General
eCM is an exclusively on-line journal, publishing original research and review within its scope. Manuscripts are submitted at http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ecm. eCM requires payment of a one-time, non-refundable, CHF100 submission fee per manuscript. On completion of payment, submitting authors will receive a 10-digit Worldpay Transaction ID, which will be required during the submission process. The Worldpay Transaction ID must be quoted in the letter of submission. Pay Here.

Upon acceptance, and before publication, the payment of an Article Processing Charge (APC) of CHF1000 will be requested. The APC covers part of the costs of eCM staffing, web hosting and general publishing costs, with the remainder of the costs being covered by donations and sponsorship. eCM offers Gold Open Access to its papers, where articles are immediately available for others to read, download and share. Pay Here.

The official language of eCM Journal is UK English. US English is acceptable. Should authors wish their paper to be published in US English, the following instruction must be included below the main title: “Please publish in US English”; otherwise, at the time of publication, the paper will be edited in UK English. If English is not your native language, we strongly recommend you acquiring assistance from a professional scientific editing service (best if they are experienced, native English-speaking academics) to edit the manuscript before it is submitted, since manuscripts with a poor standard of English will be unsubmitted and returned to the authors prior to being sent for review.

eCM publish two types of manuscripts:
- Research paper: presents new unpublished findings (of general or specialist interest).
- Review paper: including an extended literature review and a complete bibliography. It can also emphasise authors’ new unpublished findings and, in an extended discussion, place the topic in its proper perspective. It can also be a complete bibliography of an author’s own work, discussed in relation to the work of others.

Responsibilities in the Submission and Peer-Review Process: authors, reviewers and the journal bear responsibility in the review process. Read the guidelines of the ICMJE.

Manuscript submission and review process
Papers should be submitted in Microsoft Word format. There are no practical limitations concerning figures, monochrome or colour are equally acceptable. Note: eCM Journal does not publish supplementary figures: all figures must be included in the main text figure sequence. Short videos, when bringing exceptional improvement to the paper, may also be included as appendices to the paper – please consult the Production Editor in such cases. Full details of the required manuscript standards for submission are described under eCM manuscript style.

A letter of submission (signed by all authors) is required when submitting your manuscript. In its absence, the paper will be unsubmitted. Download eCM_Letter of Submission template.

Reviewing and processing
Each abstract is checked for scope by the Editor-in-Chief, who decides whether the manuscript will be assigned to a Scientific Editor (SE) or returned. The SE decides whether the paper warrants rejection or, if acceptable, he/she selects several reviewers and the manuscript enters the review process. SEs reserve the right to directly return work, which they deem incremental, not hypothesis-driven but observational, sufficiently covered in literature, or technical notes. If this happens before sending out to review, no detailed comments will be sent to the authors.
Resubmissions
When resubmitting a revised manuscript, please respond fully to all the reviewers’ comments, with a point-by-point rebuttal in a separate document. You should also list and comment on any changes made to the original manuscript. To expedite processing of the revised manuscript, be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewer(s). The revised manuscript should be prepared with changes noted by either using the track changes mode in MS Word or by highlighting changes in bold and red. The onus is on the author(s) to make the changes as obvious as possible and easy for the reviewer(s) to recognise. IMPORTANT: Your original files remain available when the revised manuscript is uploaded. Please delete all redundant files before completing the resubmission.

Discussion with Reviewers section: in addition to reviewing the paper critically, we also ask reviewers to raise relevant questions – such as those that are often asked at conferences – to be presented to the author(s). Questions bringing out additional information or challenging the authors’ approach, findings or conclusions are particularly welcomed. While some of these questions may be attended to by appropriate text changes to the final version of the manuscript, other authors’ replies will be published in the “Discussion with Reviewers” section of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest
A Conflict of Interest is anything that interferes with, or could reasonably be perceived as interfering with, the study design and conduct, full and objective presentation, peer review, editorial decision-making or publication of research or non-research articles submitted to eCM journal. Conflict of Interest can be financial or non-financial, professional or personal. They can arise in relationship to an organisation or another person.

