

# INSTRUCTION FOR AUTHORS

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## SCOPE

**Open Life Sciences** is an international peer-reviewed open access journal that publishes original research, reviews and news in the all areas of life sciences. Our central goal is to provide a hub for researchers working across all species to present their discoveries, and to be a forum for the discussion of the important issues in the field. The journal accommodates a variety of exposition styles and formats to help scientists with diverse backgrounds interact.

## PUBLICATION FORMATS

Open Life Sciences considers submissions of:

- Research Articles,
- Communications,
- Rapid Communications\*,
- Reviews, and Commentaries
- Letters to the Editor,
- Erratum,

\*Rapid Communications are intended to present information of exceptional novelty and exciting results of significant interest to the readers. Authors are asked to provide an explanation in the cover letter why their contribution should be handled via the rapid channel.

## ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

All submissions to Open Life Sciences must be made via online submission system Editorial Manager at <http://www.editorialmanager.com/openbiol/default.aspx>. Please note that the journal has Article Processing Charges (APCs) introduced. Please check the journal website for more information: [http://www.degruyter.com/view/supplement/s23915412\\_Article\\_Processing\\_Charge.pdf](http://www.degruyter.com/view/supplement/s23915412_Article_Processing_Charge.pdf).

Manuscripts submitted under multiple authorship are reviewed on the assumption that all listed authors concur in the submission and are responsible for its content; they must have agreed to its publication and have given the corresponding author the authority to act on their behalf in all matters pertaining to publication. The corresponding author is responsible for informing the co-authors of the manuscript status throughout the submission, review, and production process.

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The journal uses a single-blind peer review system (the names of the reviewers are hidden from the authors). Submitted manuscripts are reviewed by two or more experts. Reviewers are asked to recommend whether a manuscript should be accepted, revised or rejected. Although the journal uses the plagiarism detection system [CrossCheck](#), reviewers should alert the editors if they suspect any issues relating to author misconduct such as plagiarism.

Reviewers are asked to provide detailed, constructive comments that will help both the editors make a decision on the publication and the author(s) to improve their manuscript. They should point out whether the work has serious flaws that preclude its publication, or whether additional experiments should be carried out or additional data should be collected to support the conclusions drawn.

## Electronic Formats Allowed

We accept submission of text, tables and figures as separate files or as a composite file. For your initial submission, we recommend you upload your entire manuscript, including tables and figures, as a single PDF file. If you are invited to submit a revised manuscript, please provide us with individual files: an editable text and publication-quality figures.

Text files can be submitted in the following formats: MS Word - standard DOCUMENT (.DOC) or RICH TEXT FORMAT (.RTF); PDF (not applicable for re-submitted or accepted manuscripts, see below).

Tables should be submitted as MS Word or PDF (not applicable for re-submitted or accepted manuscripts, see below). Please note that a straight Excel file is not an acceptable format.

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Any articles that have been prepared in LaTeX will be accepted for review, but only in PDF format. Post-acceptance, text files of the revised manuscript and tables are required for use in the production. Authors should clearly indicate the location(s) of

tables and figures in the text if these elements are given separately or at the end of the manuscript. If this information is not provided to the editorial office, we will assume that they should be left at the end of the text.

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It is important that authors include a cover letter with their manuscript. Please explain why you consider your manuscript to be suitable for publication in the Journal, why your paper will inspire the other members of your field, and how will it drive research forward.

The letter should contain all important details such as:

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- e-mail of the corresponding author
- contact address, telephone/fax numbers of the corresponding author
- number of attached files, if there is more than one
- status: new, reviewed or accepted (with reference ID if reviewed or accepted)

The cover letter should explicitly state that the manuscript (or one with substantially the same content, by any of the authors) has not been previously published in any language anywhere and that it is not under simultaneous consideration or in press by another journal. If related work has been submitted, then we may require a preprint to be made available. Reviewers will be asked to comment on the overlap between the related submissions.

