

Submission guidelines

we do not impose strict limits on word count or page number. However, we strongly recommend that you write concisely and stick to the following guidelines:

- Articles should ideally be no more than 11 typeset pages.
- The main text should be no more than 4,500 words (not including Abstract, Methods, References, and figure legends)
- The title should be no more than 20 words, describe the article's main message using a single scientifically accurate sentence, and not contain puns or idioms.
- The abstract should be no more than 200 words.
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Abstract

Please do not include any references in your Abstract. Ensure it serves as a general introduction to the topic and as a brief, non-technical summary of the main results and their implications. The abstract should be unstructured, i.e. should not contain sections or subheadings.

Manuscript

Your manuscript text file should start with a title page that shows author affiliations and contact information, identifying the corresponding author with an asterisk. We recommend that each section includes an introduction of referenced text that expands on the background of the work. Some overlap with the Abstract is acceptable.

For the main body of the text, there are no specific requirements. You can organize it in a way that best suits your research. However, the following structure will be suitable in many cases:

- Introduction
- Results (with subheadings)
- Discussion (without subheadings)
- Methods

You should then follow the main body of text with:

- References (limited to 60 references, though not strictly enforced)
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Author contributions (names must be given as initials)
- Data availability statement (mandatory)
- Additional Information (including a Competing Interests Statement)
- Figure legends (these are limited to 350 words per figure)
- Tables (maximum size of one page)

References

In your reference list, you should:

- Include all authors unless there are six or more, in which case only the first author should be given, followed by 'et al.'
- List authors by last name first, followed by a comma and initials (followed by full stops) of given names.
- Use Roman text for Article and dataset titles, with only the first word of the title having an initial capital and written exactly as it appears in the work cited, ending with a full stop.
- Use italics for book titles, giving all words in the title an initial capital.
- Use italics for journal and data repository names, abbreviating them according to common usage (with full stops).
- Use bold for volume numbers and the subsequent comma.
- Give the full-page range (or article number), where appropriate.