

***Cases in Public Health Communication & Marketing***  
**Volume 3: Style Decisions**

References and Overall Style

AMA style for references and overall submission style. Online resource:

- <http://www.amamanualofstyle.com/oso/public/index.html>

Grammar and Punctuation Conventions

- Abstract word limit: 250 words.
- Acronyms and abbreviations: spell out the first time they are used, with the abbreviation in parentheses. Use the abbreviation thereafter.
- Capitalize the names of any theories (and include references).
- “e.g.” can substitute for the phrase “for example”, and “i.e.” for “in other words.” Both should be offset, on both sides, with commas. Example:
  - “A variety of media were used, e.g., television, radio, and newspaper ads.”
- Use one space, not two, between a period and the start of the next sentence.
- Digits: Spell it out:
  1. When the number is between one and nine: “eight of 18 participants”
  2. At the start of a sentence: “Fourteen adults and 19 children attended the event.”
    - Otherwise, use numerals.
- Percentages: when beginning a sentence, spell out the number and the word ‘percent’. When midsentence, use numerals and the ‘%’ symbol. Examples:
  - Ninety-four percent of respondents agreed with the statement.
  - After the intervention, 94% of respondents agreed with the statement.
- Numerical ranges: use hyphens, not dashes. Example:
  - “Respondents age 15-24 agreed with the statement,” not “Respondents age 15 – 24 agreed with the statement.”
- Sample size: n for sample size, N for population size
- Assume USD for all dollar amounts. If not, specify.
- Define non-English words when they are first used, and italicize them throughout.

Specific Word Conventions

- at-risk: lowercase, with a hyphen
- email: lowercase, without a hyphen
- health care: lowercase; as two words, not one
- health communication: lowercase, singular (not health communications)
- health-related: lowercase, with a hyphen
- high-tech: lowercase, with a hyphen (not hi-tech)
- Internet: capitalized; not World Wide Web
- low-income: lowercase, with a hyphen
- online: lowercase, without a hyphen

- pre-test and post-test: lowercase, with hyphens. When together in a sentence, can use “pre- and post-test.”
- re-entry: lowercase, with a hyphen
- sexually transmitted disease vs. sexually transmitted infection: depends on context
- U.S.: capitalized, with periods. Spell out “United States” the first time it is mentioned.
- underserved: lowercase, as one word, without a hyphen
- website: lowercase, as one word, without a hyphen

General rule regarding hyphenation: if two words are used together as an adjective, such as “high-tech strategies,” a hyphen should be used. If they are not modifying anything, such as “the population was at risk of becoming dehydrated,” no hyphen should be used.

**Questions/Clarification:** Please contact the Cases Editors ([gwcases@gmail.com](mailto:gwcases@gmail.com)) with any questions regarding these and other style issues.