

PEER REVIEWER GUIDELINES

New Zealand College of Midwives Journal Te Hautaka o Te Kāreti o ngā Kaiwhakawhānau ki Aotearoa

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(Document updated January 2025)

INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand College of Midwives Journal | Te Hautaka o Te Kāreti o ngā Kaiwhakawhānau ki Aotearoa (the Journal) cannot continue without the work of our peer reviewers. The Journal Editorial Board is committed to supporting our team of peer reviewers to provide us with quality reviews, which support authors to produce articles that are of a high academic standard. We cannot maintain the Journal's quality and integrity without you, so thank you for agreeing to be a reviewer and for the time and effort you put into reviewing for the Journal.

Aims of the Journal

When an author submits a manuscript for consideration for publication in the Journal, [a co-editor](#) assesses it first to see whether it fits with the [Journal's Aims](#), word count and academic standard.

The Aims of the Journal are:

- to promote health as it relates to childbearing wāhine/women/people and their whānau/families
- to promote the view of childbirth as a normal life event for the majority of wāhine, and the midwifery professional's role in effecting this
- to provoke discussion of midwifery issues
- to support the development of Aotearoa New Zealand midwifery scholarship
- to support the development and dissemination of Aotearoa New Zealand and international research into midwifery and maternal and child health
- to provide evidence to support midwifery practice

Publication ethics

The Journal bases its [Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement](#) and its guidelines for authors, reviewers and editors on the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\) recommendations](#) and the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\) core practices](#).

THE REVIEW PROCESS

Appointing reviewers to a manuscript

If the manuscript looks suitable, we appoint two (or sometimes three) peer reviewers to review it – this is where you come in. When we invite you to review a manuscript, we have considered the topic and your areas of expertise. We keep a database of reviewers' areas of content or methodological expertise, so please let us know if yours changes.

We also consider when reviewers last reviewed a manuscript for the Journal, as we try to spread the workload. You will be contacted to see if you are available to complete a review for us in the expected timeframe. When you receive a request, we do appreciate a response within a few days to say whether or not you can do the review.

When you are invited to review a manuscript, please consider the following:

- Does my area of expertise match the topic?
- Do I have any conflict of interest? For example, do I know who the author is?
- Do I have time to do this, given that an estimated time of 5 hours is required to adequately review a manuscript and to prepare the feedback table?
- Can I complete the review in the usual turnaround time of 3 weeks?

If you agree to review a manuscript for the Journal, the secretariat will email the anonymised manuscript and a Reviewer Feedback Table. The date we would like to receive your review will also be confirmed. We usually allow approximately 3 weeks for a review but please talk with the editor or secretariat if circumstances mean you need an extended time to complete your review.

To help you identify whether authors have adhered to the Journal's criteria, it would be useful to familiarise yourself with the [Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement](#), the [Contributor Guidelines](#) and the [Aims of the Journal](#).

Confidentiality and ethical considerations

Before you start the review please note the following points:

- Manuscripts received for review must be kept confidential and not shared with others. Further, content from manuscripts reviewed must not be used by reviewers in their own research until such time as the manuscript has been published or is "in press".
- The identity of the authors is not supplied to the reviewers. Similarly, the identity of the reviewers are not provided to each other or to the authors or sub-editor.
- Do not put your name or any identifying details in the Reviewer Feedback Table. Please put all your comments and references to particular line numbers in the table and not in track changes (see Appendix 1 for an example.)
- If you suspect plagiarism or that the author has unlawfully copied all or part of another's (or their own) work this needs to be brought to the editor's attention. This is a serious issue. Similarly, if the content appears fraudulent this also needs to be communicated to the editor.
- If you have doubts about the ethics of the methods used for the research these concerns should also be shared with the editor.

Overview of your role as a reviewer

Your role is to carefully and objectively critique the manuscript in a formalised manner. Reviewers are expected to identify the strengths and weaknesses and indicate the improvements they consider necessary to support the quality of the manuscript.

It is not necessary for you to focus on elements such as spelling, grammar, referencing style etc., as detailed proofreading with editorial oversight is undertaken as part of the in-house processes, once the sub-editor is satisfied that the manuscript is acceptable for publishing.

WRITING THE REVIEW

Reviewer feedback table

As you read through the manuscript, it is helpful to be methodical in the way you provide feedback.

For ease of the sub-editor's response to the author, we ask that you use the Reviewer Feedback Table. Please do not use track changes on the manuscript.

