

Author guidelines

This document outlines the writing, submission, and publication process for papers submitted to *Veterinary Evidence*. For any queries please [contact the editorial office](#).

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Beginning the writing process

Aims and scope

Please read the journal's [Aims and scope](#) to ensure the relevance of your paper before submitting it to *Veterinary Evidence*.

Submission templates

All papers written for *Veterinary Evidence* are done so using [templates](#). This makes writing your paper as simple as possible, as each section of the template is clearly explained.

Please download the relevant template to begin your writing process. Papers should be written using UK English.

Reporting guidelines

Authors must adhere to published reporting guidelines when structuring their manuscripts:

- [CONSORT Statement](#) (randomised controlled trials)
- [STROBE](#) (observational studies)
- [STROBE-VET](#) (observational studies - veterinary extension)

- [PRISMA](#) (systematic reviews)
- [REFLECT Statement](#) (randomised controlled trials for livestock and food safety)
- [STARD](#) (diagnostic accuracy studies)
- [MOOSE](#) (meta-analyses of observational studies)
- [STREGA](#) (gene-disease association studies)
- [COREQ](#) (qualitative research)
- [ARRIVE Guidelines](#) (for in vivo research)

How to write a knowledge summary

What is a Knowledge Summary?

In the veterinary profession, as in human medicine, a great deal of time is spent making decisions in a complex and often uncertain environment. Family physicians may need answers for up to 333,000 questions per year.^[1] For veterinary practitioners dealing with more than just one animal species, the need for answers are bound to be as numerous. The challenge to keep up with the latest research is immense.

The interface between practitioners and evidence-based resources can be strengthened by the use of Critically Appraised Topics (CATs).^[2,3] These are short critical summaries of the best available information on a defined clinical question. They provide a concise conclusion which should be easily accessible by clinical staff.^[4]

We have decided to call these CATs “Knowledge Summaries” (so as not to be confused with the cat species) in that they are summarised resources to address information needs.

What if there is insufficient evidence to answer my clinical question?

If no primary research literature is found following a search of the literature then that is an important finding. Particularly if it is an important and common question that can have a high impact on patient care. The value of finding a lack of evidence (little or no published literature) is often underestimated and overlooked - it is a key finding to drive further research and informs the current knowledge or lack of.

We are of the stance that a Knowledge Summary with no evidence or not enough evidence is still a valuable outcome that should be shared with the community.

How can I get started with writing a Knowledge Summary?

The first step to writing a Knowledge Summary is defining your question. Pick one of our [clinical queries](#) ([or write your own](#)) then [contact us](#) stating your question.

The following resources have been created by RCVS Knowledge to help guide authors with writing a Knowledge Summary. For any queries or for more guidance and information please contact the [editorial office](#).

6 steps to writing a knowledge summary

Read our bite-size guide [6 steps to writing a Knowledge Summary](#) for an overview of the Knowledge Summary writing process. This guide covers the main steps and provides links to more in-depth resources.

Guidance for writing the Clinical Bottom Line

Within the Knowledge Summary template you will be asked for a clinical bottom line. The following guidance will help you to write this section:

The strength of evidence provided by a study type is dependent upon the clinical question being addressed as indicated in Table 1. It is also dependent upon how well the study was designed and implemented. Factors to be considered in the study design may include the sample size, bias, blinding, control of variables, appropriate use of statistical tests, the power of the study, the accuracy and precision of any measurements made, the sample population and other components that may reduce the strength of evidence provided by the study.

When composing the clinical bottom line it is important that the strength of the body evidence provided by the studies is assessed and categorised according to Table 2 below. The outcomes from the studies should then be clearly stated. Conclusions and additional comments based upon the strength of evidence and the outcomes reported should then be made.

Table 1: Level of evidence table, adapted from the Oxford Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine's levels of evidence

Strength of evidence	Clinical question being addressed					
	Treatment	Prognosis	Risk	Diagnosis	Prevalence	Incidence
1 (strongest)	Systematic review and meta-analysis	Systematic review and meta-analysis	Systematic review and meta-analysis	Systematic review and meta-analysis	Systematic review and meta-analysis	Systematic review and meta-analysis
2	Randomised controlled trial	Cohort study	Cohort study	Diagnostic test evaluation study	Cross-sectional study	Cohort study

3	Cohort study	–	Case-control study	–	–	–
4	Case report or case study	Case report or case study	Case report or case study	Case report or case study	Case report or case study	Case report or case study
5 (weakest)	Opinion consensus	Opinion consensus	Opinion consensus	Opinion consensus	Opinion consensus	Opinion consensus

Modified from Rees Gwen (2019)

Table 2: Significance of the four levels of collective evidence used in the clinical bottom line

Strength of evidence provided by the study designs	Definition
Strong	High level of confidence that the estimate of the effect reported by the studies lies close to the true effect.
Moderate	Moderate confidence that the estimate of effect reported by the studies lies close to the true effect.
Weak	Limited confidence that the estimate of effect reported by the studies lies close to the true effect. Additional appropriate studies are required.
Zero	No studies available.

