Editor's advice to authors submitting papers to *Health, Risk & Society*

I hope that you find the following guidance helpful. If you follow this guidance, it will increase the chance of your article being accepted for publication in *Health, Risk & Society*. Note that you can also access the publisher's generic advice for potential authors.

1. **Does your paper fall within scope?**

   Health Risk & Society is an international scholarly journal that focusses on the social processes which influence the ways in which risks and uncertainties regarding health are identified, communicated, assessed and/or managed. Articles published in the journal should show a critical awareness of contemporary risk theory, critically evaluate and review evidence and contribute to understandings of the relationship between health, risk and society (see our website where the aims and scope of the journal are provided in full). Please note that *Health, Risk & Society* is not a medical, epidemiological or public health journal. Thus articles which aim to identify individuals or groups that are 'at risk' of certain medical conditions do not fall within the scope of the journal.

   To demonstrate that your article falls within scope, you should clearly state how your article contributes to an understanding of the relationship between health, risk and society and the ways in which the social processes that form the focus of the paper influence the perception, communication, assessment or management of health risks. Note that it is important that such a statement is included in the Abstract as well as the main part of the article as I base my initial judgement on whether your article is in scope on a reading of the Abstract.

   Note that many articles are based on studies whose primary focus is on a particular health and wellbeing issue. It is important in articles based on such studies to make the relevance of the problems or issues for health risk clear. One way to establish this is to ensure there is a clear link to existing literature on risk, for example by reviewing and citing articles published in risk journals such as *Health, Risk & Society* or the *Journal of Risk Research* and/or to cite key texts or authors in risk studies.

2. **Is the title of your paper fit-for-purpose?**

   It is important that your title is attractive to potential readers, contains relevant information about nature of your article and its relevance for risk and reflects the contents of your paper. Search engines often focus on titles, so, if you want your article to be picked up and brought to the attention of potential readers, you need to ensure that your title includes appropriate words. You can use a catchy title, for example one based on a key finding or a quote from one of the participants in your study. If you do this, please make sure that the title includes an explanatory phrase. Recent titles which work well include: 'Life would be pretty dull without risk': Voluntary risk taking and its pleasures; Risks to home care workers: professional perspectives; and The effects of 'risk-thinking' on contemporary motherhood.

   Note: including risk in the title is not a requirement but using the term does help to make clear the relevance of the paper for reviewers and readers of *Health, Risk & Society*.

3. **Is the Abstract properly written?**

   While full access to your article will be limited to those readers who can use a personal or organisational subscription, all Abstracts are posted on the Journal website and are publically available. I will use your Abstract to make an initial assessment of whether your article falls within the scope of *Health, Risk & Society* and potential readers may use it to decide if they want to access and read the full article. Therefore, your Abstract should be an accurate summary of your article. It should clearly states its aims and objectives and their relevance for risk studies; why, how, where and when the data were collected, what the main findings are and their implications for risk.

   Note: The Abstract in *Health, Risk & Society* should form a single narrative and not be divided by side headings.

4. **Do your keywords accurately reflect the key elements of your paper?**

   Search engines use keywords to identify articles to be included in specific abstracting services. Therefore, to ensure that your article is included and can be found quickly and

accurately online within the top three hits, make sure that your keywords reflect the key issues and topics covered in your article.

Note that *Health, Risk & Society* is a risk journal and your keyword list should include risk plus a more detailed specification of the specific risk issue such as risk perception, risk management or risk taking.

5. **Is your paper the right length?**

   Most articles published in *Health, Risk & Society* are either original articles grounded in empirical research or review articles/editorials based on reviews of published findings. Original articles should be between 5,000 and 7,000 words including the Abstract, notes, references, tables and diagrams. Generally, articles based on the numerical presentation of data are likely to be shorter while papers that present data in the form of text, such as quotations from interviews, can be longer and in exceptional cases may be up to 10,000 words. Authors submitting papers which exceed 7,000 words should include a covering letter to indicate why the data could not be summarised and the paper shortened. Review articles and editorials should be between 2,000 and 4,000 words.

6. **Is the structure of your paper acceptable?**

   While the precise structure of your article will depend on its nature, most articles in *Health, Risk & Society* are data-based and should have the following structure:

   Title page. In the blinded version this should include all necessary information apart for authors' names, institutional affiliation and the address for correspondence. It should include: title, short title, Abstract and keywords.

   Introduction. This should be short (2-3 paragraphs) and should briefly state the aims and objectives of your article and how you will achieve them.

   Context. This section should justify the aims and objectives of your article by outlining the risk context (the real world situation within which the risk is articulated, such as the everyday consumption of food or the regulation of pharmaceutical products) and the risk

theory which informs your article. The supporting evidence in this section is likely to be drawn from sources such as published literature in scholarly journals or government policy documents. You need to check that you follow the [Health, Risk & Society conventions for citing such sources](#).

