

## **Endorsing CONSORT in your journal**

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Does your journal publish articles that report the results of randomised trials?

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CONSORT can help make sure these articles include all the information your readers need.

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In this video, we'll tell you what CONSORT is,

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why many journals endorse CONSORT,

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and how to endorse CONSORT in your journal.

## **What CONSORT is**

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CONSORT is a reporting guideline.

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Reporting guidelines are a list of minimum items that a person needs to fully understand a trial.

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There are lots of reporting guidelines, each for a specific study type.

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CONSORT is the reporting guideline for reporting the results of a randomised controlled trial.

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For other study designs that your journal publishes, visit the EQUATOR Network for help in finding appropriate reporting guidelines.

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The CONSORT statement is a checklist of 30 items.

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In the actual checklist, each item is given a line or two of description.

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For example, item two, trial registration, is the name of trial registry, identifying number with URL, and date of registration.

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Item 22 asks for a flow diagram to show exactly what happened to all the participants in the trial.

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CONSORT includes a flow diagram template that authors can adapt. This lets them show clearly how many participants were randomly assigned, received the intended treatment, and were analysed; and any exclusions and losses to follow up.

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CONSORT doesn't tell authors how to write about each item. They can write in their own voice or your journal's preferred style.

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It also doesn't tell authors the order that the information has to be in, although it does suggest which information readers would prefer to see in the methods or in the results.

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CONSORT doesn't limit what authors can write about. It lists the minimum essential information, but authors can include more details

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and authors can use CONSORT to write articles for any journal that accepts trials. They will always be able to follow CONSORT *and* your journal's instructions.

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Importantly, CONSORT does not mandate specific methods.

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It does not specify how a trial should have been *conducted*. It just makes sure authors report exactly what they did. This lets readers judge whether the results are valid and relevant to them.

### **Why journals endorse CONSORT**

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Hundreds of biomedical journals endorse CONSORT. You might be wondering – why?

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CONSORT was created by groups of people who work with clinical trials and their results, like trialists, statisticians, systematic reviewers, healthcare professionals, patients, and funders.

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So when authors use CONSORT to report their trial, all of these different audiences will be able to find the information they need. They can use the trial results, so the article has impact.

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Patients can understand their healthcare options. Policymakers can include the work in their practise guidance.

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Systematic reviewers can include the work in reviews and meta-analyses,

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and healthcare professionals can use the work to inform their clinical practise.

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Complete reporting in trials submitted to your journal also means you'll have less back and forth with authors asking for missing information during the peer review process.

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This means there's less work for your editorial office and for peer reviewers,

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and a smoother and quicker publishing experience for authors.

### **How to endorse CONSORT**

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So how exactly can you endorse CONSORT?

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You could include text in your journal's Instructions for Authors asking authors to use CONSORT when reporting randomised trials,

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and you may want to ask authors to upload a completed copy of the CONSORT checklist.

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Next to each item they can write which page of the draft that information can be found on.

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On our website, you can find suggested wording to include in your journal's Instructions for Authors.

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This includes a link to our website, where authors can find a downloadable, fillable copy of the CONSORT checklist, and additional training and support.

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You could then ask your editorial team or peer reviewers to check the completeness of reporting using CONSORT as a guide. This job is made easier if authors upload a completed checklist.

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You could write an editorial promoting and explaining your decision to endorse CONSORT. You can find some examples of editorials like this on our website.

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You could also include the CONSORT checklist and a link to our website in your resources for peer reviewers. The website includes training for reviewers on how to use CONSORT and the importance of complete reporting.

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This is the end of this training video on what CONSORT is, why journals endorse CONSORT, and how to endorse CONSORT in your journal.

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The 2025 update to SPIRIT and CONSORT was funded by the MRC NIHR. Thank you for endorsing CONSORT to make sure the trial reports that your journal publishers contain all the important information that readers need. By building a better evidence base today, we're ensuring better quality research in the future.