

Developing guidelines for better reporting of health research

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A paper published in this week's issue of *PLoS Medicine* provides a substantial new resource for the developers of guidelines of the reporting of health research. The authors of the paper have been key in the development of many of the most important health research guidelines published over the past few years, including the CONSORT guidelines for clinical trials and the PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews.

The accurate reporting of a study is key to the understanding of the importance of the study. Before the development of CONSORT, for example, there was no consensus on what must be reported in order for a reader to accurately assess the validity of a trial. Hence, even such important items such as method of randomization and the primary outcome of the trial were routinely left out, leading to studies being reported in a misleading fashion.

The authors of this report are part of a larger group of experts who have for many years been advocating for, and producing [guidelines](#) aimed at the improvement of reporting of health research. The importance of these guidelines is now increasingly recognized by the wider research community, and, moreover, they are increasingly required by journals. In addition to individual guidelines this group has also spearheaded the development of an overarching network, the EQUATOR Network, which contains most of the currently developed guidelines - <http://www.equator-network.org/>. This paper represents a further effort to promote better reporting" As the authors note "If reporting guidelines are to be useful and more widely disseminated, they need to be developed using robust and widely accepted methodologies.

More information: Moher D, Schulz KF, Simera I, Altman DG (2010) Guidance for Developers of Health Research Reporting Guidelines. *PLoS Med* 7(2): e1000217. [doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000217](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000217)

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