Modified from *Balshem et al (2011)*

When writing a Knowledge Summary, authors will be asked to fill in the below section within the submission template:

Figure 1: Clinical bottom line submission template

Question

(In PICO format)

Clinical bottom line

- **The category of research question was treatment/prognosis/risk/diagnosis/prevalence/incidence**

Indicate the category of research question that was addressed

- **The number and type of study designs that were critically appraised were...**

Indicate the number and type of study designs which were critically appraised

- **Critical appraisal of the selected papers meeting the inclusion criteria collectively provide zero/weak/moderate/strong evidence in terms of their experimental design and implementation.**

Indicate the strength of evidence

- **The outcomes reported are summarised as follows...**

Indicate the summarised collective outcome(s) from the studies

- **In view of the strength of evidence and the outcomes from the studies the following conclusion is made...**

The conclusion should provide an answer to the Knowledge Summary question

Additional comments and caveats can be added if required

Below is an example using the Knowledge Summary by Natasha A Jocelyn (2018) (<http://dx.doi.org/10.18849/ve.v3i2.139>).

Figure 2: Example of completed Clinical bottom line

Question

In an Adult Horse With Severe Asthma (Previously Recurrent Airway Obstruction) Does Using Inhaled Corticosteroids Result in an Equal Improvement in Clinical Signs When Compared to Systemic Corticosteroids?

Clinical bottom line

- **The category of research question was treatment/prognosis/risk/diagnosis/prevalence/incidence**

Treatment.

- **The number and type of study designs that were critically appraised were...**

Four papers were critically reviewed. There were 3 prospective crossover design clinical studies and a randomised design clinical study.

- **Critical appraisal of the selected papers meeting the inclusion criteria collectively provide zero/weak/moderate/strong evidence in terms of their experimental design and implementation.**

Strong.

- **The outcomes reported are summarised as follows.**

Inhaled corticosteroids (fluticasone and beclomethasone) when used at an appropriate dose can have equivalent effects on severe equine asthma as systemic intravenous dexamethasone. Inhaled corticosteroids can take longer to have the desired effects.

- **In view of the strength of evidence and the outcomes from the studies the following conclusion is made...**

In an adult horse with severe asthma (previously recurrent airway obstruction) Inhaled corticosteroids result in an equal Improvement in clinical signs when compared to systemic corticosteroids.

Knowledge summary handbook

The Knowledge Summary handbook provides detailed instruction on every aspect of writing a Knowledge Summary: Knowledge summary handbook PDF.

EBVM learning tutorial

This tutorial introduces the concepts of Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine (EBVM), and aims to give you a foundation from which you can write a Knowledge Summary and start to apply EBVM to your own veterinary work: <http://www.ebvmlearning.org>

EBVM toolkit

The EBVM Toolkit is designed to help busy veterinary practitioners answer a clinical question with the best available evidence. We hope this Toolkit will be useful for daily evidence-based practice – and that practitioners will share the answers they've found with their colleagues, by writing a [Knowledge Summary](#) and submitting it to [Veterinary Evidence](#).

Preparing your submission

Authorship criteria

All authors listed must meet the following four criteria recommended by the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#) (ICMJE):

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

More information can be accessed on the [ICMJE website](#).

Where all criteria are not met, individuals should be acknowledged in an acknowledgements section at the end of the main text.

Adding, removing or changing the author order

The editorial office must be made aware of any changes to the author list at proof stage. The corresponding author must contact the editorial office and state why the change is taking place and provide written confirmation from all authors, including the author(s) being added/removed, that they agree with the change. The corresponding author must also confirm that all authors meet the four ICMJE criteria detailed above.

Images and copyright

It is the responsibility of the authors to ensure they have acquired the necessary permissions to use figures, images or extracts from previously published articles.

All material must be properly referenced and authors must have written consent of the copyright holder (this may be the publisher rather than the author). This includes the author's own previously published material, where the author is not the copyright holder.