Who must declare a Conflict of Interest?
Authors
At the time of submission, authors must state what competing interests are relevant to the submitted research. Use eCM_Letter of Submission template to state any potential Conflict of Interest, including, but not limited to, support from any commercial sources, description of funder’s role in the study design, professional affiliations, advisory positions, board memberships, patent holdings, etc.

Peer Reviewers
Reviewers must declare autonomously their own Conflict of Interest and, if necessary, disqualify themselves from involvement in the assessment of the manuscript. Reviewers must not use knowledge of the work they are reviewing before its publication to further their own interests.

Editors
Editors who make final decisions about manuscripts should recuse themselves from editorial decisions if they have a Conflict of Interest or relationships that pose potential conflicts related to articles under consideration. Editorial staff must not use information gained through working with manuscripts for private gain.

Plagiarism check
Each accepted manuscript will be run through a powerful plagiarism detection system software (http://www.ithenticate.com/) before production and publication.

iThenticate is used worldwide by scholarly publishers and research institutions to ensure the originality of written work before publication. iThenticate helps editors, authors and researchers prevent misconduct by comparing manuscripts against its database of over 60 billion web pages and 155 million content items, including 49 million works from 800 scholarly publisher participants of Crossref Similarity Check powered by iThenticate software.

Authors will be contacted in case the percentage of possible plagiarism (including self-plagiarism) in relevant sections is considered to be too large.
eCM Manuscript style

- **General**: the submitted manuscript must be formatted as a single-spaced plain *Microsoft Word* format document using *Palatino Linotype* font. **There is no need to arrange the text into columns, sections or apply any formatting other than superscript, subscript, bold, italic and indents (use embedded ‘tab’ character for indents).**
- **Title**: the title should contain no more than twenty words.
- **Authors list**: use first name initial, followed by a period and last name of all authors separated by commas. Do not add titles (e.g. Prof., Dr, PhD etc.). Different affiliations should be marked by superscript numbers (1, 2 etc.) immediately following the author’s name. The corresponding author(s) should be designated by an asterisk (*). **Note**: only one author should be designated as the contact person when submitting your manuscript in ScholarOne. However, two corresponding/senior authors can be defined in the manuscript *Microsoft Word* file.
- **Affiliations list**: each affiliation should include department, institution, city and country, preceded by the appropriate number in superscript (1, 2 etc.).
- **Running Title**: an informative running title, of up to 50 characters.
- **Abstract**: The abstract should be no more than 250 words long. It should contain the purpose of the work, the main methods used, as well as the main results and conclusions, but not in separate sections. Abbreviations may be used in the abstract, but they must be defined in parentheses the first time they are used, *e.g.* “...transmission electron microscopy (TEM) was used to...”. References should not be included in the abstract. The clinical relevance of the work must also be mentioned within the abstract.
- **Key Words**: up to 10 key words. Do not use abbreviations in the key words.
- **Corresponding author(s) details**: full name, full mailing address, telephone number (optional), fax number (optional) and e-mail address.
- **Introduction**: a clear and concise statement of the purpose of the paper and the relationship of this paper to what is already in the literature (along with relevant references).
- **Materials and Methods**
  - **Detail**: All eCM reviewers are asked a simple question: ‘Is the Materials and Methods section described in sufficient detail to allow repetition of the work?’ This section must have complete information (even if already published) for all areas of the study so that others could duplicate the work. This section should carefully describe the materials and methods used, including sample size and statistical approaches. Sequence and source of unique constructs etc. should be made available.
  - **Sources**: Provide the supplier/manufacturer’s name, city, country and product code (or URL; only if city, country and product code are not available) of all non-generic products used in the
work. If the suppliers/manufacturers are international companies, with common website and local agents, the company name is sufficient.

Collaboration. The role of any outside organisation in the collection of data, its analysis and interpretation must be described in this section.