1. Please consider, and provide feedback on, the bullet points below. These are listed on the Reviewer Feedback Table and are intended as a prompt for your comments (see Appendix 1 for an example).
2. Some sections will not be applicable; others may need a simple yes/no answer; and others will need more detailed comments.
3. The manuscript will be formatted with line numbers so if you have specific feedback about language, ideas or arguments, you can identify the line number/s and note these in the appropriate section, or in a list at the end of the Table.
4. The written comments are the most helpful for authors.

Relevance and contribution to knowledge

- Is the manuscript an informed contribution?
- Does the manuscript discuss, identify or examine a significant issue of relevance to the midwifery profession?
- Do the authors demonstrate a firm grasp of the pertinent issues?
- Are the ideas original in nature?
- Does the work provide fresh insights into the topic?
- Is any conflict of interest made explicit? (Details may be anonymised for review)
- Is the contribution of any funding bodies made explicit/identified/acknowledged? (Details may be anonymised for review)
- Is the research situated in its context e.g. a particular region, country?

Title

- Does the title reflect the content?

Abstract

- Is the abstract a well-structured summary of the manuscript?
- Does it conform to the Journal's required sub-headings: Introduction/Background, Aim/s, Method/s, Findings or Discussion, and Conclusion?
- If the abstract is more than the preferred 300-350 word count, are there areas that could be condensed or omitted?

Introduction/background

- Is there an appropriate introduction?
- Have the authors introduced the research question appropriately?
- Have they identified what prompted their research and why they thought it was important?
- Have they established the gap in the literature that their research fills?
- Are key concepts well defined?

Literature review

- Is there evidence of wide reading in the area?
- Is the literature recent and relevant to the topic?

Research question and aim/s

- Is the aim or research question appropriate and clear?

Study design and method/s

- Have the authors clearly stated the study design and methods?
- If a theoretical framework was used, was this well explained and appropriate to the research question?
- Have the authors given information about the method of recruitment, the sample size, participants, intervention, comparison and outcomes?
- Was the research process culturally appropriate and compliant with relevant cultural research guidelines?
- Are the ethical considerations made explicit? Have the authors stated the ethics approval number and the institution that granted ethical approval?
- If potentially identifying information is included, have the appropriate consents been obtained from study participants? (Refer to [Publication Ethics and Malpractice Statement](#).)
- In accordance with the Sex and Gender Equity in Research (SAGER) [guidelines](#), where possible has both sex and gender information been reported in the study design, data analyses, results, and interpretation of findings?

Findings and data analysis

- Have the authors identified the main findings, as per the research question?
- Do tables/figures show an accurate representation of the data?
- Are the findings well supported by the data analysis?

- If a quantitative study, have the authors identified the appropriate methods of statistical analysis?
- If a qualitative study, are the themes well described and supported by appropriate text excerpts?

Discussion

- Have the authors linked their findings to the research question?
- Have they identified how the findings “fit” with other knowledge/research on the topic?
- Have they considered the strengths and limitations of their project?
- Have they identified any future research possibilities?

Conclusion

- Have the authors arrived at reasonable conclusions, given their results?

References

- Are the references relevant to the topic?
- Is text based on the work of others appropriately attributed?
- Are references current?
- If the number of references exceeds the preferred number of 30-40, are there any that could be omitted?
- Are references in APA 7th edition style?

Structure and presentation

- Is the English of a high scholarly standard?
- Is a logical, well-structured argument developed?
- Is the manuscript clear and succinct?
- Have the authors used inclusive, culturally sensitive language that conveys respect and acknowledges diversity?
- Are Te Reo Māori words/phrases accompanied by a short definition or glossary?

Word count

- The preferred length of manuscripts is 4-5,000 words. If the word count exceeds this (especially if recommending additional information to be added), what areas of repetition or redundancy that can be condensed or omitted without losing important information? (Please note, however, that manuscripts of more than 5,000 words may be accepted at the editors’ discretion.)

Recommendation

When you have completed the review under the above headings, please state whether you think the manuscript is suitable for publication:

- **Accept** manuscript with revisions to editor’s satisfaction
- **Reject** manuscript

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

From review to publication

Once reviews have been received, we send each reviewer an anonymised copy of the other review/s, with the aim of providing feedback and an insight into a different perspective.

An editor is appointed to the manuscript to collate reviewers' comments and to communicate with the corresponding author regarding reviewer feedback and recommendations.

If the manuscript is deemed acceptable for the Journal, the editor works with the author to improve the overall academic standard of the manuscript through a process of critique, feedback and revision. Our goal is to encourage authors with this editorial process.

Once the editor has accepted the manuscript in principle, we inform the reviewers of the outcome. The manuscript then goes through a process of proofreading and in-house checks and is returned to the author for final confirmation and permission to publish. Authors are kept informed as their manuscript progresses through this process.

