

# Trauma Performance Improvement

## Author Guidelines

*Trauma Performance Improvement*, a specialty channel of *The Cureus Journal of Medical Science*, covers all aspects of quality improvement in trauma care. It provides trauma program leaders with a forum for reporting efforts to (1) improve the safety, efficiency or effectiveness of care provided to injured patients and (2) increase the effectiveness of trauma performance improvement and patient safety (PIPS) programs.

All submissions to *Trauma Performance Improvement* are peer-reviewed by experts in trauma PI methodology and practice. All published articles are indexed in PubMed Central, PubMed and Google Scholar and are freely available online with no barriers to access.

**Quality improvement reports** published in *Trauma Performance Improvement* focus on initiatives to:

- Improve care coordination and timeliness
- Reduce complication rates and prevent errors
- Implement new practice management guidelines
- Increase compliance with existing care protocols
- Improve trauma data quality and use data more effectively
- Adopt innovative tools for improving injury care
- Improve trauma care at the state/regional system level
- Strengthen the components of a trauma PIPS program
- Sustain quality or performance gains over the long term
- Resolve quality or safety problems identified during site surveys
- Foster a culture of quality and safety within a trauma program

*Trauma Performance Improvement* also accepts:

- **Quality research** articles — biomedical research that creates new knowledge about an issue that impacts quality of care in trauma
- **Quality tools** articles — prescriptive articles that explain how to conduct trauma PI, ideally filling a gap in current standards and education

- **Research posters** — conference posters on any aspect of trauma PI (for more information, see [“How to Submit a Research Poster”](#) below)

One of the main goals of *Trauma Performance Improvement* is to facilitate constructive feedback for trauma PI programs. The pre-publication review process is led by an editorial board of national leaders in trauma quality. In addition, a unique “post-publication review” enables discussion by the entire trauma community. The overall process ensures articles receive useful input from a wide range of professional peers, ultimately helping authors strengthen their program’s PI efforts.

## Article Format

*Trauma Performance Improvement* publishes reports on initiatives to improve quality and performance in injury care. This suggests an intuitive approach to organizing article content:

- *What was the problem?*
- *What did you do about it?*
- *What did you find?*
- *What does this mean for your trauma program and others?*

In terms of article structure, authors should use the following format:

**Title.** Clearly and concisely describe the focus and aim of your PI initiative.

**Abstract.** Summarize key information using the following format: *Introduction, Methods, Results, Conclusions*. Abstracts are limited to 3,500 characters (or about 400 to 500 words).

**Introduction.** Describe the problem your initiative was meant to address, any relevant background information and the specific aim of the project.

**Materials and methods.** Describe the intervention in enough detail that it could be reproduced by other trauma programs. Describe any relevant information about the care context and the team that implemented the intervention. Describe how you planned to assess the impact or effectiveness of the intervention, including the process or outcome measures you selected.

**Results.** Describe the impact of your intervention, including the impact on your process or outcome measures. Note the timeframe of the project (starting point, ending point and any key milestones). Describe any associations you observed between interventions and outcomes, and note any unintended consequences. In addition, describe any modifications you made to the intervention as the project progressed.

**Discussion.** Summarize your main findings. Assess the effectiveness of the intervention and describe possible reasons why the project did or did not achieve its aim. Explain why the results

may or may not be generalizable to other care settings. Evaluate the potential impact of this intervention on patients, care providers and systems.

**Conclusions.** Summarize the potential value of your findings, for your trauma program and other trauma centers. Suggest possible next steps for implementation or further study.

For complete information on *Trauma Performance Improvement* format and style, see “[How to Submit an Article](#)” below. For a deeper look at writing about healthcare performance improvement, authors are encouraged to explore the [SQUIRE](#) guidelines.

## Policies and Publication Ethics

*Trauma Performance Improvement* is a specialty channel of the *Cureus Journal of Medical Science*. As such, it adheres to Cureus policies on publication ethics and related issues. Key policies are summarized below. For more information, see the [Cureus Author Guide](#).

### **Authorship**

*Trauma Performance Improvement* adheres to the requirements of authorship established by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). In summary, authors of an article must have (1) made a substantial contribution to study conception and design, data acquisition, or data analysis/interpretation; (2) participated in drafting the article or revising it critically; and (3) given final approval for the published version. For full details, see the [ICMJE Uniform Requirements](#). Any contributor who does not meet the criteria for authorship may be listed in the Acknowledgements section (see Step 9 of “How to Submit an Article” below). Examples include a person who provided technical help or writing assistance alone.