Ethical responsibilities of authors

- All authors must give their consent for the paper to be submitted.
- The paper must not be under consideration elsewhere or be previously published.

- The work must be original and free of misleading or fabricated data. Your paper may be uploaded to Crossref Similarity Check to ensure it is an original piece of work.
- Prior to submission please read the journal's [Editorial policies](#).

ORCID

[ORCID](#) is a system of identification for authors. An ORCID identifier is unique to an individual and acts as a persistent digital identifier to ensure that authors (particularly those with relatively common names) can be distinguished and their work properly attributed.

Our submission system supports ORCID, allowing authors to enter their unique identifier.

Conflict of interest

Declaring a conflict of interest

Veterinary Evidence strives to uphold the principles of best practice in scholarly publishing. We therefore aim to be transparent when it comes to any conflicts of interest that may arise during the publication process.

To make the best decision on how to proceed with a submission or peer-review process, *Veterinary Evidence* asks authors, reviewers and Editors to declare any competing interests, so that *Veterinary Evidence* can make informed decisions regarding submissions and reviews.

What is a conflict of interest?

The [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#) (ICMJE) states that:

The potential for conflicts of interest can exist whether or not an individual believes that the relationship affects his or her scientific judgment. Financial relationships (such as employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony) are the most easily identifiable conflicts of interest and the most likely to undermine the credibility of the journal, the authors, and of science itself. However, conflicts can occur for other reasons, such as personal relationships, academic competition, and intellectual passion.

Authors, reviewers and Editors should therefore ask themselves if there is anything that may bias their judgement when performing the task required of them and to state this within their declaration of interest.

All disclosures of potential conflicts of interest are reviewed by the Editor in order to determine whether there is any potential for bias.

Declaring conflicts of interest: Authors

Potential conflicts of interest must be declared. These include relevant financial, personal, political or intellectual interests that may bias the work, as well as disclosing:

- How the article is funded
- Comprehensive explanation of the role of the sponsors in article preparation (if the article is sponsored in part or whole)
- Disclosure of any assistance with the preparation of the article

Authors are required to fill in the conflict of interest section within the article submission template (there is a link in this section of the submission template to this policy), as well as within the submission system for every author. The corresponding author must ensure that all authors have been asked to disclose any conflicts of interest.

Authors can provide names, affiliations and contact details of potential reviewers. Suggested reviewers will be used at the Editor's discretion, and if the reviewers contact details can be verified from an independent source.

All disclosures of potential conflicts of interest made by authors are reviewed by the Editor in order to determine whether there is any potential for bias.

Please see our full [Conflict of interest policy](#) for more information.

Open access policy

Veterinary Evidence is an online only, open access journal which publishes continuously. Accepted articles are made open access immediately upon publication on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge.

This means all content published within *Veterinary Evidence* can be read by anyone, anywhere for free.

Users are allowed to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of the articles, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without asking prior permission from the publisher or the author. The content must be credited appropriately. In all cases, the requirement to link to the journal's website is designed to protect the integrity and authenticity of the scientific record.

Licence

All content published in the *Veterinary Evidence* journal is done so under a CC-BY licence.

[CC-BY 4.0](#): This license allows others to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format. Remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

Copyright and author's rights

Authors (or their employers) retain copyright in their work.

Upon submitting their article authors are asked to sign a declaration agreement and a non-exclusive license to publish. Authors retain the copyright of their article and retain publishing rights.

By signing the non-exclusive license to publish, the author gives RCVS Knowledge permission to edit, adapt, translate, publish, reproduce, distribute and display the article in printed, electronic or any other medium and format whether now known or yet to be developed.

Self-archiving policy

Authors are free to deposit the pre-print, post-print and publisher's version/PDF to their institution's repositories or personal websites immediately on publication.

Authors can archive pre-print (ie pre-refereeing)

Authors can archive post-print (ie final draft post-refereeing)

Authors can archive publisher's version/PDF

Attribution must be made. Doing so protects the integrity and authenticity of the scientific record.

Veterinary Evidence is registered with the database [SHERPA/RoMEO](#).

Publication fees

It is free to publish in and read *Veterinary Evidence*.

There are no submission fees or article processing charges (APCs). All articles undergo a thorough open peer-review process, and accepted articles are published open access immediately upon publication.

Data sharing

Please see our [Data sharing policy](#) for information on how to cite and share data.

Editorial policies

For more information please see our [Editorial policies](#).