Animal studies. When animal studies are submitted, Animal Ethics Committee permissions must be mentioned. Authors must also submit a completed ARRIVE checklist with their manuscript (the file must be submitted in the same section with the manuscript files, e.g. figures, tables and word file). The ARRIVE Essential 10 constitute the minimum requirements for reporting animal research and include information allowing reviewers and readers to assess the reliability of the findings.

Human material. When using human material, the ethics permission must be mentioned. If patient consent forms were used, these must be mentioned. The minimum number of human donors should be 3. Note: the use of pooled human donor cells should be avoided. When unavoidable, the use of fewer than 3 or pooled donors needs to be justified convincingly within the manuscript.

- Results: this section should succinctly state the results without lengthy discussion or interpretation of individual data. Conclusions should not be stated in the Results section. Tabular data should not repeat what is already shown in graphical format. eCM offers the possibility to host Omics data (e.g. genomic sequences) on the same web page as the manuscript.

- Discussion: should summarise, but not repeat, the Results; distinguish between logical explanations of the results and extrapolations or hypotheses drawn from the results; show how each result advances the overall conclusions of the study; relate the results to the literature (along with relevant references). The Discussion should highlight the potential clinical relevance of the work.

- Conclusions: authors should state the conclusions and potential implications of the findings.

- Acknowledgements: authors should acknowledge all support received for the work: funding, equipment, materials, technicians or anyone who has contributed but has not been listed as an author. Any conflict of interest should also be stated here.

- References

Output styles for Endnote and Zotero. Note: eCM Journal is not responsible for content downloaded from other sites.

- Download for Endnote: eCM_Endonote_2022.ens
- Download for Zotero: eCM_Zotero_2022.csl

Include all references relevant to the paper. References can be made only to readily available published work and to papers in press. Unpublished results, submitted manuscripts, conference abstracts and personal communications should not be included in the reference list, but can be acknowledged in the text (in parentheses). In the text use the following style: Jones (1989) or (Jones, 1989) or Jones and Smith (1988). If there are three or more authors, use the form Jones et al. (1993) or (Jones et al., 1993). If more than one paper is published by the same author(s) in the same year, use the form Jones (1986a; 1986b etc.).

Reference may be made to Web sites. These must be listed separately, in a list entitled ‘Web References’, following the main list of references. Web references in the list should be numbered in the order in which they appear in the text. Web references should be referred to in the text as ‘(Web ref. 1)’; ‘(Web ref. 2)’ etc. Details of each Web reference should include the full Uniform Resource Locator (URL), followed by the date accessed in square brackets i.e. [dd-mm-yyyy].

The References list (Note: not numbered) must be organised in alphabetical order by the first author’s last name. For several references with the same first author, the following order must be used: [a] one-author references, ordered by year (e.g. Jones (1989); Jones (1991)); [b] two-author references, ordered first according to second author’s last name, then ordered by year
[Jones and Brown (1990); Jones and Smith (1988)]; and [c] three (and more)-author references, ordered by year [Jones et al. (1983); Jones et al. (1993a); Jones et al. (1993b)]. Begin each reference on a separate line; first line indented using a single tab.

Reference list style

- For a paper from a journal: last names and initials of all authors (not "et al."), year (in parentheses), full title of paper, name of publication (use only standard Index Medicus abbreviations – as used by PubMed; ; terminated by a period). Do not use any punctuation (nor "and" or "&" preceding last author's name), except for commas between authors' names. A period must be inserted at the end of the title (with the exception of titles ending with a question mark). Next, insert the volume-number (in bold), followed by a colon, a single space before the first page number and a period/full-stop following the last page number (separated from the first page number by a hyphen, not an ‘en-dash’ or ‘em dash’). Then, insert the DOI (followed by a period). e.g. Modic MT, Steinberg PM, Ross JS, Masaryk TJ, Carter JR (1988) Degenerative disk disease: assessment of changes in vertebral body marrow with MR imaging. Radiology 66: 193-199. DOI: 10.1148/radiology.166.1.3336678.