### **Ethical Approval**

Since quality improvement is generally distinct from research, it is expected that many papers submitted to *Trauma Performance Improvement* will not require approval from an institutional review board (IRB) or hospital ethics committee. However, your IRB may require approval depending on the method used and the research question asked. Authors are encouraged to:

- Follow their institution’s ethical approval guidelines
- Check with their organization’s IRB or equivalent committee on any required approvals

### **Competing Interests and Funding Sources**

Authors are required to declare all competing interests during the article submission process. A complete list of funding sources (institutional, corporate, grants, etc.) and relevant relationships and financial activities must be detailed in the Ethics Statements and Conflict of Interest Disclosures section of the submission (see Step 10 of “How to Submit an Article” below).

### **Copyright and Permissions**

*Trauma Performance Improvement* publishes all accepted articles under a [CC BY License](#). If you wish to republish any previously published text, figures, tables, supplementary information, etc., under a CC BY license, you must obtain permission from the original publisher.

### **Plagiarism and Fraud**

*Trauma Performance Improvement* does not tolerate plagiarism, data or figure manipulation, knowingly providing incorrect information, copyright infringement, inaccurate author attributions, attempts to inappropriately manipulate the peer review process, fraud and libel. We reserve the right to retract articles that are found to be fraudulent or in serious breach of one of our policies.

### **Open Access and Publication Fees**

*Cureus Journal of Medical Science* is an open access publication. Papers accepted for publication by *Trauma Performance Improvement* are freely available online with no barriers to access.

There are no subscription fees under the open access publishing model. Instead, *Trauma Performance Improvement* authors or their institutions pay an Article Processing Charge (APC) to support publication costs. The APC model is key to making articles available to the widest audience possible. This model has been adopted in whole or in part by a wide range of medical journals, including journals in the field of trauma.

**The APC for articles published in *Trauma Performance Improvement* is \$1,600 USD.**

The APC is assessed after an article has completed the editorial and peer review processes and has been accepted for publication. Authors of accepted articles will be contacted by email to make payment arrangements. Authors based in developing countries are eligible for a discounted APC or a full waiver of the fee.

## How to Submit an Article

To submit an article to *Trauma Performance Improvement*, visit [Cureus.com](https://Cureus.com) and follow the instructions below.

- 1. Create a Cureus account.** You must register with Cureus before you submit an article. To create an account, visit [Cureus.com](https://Cureus.com) and select “Join Now” in the top right corner of the page.
- 2. Begin the submission process.** After you have created a Cureus account (or logged in to your existing account), click the “Submit Research” button in the top right corner of the page. You may save and exit the submission process at any time.
- 3. Go through the “Getting Started” screens.**
  - **First screen:** Check “No, this is not a competition entry.”
  - **Second screen:** Check “Yes, this is a channel article” and several options will appear below. Click “Other” (the third choice) and then click “Trauma Performance Improvement”.
  - **Third screen:** Click the “Select Article Type” drop-down menu and select “Original Article.”
  - **Fourth screen:** Confirm your selections and then click “Next.”
- 4. Enter the title of your paper.** Clearly and concisely describe the focus and aim of your performance improvement initiative. Ideally, the title should indicate an aim to improve some aspect of care. Titles are limited to 250 characters.
- 5. Enter the abstract.** Summarize the content of your article using the following format: *Introduction, Methods, Results, Conclusions*. (You can use the “Styles” drop-down menu to create these subheadings.) Abstracts are limited to 3,500 characters (about 400 to 500 words).
- 6. Select categories for your article.** Choose one to three categories that describe the content of your article. (Note: Most authors submitting to *Trauma Performance Improvement* will include “Trauma” and “Quality improvement” among their category selections.)
- 7. Add keywords to help others find your article.** Enter a keyword and click “Add.” You can add up to 10 keywords.
- 8. List all co-authors.** Add a co-author by entering his or her email address and clicking “Search.” If he or she is not already registered with Cureus, you will be prompted to fill in some temporary details (co-authors will have the opportunity to update these later). As the submitting author, you are also considered the default primary author. To designate a different co-author as the primary author, click their name and drag it to the top of the list. (Note: While you may choose to make someone else the primary author, you will remain the corresponding author.)

**9. Add an acknowledgement statement (if needed).** Are there individuals who contributed to your project but do not meet the criteria for [Authorship](#) outlined in the “Policies and Publication Ethics” section above? You may list these contributors in an “Acknowledgements” statement. Examples include a person whose sole contribution was technical help or writing assistance.