The Journal uses online, open-access, article-based publishing, so once an article is finalised for publication, it is first disseminated to College members and then uploaded to the [College website](#).

The editors build the "issue in progress" as manuscripts are accepted for publication. Each issue covers a calendar year.

Articles are searchable on the [Aotearoa New Zealand Midwifery Research Database](#) and by DOI. They are also indexed in the Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Scopus and ProQuest.

APPENDIX 1

Example of completed reviewer feedback table

(Please note: Comments have been compiled from various manuscripts and are representative only)

REVIEWER FEEDBACK TABLE

Title of manuscript title: *insert title here*

Instructions: Under the headings provided, please give feedback on the summarised points below (see Reviewer Guidelines for full details). Some sections will not be applicable; others may need a simple yes/no comment. If there is specific feedback about lines or paragraphs, note these in the appropriate section, or list at the end of the table.

*****Please do not use track changes on the manuscript for your feedback**

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| SUMMARY OF COMMENTS TO AUTHOR/S: Thank you for your submission of your article. This is a strong piece of research in an area that we currently know little about, so it could make a valuable contribution towards informing midwifery practice. The research methodology was comprehensive and interesting but I would have liked to read more about the recruitment and informed consent processes for women participants. | |
| SUMMARY OF COMMENTS TO SUB-EDITOR (optional): <i>(These comments will not be sent to the author/s)</i> Findings from this small study are not significant and perhaps would not be of interest to midwives as no new insights were made. This may be important research in the future and pave the way for larger studies with the potential to add value; however it is currently at infancy stage. Attention to structure would help bring it up to a higher scholarly standard. I also feel it could be restructured to improve flow and reduce overall word count. | |
| RELEVANCE/CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE | REVIEWER'S FEEDBACK (USE SPECIFIC <u>LINE NUMBERS</u>) |
| Is the manuscript an informed contribution? Does the manuscript discuss, identify, or examine a significant issue of relevance to the midwifery profession? Do the authors demonstrate a firm grasp of the pertinent issues? Are the ideas original in nature? Does the work provide fresh insights into the topic? | This is an excellent contribution to NZ maternity research and particularly for Māori wāhine. It will help inform midwives in their practice. Authors have been too specific towards location of research and not identified the dangers of generalisation of this small sample. Yes Yes |

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| <p>Is any conflict of interest made explicit?</p> <p>Is the contribution of any funding bodies made explicit/identified/acknowledged?</p> <p>Is the research situated in its context?</p> | <p>No conflict of interest stated</p> <p>Funding made explicit.</p> <p>Yes, it examines specific challenges for midwives in that region</p> |
| <p>TITLE: Does the title reflect the content?</p> | <p>The word 'affordable' is not reflected in manuscript. Suggest deleting it</p> |
| <p>ABSTRACT:</p> <p>Is the abstract a well-structured summary of the manuscript?</p> <p>Does it conform to the Journal's required sub-headings: Introduction/Background, Aim/s, Method/s, Findings or Discussion, and Conclusion?</p> <p>If the abstract is more than the preferred 300-350 word count, are there areas that could be condensed/ omitted?</p> | <p>The first sentence in the Background section belongs in Discussion section.</p> <p>Succinct outline of aims.</p> <p>Sentence on lines 20-22 is not necessary in the Abstract.</p> <p>In Findings lines 67-69: 'discussed evident abnormalities' but doesn't specify what abnormalities and how they were identified.</p> |
| <p>INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND:</p> <p>Is there an appropriate introduction?</p> <p>How have the authors introduced the research question?</p> <p>What prompted their research and why did they think it was important?</p> <p>Have they established the gap in the literature that their research fills?</p> <p>Are key concepts well defined?</p> | <p>Good introduction although could be made clearer how question and design align.</p> <p>Research question introduced a little vaguely, with ambiguity between aims.</p> <p>There are problems identified in rural women accessing timely care, which is affecting healthy outcomes. This particularly affects women the authors provide care for.</p> <p>Yes, they identified appropriate gaps.</p> <p>More definition is needed about concepts.</p> |
| <p>LITERATURE REVIEW:</p> <p>Is there evidence of wide reading in the area?</p> <p>Is the literature recent and relevant to the topic?</p> | <p>Wide reading – literature search identified that there are few convincing studies on this topic.</p> <p>Refs to Smith (1989) and Jones (1993) too old and been superseded by more recent studies by Brown et al.</p> |
| <p>RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIMS:</p> <p>Is the aim/research question appropriate and clear?</p> | <p>Aims complex and unclear.</p> <p>Suggest 'shed some light' replaced with more academic language</p> |

