General

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The potential clinical relevance of the work must be mentioned briefly at the end of the Abstract (max. 250 words) and in more detail in the Discussion. Scientific Editors 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 and the submission fee will be lost.

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A letter of submission (signed by ALL authors) MUST be included within the paper submission. In its absence, the paper will be unsubmitted. The letter of submission must contain the Worldpay Transaction ID to confirm submission fee payment. Download the eCM_Letter of Submission template.

This letter must declare:

- any potential conflicts of interest
- support from any commercial sources
- exclusively submission of the manuscript to eCM
- ethical guidelines conformation of the animal study, if applicable
- approval by all named authors
- authors contribution to the manuscript from a minimum of two of the four major parts of the submitted work (1. Planning, 2. Data collection, 3. Data analysis, 4. Manuscript preparation and editing)
- absence of "gift authorships"
- authors consideration of the protection of intellectual property associated with the work.

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 (sometimes including 1 or 2 suggested by the authors) and the manuscript enters the automatically-controlled review process. A copy of each reviewer’s report is sent to the SE, who use them to guide his/her recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief, who informs the authors on behalf of the journal. Manuscripts can commonly require two or three resubmissions before being accepted for publication.

Possible decisions are:

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When resubmitting a revised manuscript, you **MUST** respond fully to **ALL** the comments made by the reviewer(s), 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 originally submitted copy of the manuscript cannot be changed. Instead, a new copy of the manuscript must 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 are available when the revised manuscript is uploaded. Please delete all redundant files before completing the resubmission.

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- Authors and affiliations list
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- Abstract
- Key Words
- Corresponding Author details
- Introduction
- Materials and Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- Acknowledgements
- References
- Discussion with reviewers
- Detailed specification on style (text, headings, equations, symbols, abbreviations, tables, units, statistical tests, figures).

- General: the submitted manuscript must be formatted as a single-spaced plain Microsoft Word format document using Palatino Linotype font. No attempt should be made 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). Do not include any embedded styles.
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- **Running Title:** an informative running title, of no more than 50 characters. *Italic font should be used.*
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- **Key Words:** up to 10 key words or phrases, separated by commas. Do not use abbreviations in the key words.
- **Corresponding author details (note: only one):** full name, full mailing address, telephone number(s), fax number (optional) and e-mail address.
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**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 from a hospital, the ethics permission must be mentioned. If patient consent forms were used, these must be mentioned. The minimum number of human donors required is 3. **Note:** the use of pooled human donor cells should be avoided. When unavoidable, their use needs to be justified convincingly within the manuscript (and within the cover letter)

- **Results:** this section should succinctly state the results without any lengthy discussion or interpretation of individual data. Conclusions should **NOT** be stated in the Results section. Tabular data should not repeat what 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. Mention your file type and size in the comments section and letter of submission.
- **Discussion:** it 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 must show the potential clinical relevance of the work.** If the study only produces an incremental step in knowledge, the paper will not be published.

- **Conclusions:** where possible and reasonable, some conclusion should be made about the wider implications of the study findings, but the conclusion must respect the results presented and not be exaggerated.

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

- **References**
  
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  Include all references relevant to the paper. References can be made only to readily available published work and to papers in press. Where papers do not yet have final volume and page numbers, but are available electronically with a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) number, then the DOI number must be quoted. Unpublished results, submitted manuscripts, conference abstracts and personal communications must not be included in the reference list, but can be acknowledged in the text (in parentheses). **Important:** all references cited in the paper and the names and date in the text must match those in the reference list. **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) (use italics for et al.). 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].

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  **Reference list style**

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name and city of publisher or alternatively full availability information, as well as the page-range must be included.

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### Style specifications

- **Text**
- **Headings**
- **Equations**
- **Symbols and abbreviations**
- **Tables**
- **Units**
- **Statistical tests**
- **Figures**
- **Legends**

- **Text**: all text must be in **Palatino Linotype font**. Each paragraph should be clearly indented with a **tab character** (default tab stop 0.75 cm). Sentences should be separated by **single spaces only**. Greek and other symbols should be entered using the standard Microsoft Word **Insert Symbol** tool that uses the **Palatino Linotype** font. **Symbol font should NOT be used.**

  **Tenses**: 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. All headings must conform to these categories.

- **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.

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- **Tables**: tables MUST be provided as individual separate files in Microsoft Word table format. Tables should NOT be embedded in the main manuscript Microsoft Word file. 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. Tables must fit into either one column (8 cm wide), or two columns (i.e. 17 cm wide). Each table must fit onto a single A4 page, when a 9 pt font size is used for the included text. Where a table needs to be larger than a single A4 page, then it must be split into the required number of tables and labelled appropriately (e.g. Table 1a, 1b, etc.) and provided as separate Microsoft Word files. All letters and numbers in tables should be at least 9 pt size. Tables must not be supplied as bitmap images (e.g. jpg or tiff files), as the reproduction quality is usually unacceptable. The style for the use of units must be consistent with that described below, under Units.

- **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). The correct SI unit for litres, 'L' should always be used. **There must always be a space between the number and the unit** (e.g. 10 mL), including temperature (e.g. 10 °C) and percentage (e.g. 10 %), but not degree angle (e.g. 45° angle). The space must be a non-break space (Ctrl+Shift+Spacebar). Standard abbreviations for time units (s, min, h, d) must always be used – the forms ‘sec’, ‘mins’ and ‘hrs’ are not acceptable. Please note that ‘weeks’, ‘months’ and ‘years’ should not be abbreviated. For centrifugation speeds the Relative Centrifugal Force (RCF) value should be used, designated by ‘×g’, following the value (e.g. 2,000 ×g). Please note that the ‘g’ must be in italic.

- **Statistical tests**: these should be clearly defined and statistical significance should be shown in both figures and tables by superscripts of a, b, c, rather than *, ¶, # or other non-sequential symbols. 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 (no exception to this rule is allowed, even if several figures are mounted to form a plate). Multiple illustrations within each figure must
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Technical requirements are as follows:
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- Font size: 10-16
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- 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)

![Diagram Example 1](image)

**Example 2.**
- The panel tells a story from left to right
- The bottom legend clarifies the meaning of the abstract objects

![Diagram Example 2](image)