

Author Guidelines

Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing (DCCN) welcomes experienced and new authors who would like to develop a unique topic of interest to critical care nurses. Because we recognize the importance of our authors, we provide many special editorial services that will assist you in developing a manuscript that best meets the *DCCN* acceptance criteria. These services include providing you with individual feedback on an outline, review criteria used by the board members to evaluate manuscripts, timely notification of the decision, a copy of the reviewers comments, and timely printing of your article. In addition, *DCCN* is a peer-reviewed, refereed journal with evaluation of all submitted manuscripts by several nurse-colleague reviewers.

Correspondence

Address all questions and submissions to Vickie Miracle, RN, EdD, 424 Eastgate Village Wynde, Louisville, KY 40223 or via e-mail to vmiracle@aol.com. Please include your return address and both work and home phone numbers in all correspondence.

Planning

Submit Outline. Send a query letter describing your idea with a one-page outline including main headings and subheadings to the Editor. The Editor will provide individual feedback on how to develop your idea to best meet the *DCCN* formats. At this stage, we will also send a copy of the *DCCN* acceptance criteria that are used by the Review Board to evaluate manuscripts, the criteria can assist in your manuscript development. (Although advisable, the query and outline are optional. If you have studied and used the *DCCN* style and have already completed the manuscript, you may submit it without querying in advance.)

Determine the *DCCN* department that is most relevant to your idea by reviewing the list of departments. Develop the manuscript around *one* main idea. Avoid all-inclusive articles, which are often broad and too basic for our advanced readers; develop a unique aspect or slant on the idea. Often, one general idea can be developed into several specific articles covering different topics. State this unique idea clearly in the introduction and summary of your paper.

Writing

Use Headings. Organize your paper using numerous headings and subheadings. *DCCN* is a clinically applied nursing journal; therefore, the headings should focus on nursing decisions, actions, and strategies. When possible, use action headings that clearly describe your recommendations to the reader for caring for the type of patient being described, developing a similar project, or solving a problem.

Write for the DCCN Audience. Mention in your article how the critical care nursing leader—such as the advanced clinical nurse, educator, manager, researcher, and clinical nurse specialist—can use your ideas. Also, describe how your ideas could be

used in many critical care areas such as medical, surgical, cardiac, trauma, neuroscience, pediatric, neonatal, and other specialties.

The depth of the material should be for advanced nurses. Do not repeat basic material; assume the reader already knows material taught in "core" critical care courses.

Describe *how* the nurse can do something rather than just that she or he should. Use examples to help the reader identify the application to clinical practice.

Focus on Your Ideas. Develop *your* ideas on the topic. The main headings should be your points, supported by reasoning, literature, or research. Blend the literature and theory into your ideas rather than placing all the literature in one section. Avoid a long review of the literature and superfluous quotes, as they overshadow your expertise.

Use Figures and Tables. Provide figures and tables that enable the reader to comprehend the information quickly. Emphasize your visual ideas with tables and/or camera-ready art. Draw an important concept in a figure and list important information in a table. To list points, use a bulleted list in text.

Check Accuracy. Authors are responsible for accuracy of their manuscripts; therefore, ask colleagues to help review your draft before submission. Ask for feedback on accuracy, organization, and clarity, and revise it as necessary prior to submission to the *DCCN* Editorial Board.

Manuscript Preparation

Typing/Computer Style. Please use normal manuscript style with double spacing of *all* lines in the manuscript, including references. Submit the article elements in the following order: Article title, author contact information, author bios, abstract, body of article, acknowledgments, references, figures, tables. Place figures and tables on their own pages, ie, one per page. Spell out all abbreviations the first mention; add unit names to all data or values.

Prepare your document in MS Word. Use the style of manuscripts printed in *DCCN*, including:

- -Main headings are in bold at the left margin, subheadings are italic at the left margin, and sub-subheadings are indented into the paragraph in italics.
- -Paragraphs are indented with a single tab (do not insert multiple tabs).
- -Reference numbers are styled in the text body in superscript.
- -Use regular type with no other hidden codes beyond those listed above. Do not use tab position changes, line space changes, font changes, underline, or any other code changes within your text; these codes may interfere with the typesetter codes.
- -Create tables using the computer's table feature.

References. Include only those references cited in the manuscript. Include references after all dosages, side effects, or other medical information and to reference studies or publications upon which your manuscript is based. In the text, use superscript numbers in consecutive order. Use the same number each time you cite the reference; do not use *ibid* or *op. cit.* Accuracy and completeness of references is the responsibility of the author.

Style references according to the *American Medical Association Manual of Style* (9th ed.). Sample book and article references follow:

1. -Smith NT. Tips for a successful patient analysis. *DCCN*. 2001;20(1):4-12.
2. -Jones LD, Ruthy JK, Mouse LA. *Essentials of Nursing and Employee Management*. Philadelphia: Lippincott; 2000.

Tables and Figures. Number each table or figure. Tables are illustrations, which include words or numbers only. Figures include line drawings, photographs, or other material that cannot be typed. Cite all figures and tables within text (eg, see Figure 1).

Include a caption for all figures and a title for all tables. If submitting photographs, only include black and white images. Figures must be camera ready from laser printouts or black drawing ink on white paper with professional looking lines and type; photocopies cannot be used. On the back of all figures, *very lightly done so as to leave no imprint on the face*, identify each illustration with number, author's name, and a directional arrow to indicate the figure's orientation.

Figures may be submitted electronically. Images must be high resolution (300 dpi) and saved in either TIFF or EPS (TIFF format is preferred). Low-resolution JPEGs are not acceptable for publication.

Manuscript Submission

Submit the manuscript to *DCCN* for sole consideration. Please send the original manuscript and three copies and a diskette; retain a copy for your files. Include a large, self-addressed, stamped envelope to speed return of the manuscript after review.

Attach the following front pages to your manuscript:

1. -Title Page. List the suggested *DCCN* department, article title, and all authors' names with credentials.
2. -Author page. List the contact author, address, and phone numbers for work and home. Include the credit line in sentence format for all authors, including the name, degrees/ credentials, current position and employer, plus an additional sentence for any experience related to the topic of the article. (See the *DCCN* style for credit lines in published articles.)
3. -Lead-In Paragraph Page. Include a two- or three-sentence paragraph that captures the reader's interest and describes the main nursing focus of the manuscript. (See sample lead paragraphs in *DCCN*).

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Review. We will notify you of receipt of your manuscript. If it is not accepted, we will tell you the reasons why not and make specific suggestions for revision.

Computer Disk Submission. *DCCN* uses a state-of-the-art, computer typesetting system. In the final step after acceptance, all final manuscripts must be submitted on computer disk in MS Word format. More information will be sent to authors at the time of acceptance.

Editing. Accepted manuscripts will be edited to conform with *DCCN* and *AMA* style guidelines.

Questions

The Editorial Board members of *DCCN* are committed to helping you to develop a high-quality article for *DCCN's* audience. Do not hesitate to ask them, or the Editor, for help in developing your manuscript.