Note that my reviewers and I will expect you to be aware of recent relevant literature published in *Health, Risk & Society.* The easiest way to identify such literature is to access the website via a search engine such as Google and do a keyword search. For example, if you plan to submit a title such as *Regulating drugs: the development of a precautionary approach to risk,* you should search the website using 'drug', 'pharmaceutical' and 'precautionary' as keywords, and see if any of the articles are relevant for your study.

At the end of context section you should restate the aims and objectives of the paper providing a link between the context and methodology sections. Note that these should be the aims and objectives of your article and not of any underpinning research study, your article should draw on this study but should essentially be free standing.

Methodology. In this section you should justify and describe the design, methodology and ethics that informed the collection of data that underpins your article (in particular you need to indicate how you ensured the study was ethical and how independent ethical approval was obtained, and if not, why not). You should state where and when the study was undertaken. Note that both articles based on original data and review papers should include a methodology and the methodology should be specific to the article you would like to publish in *Health, Risk & Society,* not a general discussion of the wider study or project that you were engaged in. It should be clear from this section (as well as being stated in the Abstract) when and where the study that you draw on was carried out.

Findings. This section should present the key findings of your article in a logical and coherent fashion. If most of the data you use is numerical, you need to be sure that the data are clearly presented in an accessible manner, for example in tables, figures or graphs, and that in the main text there is a clear description of the meaning and

significance of the numbers. If you use mainly qualitative data such as extracts from interviews then you need to describe the significance of each and make the presentation reader-friendly, for instance using pseudonyms and providing contextual information.

Discussion. Your article should include a section that discusses the implication of your findings for the relationship between health, risk and society. If there are specific constraints and limitations relating to the type of data you used in your article then you should clearly state them at the start of the discussion section. You should then return to the theoretical and practical issues that you outlined in your contextual section and highlight the ways in which your findings contribute to increased understanding and knowledge about them. Note that *Health, Risk & Society* is not primarily concerned with policy or practical recommendations but you may wish to consider these in this section.

Conclusion. You should end the substantive part of your article with a conclusion. This can be short, three or more paragraphs, and should highlight your findings for the relationship between health, risk and society.

Acknowledgments. You should acknowledge any sources of funding and any contribution to the paper that are not otherwise evident, such as in authorship.

References. These should be organised using *Health, Risk & Society* conventions based on the APA system.

Appendices. As far as possible these should be avoided.

7. **Does your paper avoid common stylistic tics?**
   If English is not your first language, try to get a 'critical friend' or a proofreader, preferably someone who is familiar with academic English, to read through the text to attend to grammar, style and flow, as well as content and structure. Please avoid the following:

   i. *Rhetorical questions.* You should avoid questions that are not real questions but simply

ways of alerting readers to issues. For example, avoid phrases such as 'In this article we will examine "How was this issue covered by the Dutch media? To what extent did this influence the level of public outcry?"'. It would be better to phrase this in a more direct way: 'In this article we will examine the ways in which this issue was covered by the Dutch media and the extent to which this influenced the level of public outcry'.

ii. *Acronyms.* You should minimise the use of acronyms (words made up out of the initial letters of a number of other words). If you do use acronyms, the first time you use one it should be written out in full with the acronym in round brackets, for example, World Health Organization (WHO) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), but generally keep acronyms to a minimum.

iii. *Abbreviations.* Please avoid abbreviations such as i.e. or e.g. The abbreviation i.e. can be spelt out as 'in other words', while e.g. can be replaced by 'for example' or 'such as'.

iv. *American English.* Articles published in *Health, Risk & Society* should use British English rather than US English spelling conventions, for example 'behaviour' and 'programme', not 'behavior' or 'program'.

v. *The passive voice.* This is often used to conceal the identity of the active subject, often the researcher(s), hiding the agency of the researcher(s). Therefore 'Qualitative research has been carried out mostly with women who….' should read 'Most social researchers have focused their attention on women who…'

vi. *Anthropomorphism.* There is a temptation to treat abstract categories as if they were humans, for example phrases such as 'substantial body of research indicates (or reveal) …', 'the medical literature over-emphasises…' or 'this work has documented'. Such phrases should be avoided as they ascribe human attributes to non-human entities. The correct phrases to use are: 'in much of the published research there is an indication of…' or 'in the medical literature there is an overemphasis on…'

vii. *Footnotes.* Try to avoid the temptation to use footnotes. It is better to include short explanatory statements in brackets in the main text.

viii. *The numbering of points.* In order to number points, use either numbers in brackets or 'firstly', 'secondly', 'lastly'. If you feel the necessity of dividing pages or paragraphs,

use bullet points.

ix. *Avoid journalese or emotive language.* You should try to be accurate, precise and measured in the language you use.

Andy Alaszewski

Editor

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