

HARVARD health policy REVIEW

Miscellaneous Stylistic Notes

- **Abbreviations.**

- If an abbreviation is to be used, it should be introduced with the first mention of the phrase it stands in for and should be used consistently throughout the article.
 - The National Health Service (NHS) is one of the world's largest employers...The NHS employs 1.3 million people. [NOT: The National Health Service (NHS) is one of the world's largest employers...The National Health Service employs 1.3 million people.]
- If a term appears only once in the article, it is unnecessary to include its abbreviation.
 - Gross Domestic Product, not Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- Use US and UK (not U.S. and U.K.).

- **Commas.**

- In lists, *do not* place a comma after the second to last term.
 - Apples, oranges and pears. (NOT: apples, oranges, and pears.)
- Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (and, or, but, nor, yet, for, so) that separates two independent clauses (stand-alone sentences).
 - We will examine past findings, and then we will present our own research findings.
- *Do not* use a comma before a coordinating conjunction (and, or, but, nor, yet, for, so) when followed by a dependent clause (phrase, not stand-alone sentence).
 - We will examine past findings and present our own research findings. (NOT: We will examine past findings, and present our own research findings.)
- Be sure to obey these rules when they coexist.
 - We will examine cross-sectional data, longitudinal data and qualitative findings and will propose recommendations for action. (NOT...We will examine cross-sectional data, longitudinal data and qualitative findings, and will propose recommendations for action.)

- **American Spelling.** Our journal requires American, not British, spellings. The only exceptions are in direct quotations or the names of foreign organizations, initiatives, or publications.
 - “o” not “ou”: labor not labour, behavior not behaviour
 - “z” not “s”: organization not organisation, minimize not minimise, summarize not summarise, synthesize not synthesise
 - “er” not “re”: center not centre, theater not theatre

- **Quotation Marks.** We use American, not British, conventions.
 - *Always* use double, not single, quotation marks. The only exception is that single quotations are used to indicate quotations within quotations.
 - Punctuation marks like commas and periods always belong inside, not outside, quotation marks. Leave colons and outside quotation marks. Question marks belong inside quotation marks only if the question mark is part of the original quotation.

- **Numbers.**
 - Write out numbers under 100.
 - Five students convened.
 - 112 students convened.
 - 2 million workers, not two million workers.
 - Commas should be included for numbers in the thousands.
 - 3,256 (not 3256)
 - 5,000 (not 5000)
 - Do not write out currency amounts. \$25 not twenty-five dollars.
 - Do not write out percentages. 10% not ten percent / per cent.

- **Health Care.** *Always* use word “health care,” not “healthcare” or “health-care.”

- **e.g. and i.e.**
 - A comma should precede the use of e.g. or i.e., unless these terms fall inside parentheses.
 - Necessities, i.e. food and water.
 - Necessities (i.e. food and water).
 - Do not place a comma after e.g. or i.e.
 - (i.e. food and water) NOT (i.e., food and water)

- **Headings and Subheadings.**

- Headings and subheadings should all be written in capital letters, except conjunctions (e.g. and, or), prepositions (in, on, of, between), and articles (the, a, an). If a conjunction, preposition, or article is the first word of the heading or subheading, then it is capitalized.
 - The Issues Related to Patient Compliance
 - Tensions between Nurses and Physicians
 - Barriers to Cost-Effective Care
- If headings and subheadings are offset with any punctuation, they should be followed by periods, not colons.
 - Quantitative Data. NOT Quantitative Data:
 - See every section of these pages for more examples.

- **Lists.**

- We prefer bulleted lists to numbered lists. Use a numbered list only when the number is important and/or mentioned (e.g. “there are 8 categories...”) and/or when there are sub-points to each bullet. Change alphabetized lists to numbered lists (unless letters are integral to the meaning of the list).
- A line break should come before and follow a bulleted list, so that it is offset from the rest of text (as on these pages).

- **Tables, Graphs, Charts, Figures.**

- Label these clearly with numbers, not letters or roman numerals.
 - Table 1, not Table I.
 - Figure 2, not Figure B.
- If these are given as text boxes (which we can edit), make sure that headings and labels on charts follow the rules for headings and subheadings (as above).
- If these are not given as text boxes (i.e. we cannot edit them), speak to your authors to make sure that headings and labels on charts follow the rules for headings and subheadings (as above).