- For a book: include name(s) and initials of author(s), year, title of book (in upper and lower case), name and city of publisher, page-range or chapter cited; do not refer to an entire book. For a multi-author book or proceedings, in addition, the names of editor(s), name and city of publisher or alternatively full availability information, as well as the page-range must be included.

- For an internal or contract report, Master's and Doctoral thesis: relevant inclusive pages, full availability information with identification numbers and complete address must be provided.

- Discussion with Reviewers (added following review process): the Discussion with Reviewers (DWR) section is an important part of eCM journal manuscripts and should be prepared with great care. No length limit is imposed on DWR, therefore answers should be complete but concise. The DWR section is placed immediately following the References. Extra figures and references can be included, when necessary. References that have already been included in the paper reference list should be cited as follows: Jones, 2003. References that have not been cited previously, should be cited as follows: Johnson, 2003, additional reference.

Style specifications

- Headings
- Equations
- Symbols and abbreviations
- Tables
- Units
- Statistical tests
- Figures
- Figure legends

- Text: For the correct use of tenses please check here.

Examples

Present tense is used to talk about general background information, e.g. "Osteoinduction by CaP bone grafts is material-dependent", "The structure of the bovine disc is similar to the young healthy human IVD" and "Rod-shaped nanoparticles have high affinity for endothelial cells". Past tense is used to talk about actual results and procedures used, e.g. "A panel of 36 specific proteins was measured", "IVDs from the lumbar region were harvested" and "A staining diminution of around 60 % was observed". When referring to the content of a specific paper, past
tense can be used, e.g. "Zhang et al. (2012) developed a composite HA-agarose material" and "Collins and Birkinshaw (2011) studied a series of HA scaffolds"; however, when referring directly to the publication e.g. “Zhang et al. (2012) describe a composite...” the present tense is more appropriate. In order to avoid confusion, it is essential that a clear distinction is always made between what is published information (present/present perfect tense) and that which represents a description of the current work being reported (past tense).

Present perfect tense is used when previous research is being discussed in general terms, e.g. “A number of groups have focused on”.

The accepted convention for scientific writing should be used, where the text is written in the third person, i.e. it should not contain phrases like ‘I/we described X’, ‘I/we did X’, ‘I/we performed X’, etc. In such instances, passive forms are to be used, such as "X was described", “X was performed” etc.

• **Headings**: do not number headings. **Major headings** should be typed in bold upper and lower case. **Subheadings**: should be typed in bold and place flush with the left margin of the text on a separate line. **Sub-subheadings**: print italic and place flush with the left margin of the text on a separate line.

• **Equations**: each equation must be centred on a separate line, consecutively numbered. Equation numbers, in parentheses, should be flush with the right margin. The equation should normally be prepared using 'Microsoft Equation Editor' and embedded in the MS Word file.

• **Symbols and abbreviations**: define each abbreviation in parentheses the first time it is used (even if it has already been defined in the Abstract). For more than 10 symbols include a separate table in the text defining symbols (with units, as applicable). For more than 10 abbreviations, include a list of abbreviations.

• **Tables**: Tables should be numbered and referred to sequentially in the text. Each table should have a short descriptive heading. Additional details, explanation of symbols, etc., should follow. All text contained in the table(s) should be in Palatino Linotype font. The style for the use of units must be consistent with that described below, under Units. **Tables can be embedded in the main manuscript Microsoft Word file for review but must be provided as individual separate files in Microsoft Word table format upon minor review or acceptance of the manuscript.**

• **Units**: only standard International System of Units (SI) and accepted non-SI units should be used (for guidance see: http://www.bipm.org/en/measurement-units/ and download their brochure).

• **Statistical tests**: these should be clearly defined and statistical significance should be shown in both figures and tables by superscripts. Statistical terms (e.g. t, P, p, n etc.) must always be italicised.

