



REFLECT

Reporting Guidelines for Randomized Controlled Trials for Livestock and Food Safety

Information for journals considering endorsing The REFLECT Statement

Q. What is the purpose of reporting guidelines such as The REFLECT Statement?

A. The purpose of reporting guidelines such as the REFLECT statement is to provide the readership of journals with a full and accurate trial report. A full and accurate trial report allows for reproduction and critical appraisal. Reporting guidelines are not quality assessment tools. The best known reporting guideline is the CONSORT statement for randomized trials in human medicine¹⁻³.

CONSORT is a set of reporting recommendations—it does not make statements on how trials should be done, but asks that what was done should be fully and accurately reported.⁴

Q. Is there evidence that reporting guidelines impact quality reporting?

A. There is evidence that use of reporting guidelines is associated with improved reporting although many issues remain⁵.

Q. How do journals use reporting guidelines such as The REFLECT Statement?

A. Journals have several options such as

- 1) Referring authors to the reporting guideline such as The REFLECT Statement in the Instructions for Authors.
- 2) Requiring authors include a completed checklist from an appropriate reporting guideline with manuscript submission as a supplemental file.*
- 3) Referring reviewers to the reporting guidelines when soliciting a review.
- 4) Providing a copy of reporting guideline such as The REFLECT Statement to the reviewers.
- 5) Providing the authors completed checklist to reviewers to assist in the review.

Q. What does endorsement of The REFLECT Statement mean for a journal?

A. Mention of reporting guideline by name in the Instructions for Authors is considered sufficient for endorsement. For example “Authors are encouraged to consult The REFLECT Statement when preparing manuscripts describing randomized controlled trials for publication”. There is no commitment or legal obligation. The REFLECT Statement is published under the Creative Commons License and may be freely used with appropriate attribution (www.reflect-statement.org).

* This approach is adopted by British Medical Journal and preferred by the REFLECT Statement steering committee. By asking for a completed checklist authors are compelled to address the checklist items. This checklist may or may not be provided to the reviewer.

1. Moher D, Schulz KF, Altman D. The CONSORT statement: revised recommendations for improving the quality of reports of parallel-group randomized trials. *JAMA* 2001;285:1987-1991.
2. Moher D, Schulz KF, Altman DG. The CONSORT statement: revised recommendations for improving the quality of reports of parallel-group randomised trials. *Lancet* 2001;357:1191-1194.
3. Moher D, Schulz KF, Altman DG. The CONSORT statement: revised recommendations for improving the quality of reports of parallel-group randomized trials. *Ann Intern Med* 2001;134:657-662.
4. Altman DG, Schulz KF, Moher D. Turning a blind eye: testing the success of blinding and the CONSORT statement. *BMJ* 2004;328:1135; author reply 1136.
5. Plint AC, Moher D, Morrison A, et al. Does the CONSORT checklist improve the quality of reports of randomised controlled trials? A systematic review. *Med J Aust* 2006;185:263-267.