**10. Complete ethics statements and financial disclosures.** Self-explanatory.

**11. Enter the text of your article.** In the following screens, enter the text of your *Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion* and *Conclusions* sections. You can also add any supplemental information in the optional *Appendices* section. (Note: There is no need to add these section names. Section headings will be added automatically by the system.)

- **Citations:** References should be cited using square brackets and placed either mid-sentence or at the end of a sentence before the period. For example:
  - Mid-sentence: “References can be placed mid-sentence [1] if needed.”
  - End of sentence: “References can also be placed at the end of the sentence [5,9-12].”
- **(Note:** You will enter the actual reference list in Step 13 below.)

**12. Insert any media.** You can add figures, tables or videos to your article. To add media, place your cursor at the desired location within a text field. Then click either the “Insert Figure” button, the “Insert Table” button or the “Insert Video” button in the text field toolbar. You will then be prompted to upload or paste the media item and add a title and optional legend.

Each article is permitted up to 25 media items. You can move figures, tables and videos up or down in the text by clicking the arrow buttons embedded in each media item.

Each figure, table or video must be mentioned in the paragraph immediately preceding it. This can be done parenthetically or within a sentence. For example:

- Parenthetically: “The trauma program implemented a new MTP protocol (Figure 2).”
- Within sentence: “The trauma program implemented a new MTP protocol, as shown in Figure 2.”

For complete information on inserting and referencing media items, please see the [Cureus Media Guide](#).

**13. Add references.** You can add references one-by-one using the drop-down menu, or you can paste your entire reference list into the Reference Converter. Original articles can include a maximum of 30 references. Please use the following format:

**Article within a journal**

Chidester SJ, Williams N, Wang W, Groner JI: A pediatric massive transfusion protocol. *J Trauma Acute Care Surg.* 2012, 73:1273-1277.  
10.1097/TA.0b013e318265d267

**Website**

Mass casualty incidents and the overlap between trauma systems and hospital disaster preparedness. (2017). Accessed: May 14, 2018:  
<http://www.bifurcatedneedle.com/new-blog/2017/10/2/mass-casualty-incident-and-the-overlap-between-trauma-systems-and-hospital-disaster-preparedness>

**Complete book**

Lighter DE: Basics of health care performance improvement: a Lean Six Sigma approach. Jones & Bartlett Learning, Burlington, MA; 2013.

**14. List suggested reviewers.** The submitting author is required to invite a minimum of five individuals with requisite domain knowledge to review the article. Invite a reviewer by entering his or her email address and clicking “Search.” If he or she is not already registered with Cureus, you will be prompted to enter some basic information (name, location and specialty). Suggested reviewers will receive an email inviting them to review your paper. *Trauma Performance Improvement* and *Cureus* will also invite additional reviewers with relevant domain knowledge to ensure a balanced and efficient review.

**15. Review your submission.** The summary contains a section-by-section outline of your article. You can make changes by jumping directly to any section of the submission. If any issues with references or citations are detected (e.g., missing references or incorrectly formatted citations), you will receive a notification and a list of the issues to be resolved.

**16. Submit your article.** Please preview your article draft one last time and make sure everything looks good. When you are satisfied, click the “Submit for Editorial Preview” button. Once your article has been approved by our editorial team, the review invitation emails will be sent out and the peer review process will begin.

## How to Submit a Research Poster

*Trauma Performance Improvement* also publishes research posters on all aspects of quality improvement in trauma care.

Research posters do not go through peer review and they are not indexed. However, if you have prepared a poster presentation for a conference or symposium, publishing it on *Trauma Performance Improvement* will allow you to share your PI work with a wider audience.

To submit a research poster for publication, visit [Cureus.com](https://www.cureus.com) and follow the instructions below.

- 1. Create a Cureus account.** You must register with Cureus before you submit a poster. To create an account, select “Join Now” in the top right corner of the page.
- 2. Visit the *Trauma Performance Improvement* channel page.** On the Cureus home page, mouse over “Channels” in the top navigation, look under “Other” and click “Trauma Performance Improvement” — OR [click here](#).
- 3. On the *Trauma Performance Improvement* channel page, click the blue “Submit Your Research” button.**
- 4. In the dialogue box, click the drop-down menu and select “Poster”.** Then click “Submit”.
- 5. In the screens that follow, provide the requested information.**