Submitting your paper

Submission system

Everything written for *Veterinary Evidence* is done so using our [templates](#). This makes writing your paper as simple as possible, as each section is clearly explained.

Once you have filled in your template please register, login and submit your paper to the *Veterinary Evidence* journal via the online [submission system](#).

Submission checklist

As part of the submission process, authors are required to check off their submission's compliance with all of the following items, and submissions may be returned to authors that do not adhere to these guidelines:

1. The submission has not been previously published, nor is it with another journal for consideration.
2. The submission has been written using the appropriate template.
3. The text adheres to the stylistic and bibliographic requirements outlined in the relevant template.
4. The authors understand *Veterinary Evidence* is an open access and open peer reviewed journal.
5. Authors have read, understood and signed the declaration statement on the relevant template.

Withdrawing a paper

Author's may request to withdraw a paper from the process, however, we ask authors to please consider the amount of time that editors and reviewers will have spent on the submission. Authors should discuss with us any reasons they may have for considering withdrawal, as we would like to do all we can to avoid the withdrawal of a paper and to prevent editorial/reviewer time to be wasted.

If authors decide to withdraw a paper they should provide the editorial office with an explicit request to remove the manuscript from the system no later than after the first round of peer review. This letter should be signed by all authors and it should detail the reasons for withdrawal.

Veterinary Evidence may consider withdrawing a paper from the submission process if there is evidence of misconduct. The outcome will be informed by COPE guidance. For more information please see our [Plagiarism, data fabrication and falsification policy](#) and our [Corrections and retractions policy](#).

Publication process

Post submission

After submitting your paper it will be screened by the Editor-in-chief to ensure it fits within the [Aims and scope](#) of *Veterinary Evidence*. If so, your paper will then be assigned to an Associate Editor who will manage the peer-review process. Your paper will be sent to experts in the same field of research for their evaluation.

Once your paper has been peer-reviewed the Associate Editor will then decide whether it should be revised, accepted or rejected. You will be sent the reviewer comments along with the editorial decision. Final decisions are made by the Editor-in-chief.

Revisions required

Where revisions are required, instructions will be emailed to you along with the editors' and reviewers' comments. Once your revision has been uploaded it will undergo round 2 of the peer-review process, where the same reviewers will give their recommendation for your revised paper.

Acceptance

All accepted submissions are copyedited by our in-house editors. This stage is vital as it ensures that language is clear and precise and that the structure of the paper is logical and free of any ambiguities or anomalies. Along with other queries, authors may be required to provide further detail within their paper or rewrite sections of text for clarity. The paper is then proofread to ensure there are no grammatical or production errors.

This proof will then be sent to you to review the copyeditor's queries. This is also your opportunity to make any edits you feel are necessary to your paper. The paper will not be published until this quality control step is completed.

For multi-author papers we recommend that all authors check and correct the proof, but request that a single set of corrections is coordinated by the corresponding author.

Rejection

Knowledge Summaries and articles published in *Veterinary Evidence* undergo a thorough peer-review process where a minimum of two referees review each paper. The Associate Editor makes a recommendation to the Editor-in-chief, who makes the overall decision. *Veterinary Evidence* aims to provide a fair and objective critique of papers. (For more information on the review process please see our [Guidelines for reviewers](#)).

If your paper has been rejected it may be because:

- It is not within the [Aims and scope](#) of *Veterinary Evidence*
- The paper is incomprehensible
- The science is flawed

If you feel your paper has been unfairly rejected by *Veterinary Evidence* then you can appeal the decision. Please see our [Appeals and complaints policy](#) for more information.

Before publication

If accepted, your paper will then be typeset and finalised for publication. If you would like to see the final version before publication please request this at the copyediting stage.

For guidance throughout any stage of the publication process please contact the [Editorial Office](#).

Peer review guidance for authors

Peer review process

Manuscripts submitted to *Veterinary Evidence* undergo an open peer-review process and are sent to a minimum of two reviewers. The names of the reviewers are published alongside the paper with the aim that this will encourage an unbiased and transparent critique of papers.

The Editor shall ensure that the peer-review process is fair, unbiased, and timely. Reviewers are invited to review only if they have suitable expertise in the relevant field.

Authors can provide names, affiliations and contact details of potential reviewers. Suggested reviewers will be used at the Editor's discretion, and if their contact details can be verified from an independent source.

All disclosures of potential conflicts of interest made by reviewers are reviewed by the Editor in order to determine whether there is any potential for bias.

