published as a Registered Report.

Study preregistration is a joint commitment by the study investigators and the *Journal*. If the *Journal* issues an in-principle acceptance, it commits to publishing the manuscript reporting the results of the study regardless of the study findings. Likewise, authors commit to publishing the results of the study in *JAACAP* regardless of the study findings. This joint commitment is contingent upon the study being conducted as specified in the preregistration, passing all prespecified quality checks, and including a defensible interpretation of the results.

### **Review Process**

All Registered Report submissions must be approved by the editors in advance. Inquiries about potential topics are welcome at [support@jaacap.org](mailto:support@jaacap.org).

### **Study Preregistration (Stage 1 peer review)**

All new manuscripts must be submitted online at <http://jaacap.edmgr.com>.

Initial Stage 1 submissions should include the following components:

#### **A cover letter that includes the following:**

- A brief scientific case for consideration;
- A statement confirming that all necessary support (e.g. funding, facilities) and approvals (e.g. ethics) are in place for the proposed research;
- A statement indicating that the study methods could be revised based on the recommendations of the *Journal*, or an alternate statement that the study methods cannot be modified, and the *Journal* should consider the methods as is;

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- An anticipated timeline for completing the study if the initial submission is accepted; and
- A statement of commitment that the authors will submit their final manuscript to JAACAP regardless of the study outcome.

### **A Study Synopsis of up to 750 words (Introduction Summary, Method Summary, Significance) with ≤ 1 table or figure, ≤ 10 references.**

- Introduction Summary. A brief overview of the purpose of the study, recent relevant literature, pilot studies relevant to the protocol, and a priori hypothesis.
- Method Summary. A concise summary of the study methods.
- Significance. An overview of the significance of this research.

### **A manuscript of up to 3,000 words, ≤ 5 tables or figures, and ≤ 50 references, that includes the following:**

- **Introduction.** Include the purpose of the study, a review of recent relevant literature, any pilot studies relevant to the protocol, and a priori hypothesis.
- **Method.**
  - The description of prospective methods and analytic plan should be written in future tense.
  - The Method section should be sufficiently detailed such that others with access to the data would be able to reproduce the results. Authors should use the appropriate protocol guideline for structuring their description of the study method, for example, SPIRIT-P for clinical trials or PRIMSA-P for systematic reviews and meta-analyses. If the study type does not have a protocol guideline, use the Method section of a study guideline, for example STROBE for observational studies and STARD for studies of diagnostic accuracy. Peer reviewers are asked to refer to these checklists when evaluating these study protocols. Standard sections should include study design, setting, participants, data sources, measures, justification for target sample size, potential sources of bias, and analytic plan.
  - Templates for study flow diagrams and presentation of results may be included as blank tables and figures.
  - For measures, authors should describe variables measured and instruments used. Authors must provide sufficient information about rating scales and other measures so that readers can access them for their own use; unpublished instruments may be made available via supplemental material at the request of the editor.
  - If a manual-based treatment is used, authors must include information about how to obtain the manual. Unpublished manuals may be made available via supplemental material at the request of the editor
  - When devices or software are mentioned, please provide the version used (if applicable) and name of the manufacturer followed by city and state of the manufacturer's headquarters.
  - Analytic Plan
    - Describe all analyses with names of specific statistical tests proposed and how these correspond to the hypotheses postulated in the introduction. Justify and clearly reference the use of unusual statistical techniques. If multiple comparisons are unavoidable, describe any planned adjustment to control type-I error. State whether tests will be one- or two-tailed. Include information about any proposed sensitivity analyses or internal replication.
    - Include the proposed analysis pipeline, including all preprocessing steps, and a precise description of all planned analyses. Any covariates or regressors must be stated. Where analysis decisions are contingent on the outcome of prior analyses, these contingencies must be specified and adhered to. Only pre-planned analyses can be reported in the main Results section of Stage 2 submissions. However, unplanned exploratory analyses will be admissible in a

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separate section of the Results (see below).

- **Timeline for completion of the study.**
- **Pilot Data** (Optional). Pilot data may be included to establish proof of concept, effect size estimations, or feasibility of proposed methods. Any pilot experiments will be published with the final version of the manuscript and will be distinguished clearly from data obtained for the preregistered experiment(s).
- **Data Access Certification** (required for preregistration of secondary analyses). Authors must certify (e.g. self-certification; letter from independent gatekeeper) that they have had no prior access to the data in question. For advice on the eligibility of specific scenarios, authors are welcome to contact support@jaacap.org.