• **Figures**: eCM Journal does not accept supplementary data figures for publication – all figures must be included in the main figure sequence, i.e., extra figures, included in the Discussion with Reviewers section, should have consecutive numbers following the figure numbers in the paper itself. The only exceptions are Omics data files and video files that are made available from the paper’s web page. In addition, all uncropped, original gel images (western, PCR, etc.) must be uploaded as supplementary figures for review purposes only. Number each figure (including line drawings) and refer to each figure in sequence in the text. Multiple illustrations within each figure must be designated (lower case bold, upper left side of the illustration) as a, b, c etc. and referred to as such in the figure legend. Such multiple illustration figures should be supplied already assembled as a single jpg/tif file that will fit onto a single A4 page at a minimum resolution of 400 dpi. Each figure must have a short descriptive heading and a comprehensive legend, all supplied as a list at the end of main text document. The style for the use of units must be consistent with that described above, under Units. All figures must be supplied in the form of jpg or tif files and named fig_1, fig_2, etc., as high resolution (at minimum 400 dpi). **Figures can be embedded in the manuscript main MS Word file but must be provided as separate high-resolution images upon minor review or acceptance of the manuscript.**

• **Figure legend**: each figure must have a separate legend. The legend should include: Fig. x. (in bold), a short descriptive heading (in bold), followed by the caption text. The text should provide
a comprehensive description of the figure panel(s) and scale-line dimension(s), if it is not already included in the image. Use arrows or letters of sufficient size to point out features in figures.

**Publication**

Each paper has its own Web page with the paper title, DOI, authors and address listed. Abstract, graphical abstract and list of key words are also included. The final pdf version of the paper can be downloaded from this page. There is no paper-printed version of the journal. Authors may freely distribute the pdf file of their own paper, though we prefer that they refer any interested party to the paper on the open-access eCM Journal website.

**Note:** eCM advertises published papers through social media avenues (such as, but not limited to LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc.).

**Copyright**

**The copyright of each paper/manuscript remains with the author(s) (or author’s employer).** Authors must warrant that their work is original, has not been published by another journal and does not infringe any pre-existing copyright.

When a manuscript is accepted for publication by eCM Journal, the authors must agree not to submit the same material to another journal in any language. An exception is allowed if the published material appears as a part of a review article or book chapter. In such cases, the original paper/manuscript in eCM Journal must be acknowledged.

All eCM papers are published under the Creative Commons license Attribution-2.0 Generic (CC-BY). The paper/manuscript may also be stored on academic Digital Repositories, kindly asking for a URL to the original article web page (not direct to the pdf) to be included.

**Figure reproduction** from eCM Journal papers as a part of a review article or book chapter is allowed with kind acknowledgement of the source ([www.ecmjournal.org](http://www.ecmjournal.org)), but only if the new publication is distributed under the same license.

**Graphical abstract**

**General**

The graphical abstract is one single-panel, horizontal (landscape orientation) rectangular image that is designed to give readers an immediate understanding of the take-home message of the paper. It should be simple, but informative.

**Technical requirements** are as follows:

- Size: 858 × 229 pixels (X-Y axes) at 400 dpi.
- Font style: Arial
- Font size: 10-16
- Accepted file type: PNG, JPG
- Content: the abstract should summarise the findings of the manuscript
- Colours: Effective use of colour is encouraged for increasing the aesthetic quality of the graphical abstracts and directing the reader’s attention to focal points of interest
- The graphical abstracts should be drawn within a box of the indicated size (858 × 229 pixels)

**Content**

The graphical abstract should:

- Have a clear start and end, "reading" from left to right
- Emphasise the take-home message of the paper
- Not include data items of any type; all the content should be in a graphical form
- Use simple labels
- The use of text should be limited

**Example 1.**

- The panel tells a story from left to right
- Names are present only in the first panel for designation of the objects
- Italics font is used for bacteria names (or any Latin-origin name)
Example 2.
- The panel tells a story from left to right.
- The bottom legend clarifies the meaning of the abstract objects.