Disagreeing with reviewer comments

When revising your manuscript:

Use track changes and address all points raised by the Editor and reviewers within your revision.

If you strongly disagree with a reviewer comment you should provide a polite and scientific rebuttal as to why.

If reviewer comments are conflicting:

Contact us for clarification; in some cases the Editor will prioritise which comments to follow.

Alternatively, follow the comment that most aptly reflects what you wish to convey in your paper. State your decision to go with a comment over the other clearly, logically, and objectively. Your comments will be sent to the reviewer along with your revision for their consideration.

The final decision rests with the Editor-in-chief.

Blogs

Read our blogs and gain an insight into the peer-review process from the authors', reviewers' and Editors' perspectives:

[Peer review: what is it and why do we use it?](#)

[The benefits of peer review: Q&A with Veterinary Evidence authors](#)

[Peer review week: Q&A with Veterinary Evidence reviewers](#)

[Pros and cons of different models of peer review](#)

After Acceptance

Acceptance

All accepted submissions are copyedited by our in-house editors. This stage is vital as it ensures that language is clear and precise and that the structure of the paper is logical and free of any ambiguities or anomalies. Along with other queries, authors may be required to provide further detail within their paper or rewrite sections of text for clarity. The paper is then proofread to ensure there are no grammatical or production errors.

This proof will then be sent to you to review the copyeditor's queries. This is also your opportunity to make any edits you feel are necessary to your paper. The paper will not be published until this quality control step is completed.

For multi-author papers we recommend that all authors check and correct the proof, but request that a single set of corrections is coordinated by the corresponding author.

Before publication

Your paper will then be typeset and finalised for publication. If you would like to see the final version before publication please request this at the copyediting stage.

For guidance throughout any stage of the publication process please contact the [Editorial Office](#).

Frequency

Veterinary Evidence publishes content using a continuous publication model. A new online issue will become available every quarter (March, June, September, December) and articles will publish directly into the current issue. Instead of page numbers each paper has an article ID that is related to its digital object identifier (DOI) number – making everything citable upon publication. At the end of each quarter, the respective issue will close.

Continuous publication allows *Veterinary Evidence* to have a fast and efficient turn-around time; authors won't have to wait for the next available issue in order to get their work published. It enables content to be available to the veterinary community quickly; allowing readers to download, share and put their findings into practice.

Audio Summaries

Upon acceptance of your paper we will contact you with the request for your Audio Summary.

An Audio Summary is a 3 minute overview of your Knowledge Summary or Article. The purpose of it is to help listeners easily digest the main points of the paper in order to implement the findings into practice.

See below for some example points to help structure your Knowledge Summary audio clip:

1. Background - what question is the Knowledge Summary answering and why was this question chosen?
2. Please give an overview of what evidence there is and what the evidence says – what is the clinical bottom line?
3. And if appropriate - how someone in practice could implement the recommendations of the Knowledge Summary.

Please feel free to adapt it as you see fit, but ensure the clip is no longer than 3 minutes.

Promoting your paper

After publication your paper can be promoted in various ways by RCVS Knowledge and by you, the author. All papers are made open access immediately upon publication, so papers can be shared widely and read for free.

Social Networking – You can use social networking sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook to promote and share your paper. When sharing your paper always link to the published version on *Veterinary Evidence*.

Kudos – Kudos is a free web-based service that helps you explain and share your research so that you can maximise views, downloads and citations of your paper.

Department website or personal webpage – Use your staff profile or your personal webpage to link directly to your article or the issue's table of contents.

Conferences – Talk about your article at relevant conferences or meetings that you attend.

Email signature – Use your email signature to tell people about your paper by adding a short abstract/title and link to the online version of the article at the bottom of your signature.

Editorial policies

Here you will find all of the editorial policies relevant to publishing in the *Veterinary Evidence* journal.

1. [Plagiarism, data fabrication and falsification policy](#)
2. [Corrections and retractions policy](#)
3. [Authorship and contributorship policy](#)
4. [Conflict of interest policy](#)
5. [Reproducing figures and images](#)
6. [Open access policy](#)
7. [ORCID](#)
8. [Data sharing policy](#)
9. [Copyright, author's rights and self-archiving policy](#)
10. [Intellectual property rights](#)
11. [Privacy policy](#)
12. [Appeals and complaints policy](#)
13. [Reporting guidelines](#)
14. [Next review date policy](#)
15. [Guidelines for reviewers](#)

For more information or clarification please contact the [editorial office](#).