Stage 1 submissions judged by the editorial board to be of sufficient quality and within *Journal* scope will be sent for peer review. Reviewers will be asked to assess:

1. The importance of the research question(s);
2. The logic, rationale, and plausibility of the proposed hypotheses;
3. The soundness and feasibility of the methodology and analysis pipeline (including statistical power analysis where appropriate);
4. Whether the clarity and degree of methodological detail is sufficient to replicate the proposed experimental procedures and analysis pipeline exactly; and
5. Whether the authors have prespecified sufficient outcome-neutral tests to ensure that the results obtained can test the stated hypotheses, including positive controls and quality checks.

Following Stage 1 peer review, manuscripts will be either rejected outright, offered the opportunity to revise, or issued an in-principle acceptance. Manuscripts that exceed the highest standards of importance and scientific rigour will be issued an in-principle acceptance.

**Authors are reminded that any deviation from the stated experimental procedures could lead to rejection of the manuscript at Stage 2.** In cases where the preregistered protocol is altered after in-principle acceptance, the authors must consult the editorial board immediately for advice, and prior to the completion of data collection.

### Registered Report (Stage 2 full manuscript peer review)

Once the study is complete, authors prepare and resubmit their manuscript for full review, with the following additions:

- Cover letter.
  - The Stage 2 cover letter must confirm that, for primary research Registered Reports, no data for any preregistered study (other than pilot data included at Stage 1) was collected prior to the date of in-principle acceptance. For secondary analysis Registered Reports, authors should confirm that no data (other than pilot data included at Stage 1) was subjected to the preregistered analyses prior to in-principal acceptance.
- Introduction and Method
  - The Introduction from the study preregistration may be altered to update the literature review. The stated hypotheses may not be amended or appended. At Stage 2, any description of the rationale or proposed methodology that was written in future tense within the Stage 1 manuscript should be changed to past tense. Any textual changes to the Introduction or Method (e.g. correction of typographic errors) must be clearly marked in the Stage 2 submission. If accepted, the published manuscript will be accompanied by a version of the Introduction and Method with highlighted changes as an online supplement.

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- Results & Discussion

- The outcome of all registered analyses must be reported in the manuscript, except in rare instances where a registered and approved analysis is subsequently shown to be logically flawed or unfounded or circumstances have substantially changed. In such cases, the authors, reviewers, and editor must agree that a collective error of judgment was made and that the analysis is inappropriate. In such cases the analysis would still be mentioned in the Method but omitted with justification from the Results.
- Authors may wish to include additional analyses that were not included in the registered submission. For instance, a new analytic approach might become available between in-principle acceptance and Stage 2 review, or a particularly interesting and unexpected finding may emerge. Such analyses are admissible but must be clearly justified in the text, appropriately framed, and reported in a separate section of the Results titled “*Exploratory Analyses*.” Authors should be careful not to base their conclusions entirely on the outcome of statistically significant post hoc analyses.
- Authors reporting null hypothesis significance tests are required to report exact  $p$  values and effect sizes for all inferential analyses.

The Stage 2 submission will most likely be considered by the same reviewers as in Stage 1, but could also be assessed by new or different reviewers. Reviewers will be asked to assess:

1. Whether the data are amenable to testing the authors’ proposed hypotheses by satisfying the approved outcome-neutral conditions (such as quality checks, positive controls);
2. Whether the introduction, rationale, and stated hypotheses are the same as the approved Stage 1 submission (required);
3. Whether the authors adhered precisely to the registered experimental procedures;
4. Whether any unregistered post hoc analyses added by the authors are justified, methodologically sound, and informative; and
5. Whether the authors’ conclusions are justified given the data

**Reviewers are informed that editorial decisions will not be based on the perceived importance, novelty, or conclusiveness of the results.** While reviewers are free to enter such comments on the record, they will not influence editorial decisions. Reviewers at Stage 2 may suggest that authors report additional post hoc tests on their data; however, authors are not obliged to do so unless such tests are necessary to satisfy one or more of the Stage 2 review criteria.

### Withdrawal

It is possible that authors with in-principle acceptance may wish to withdraw their manuscript following or during data collection. Potential reasons may include major technical error or an inability to complete the study due to unforeseen circumstances. In such cases, manuscripts may be withdrawn at the authors’ discretion. However, the *Journal* will update the published registered study protocol to note that it has been withdrawn with a brief summary of the reason(s) for withdrawal. Partial withdrawals are not possible; i.e. authors cannot publish part of a registered study by selectively withdrawing one of the planned experiments. Such cases would lead to withdrawal of the entire paper.

Portions of these guidelines have been adapted from model guidelines developed by the Open Science Framework (OSF). For more information, visit <https://cos.io/rr/>.