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| <p>STUDY DESIGN AND METHOD/S:</p> <p>Have the authors clearly stated the study design and methods?</p> <p>If a theoretical framework was used was this well explained and appropriate to the research question?</p> <p>Have the authors given information about the method of recruitment, sample size, participants, intervention, comparison and outcomes?</p> <p>Was the research process culturally appropriate and compliant with relevant cultural research guidelines?</p> <p>Are the ethical considerations made explicit? Have the authors stated the ethics approval number and the institution that granted ethical approval?</p> <p>If potentially identifying information is included, have the appropriate consents been obtained from participants?</p> | <p>Information given about participants but no mention of informed consent and that payment was made to participate. No discussion about autonomy to withdraw etc. although stated two participants withdrew.</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>Unclear if participants were all first time mothers or only some of them? And no mention of how were they recruited</p> <p>Implied process was culturally sensitive but didn't state how this was achieved.</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>No identifying information included.</p> |
| <p>FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS:</p> <p>Have the authors identified the main findings, as per the research question?</p> <p>Do tables/figures show an accurate representation of the data?</p> <p>Are the findings well supported by the data analysis?</p> <p>If a quantitative study, have the authors identified the appropriate methods of statistical analysis?</p> <p>If a qualitative study, are the themes well described and supported by appropriate text excerpts?</p> | <p>Data collection section would have benefited from descriptive statistics regarding data collected</p> <p>Tables accurately represent data. Table 2, line 240, missing data in Odds Ratio column</p> <p>I would like to see more detail in analysis section. How was analysis conducted? Findings don't explicitly correlate with objectives, e.g....</p> <p>This section seemed unnecessarily long and repetitive.</p> <p>Yes but not stated whether or not names or pseudonyms used</p> |
| <p>DISCUSSION:</p> <p>Have the authors linked their findings to the research question?</p> <p>Have they identified how the findings "fit" with other knowledge/research on the topic?</p> <p>Have they considered the strengths and limitations of their project?</p> <p>Have they identified any future research possibilities?</p> | <p>Yes outlined their findings and the significant learnings to inform future studies.</p> <p>Mostly but could clarify lines 382-385 to align with lines 51-53</p> <p>Also line 456 'significantly' may be misleading as results were found to not be statistically significant.</p> <p>Not stated. Please add paragraph demonstrating strengths/weaknesses.</p> <p>Author has identified a gap in the literature, so the potential for further research is inferred but not made explicit.</p> |

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| <p>CONCLUSION:</p> <p>Have the authors arrived at reasonable conclusions, given their results?</p> | <p>Conclusions are interesting but not sure that they came out of this study.</p> |
| <p>REFERENCES:</p> <p>Are the references relevant to the topic?</p> <p>Is text based on others' work appropriately attributed?</p> <p>Are references current?</p> <p>If references exceed the preferred number of 30-40, are there any that could be omitted?</p> <p>Are references in APA 7th edition style?</p> | <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Jones et al. 1985, have had more recent research published. Suggest investigating this.</p> <p>Hopkins et al., and Anderson et al. are not cited in text. Johnson is superseded by Allan; Rogers & Brown refs are not necessary.</p> <p>They appear to be in a variety of styles. Please check.</p> |
| <p>STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION:</p> <p>Is the English of a high scholarly standard?</p> <p>Is a logical, well-structured argument developed?</p> <p>Is the manuscript clear and succinct?</p> <p>Have authors used inclusive, culturally sensitive language that conveys respect and acknowledges diversity?</p> <p>Are Te Reo Māori words/phrases accompanied by a short definition or glossary?</p> | <p>Mostly. In lines 407 and 412, suggest using more academic terms</p> <p>It would add value to add subheadings in Discussion section, to harness key ideas and make them flow for a sense of cohesion</p> <p>Language used is respectful to all cultures represented in the study group. Authors could strengthen sentence on Line 201 by acknowledging the challenges for same-sex couples in accessing this service.</p> <p>Definition missing for tikanga, Line 51.</p> |
| <p>WORD COUNT:</p> <p>Preferred word count of manuscript is 4-5,000. If the word count exceeds this (especially if recommending additional information to be added), what areas of repetition or redundancy can be condensed/omitted without losing important information?</p> | <p>The Findings section is repetitive and could be condensed. The Literature Review is probably longer than appropriate for this study.</p> |
| <p>REVIEWER'S RECOMMENDATION (please state):</p> <p>Accept manuscript with revisions to editor's satisfaction</p> <p>Reject</p> | <p>Accept manuscript with minor revisions</p> |