Manuscripts that have been previously rejected, or withdrawn after being returned for modification, may be resubmitted if the major criticisms have been addressed. The cover letter must state that the manuscript is a resubmission, and the former manuscript number should be provided.

To ensure fair and objective decision-making, authors must declare any associations that pose a conflict of interest in connection with evaluated manuscripts (see Editorial Policy for details). Authors may suggest up to two referees not to use, and in such cases additional justification should be provided in the cover letter. Authors are encouraged to recommend up to five reviewers who are not members of their institution(s) and have never been associated with them or their laboratory(ies); please provide contact information for suggested reviewers. The Editors reserve the right to select expert reviewers at their discretion.

## Submission of Revised Articles

Resubmitted manuscripts should be accompanied by a letter outlining a point-by-point response to Journal Editor's and reviewers' comments and detailing the changes made to the manuscript. A copy of the original manuscript should be included for comparison if the Journal Editor requests one. If it is the first revision, authors need to return the revised manuscript within 28 days; if it is the second revision, authors need to return the revised manuscript within 14 days. Additional time for resubmission must be requested in advance. If the above mentioned deadlines are not met, the manuscript will be treated as a new submission.

For resubmitted manuscripts, please provide us with an editable text and publication-quality figures: Tables also need to be included within an editable article file or be submitted separately as editable files. Supply any figures as separate high-resolution, print-ready digital versions.

In addition to the editorial remarks, authors are asked to take care that they have prepared the revised version according to the Journal's style. Please adopt numbered citation (citation-sequence) style referencing.

## PREPARATION OF MANUSCRIPTS

It is essential that contributors prepare their manuscripts according to the instructions and specifications presented below.

### Reporting Guidelines

De Gruyter Open supports the development of the reporting of biomedical research. Authors of reviews in health sciences are recommended to refer to [guidelines of the EQUATOR Network](#) and [NLM's Research Reporting Guidelines and Initiatives](#). The similar reporting checklist for biological and biomedical research may be found at [MIBBI website](#). Guidelines are available for a number of study designs, including ([CONSORT](#)) for randomized controlled trials, ([PRISMA](#)) for systematic reviews and meta-analyses, ([STROBE](#)) for observational studies, ([STARD](#)) for diagnostic accuracy studies, ([RATS](#)) for qualitative studies.

## General Rules for Writing

The work must demonstrate its novelty, importance to the field and its interest to biomedical community in general. Conclusions must be justified by the study; please make your argumentation complete and be self-critical as you review your drafts.

The Journal encourages the submission of both substantial full-length bodies of work and shorter manuscripts that report novel findings that might be based on a more limited range of experiments. There are no specific length restrictions for the overall manuscript or individual sections; however, we urge the authors to present and discuss their findings in a concise and accessible manner.

Use simple, declarative sentences and commonly understood terms; avoid long sentences and idle words. Please use active voice while writing your manuscript; e.g. 'we measured snout-vent length' rather than 'snout-vent length was measured'. We recommend that for clarity you use the past tense to narrate particular events in the past, including the procedures, observations, and data of the study that you are reporting. Use the present tense for your own general conclusions, the conclusions of previous researchers, and generally accepted facts. Thus, most of the Abstract, Methods, and Results should be in the past tense, and most of the Introduction and some of the Discussion should be in the present tense. Editors may make suggestions for how to improve clarity and readability, as well as to strengthen the argument.

## Organization of the Manuscript

Articles should be organized into the following sections:

- Title page with: Title (and running title)
- Abstract
- Keywords
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Acknowledgments
- References
- Figure Legends and Table Captions
- Tables
- Figures
- Supplemental data (if applicable)

Each of these elements is detailed below. We draw particular attention to the importance of carefully preparing the title, keywords and abstract, as these elements are indicators of the manuscript content in bibliographic databases and search engines.

### Title

We suggest the title should be informative, specific to the project, yet concise (75 characters or fewer). Please bear in mind that a title that is comprehensible to a broad scientific audience and readers outside your field will attract a wider readership. Avoid specialist abbreviations and non-standard acronyms. Titles should not be presented in title case (words should not be capitalized). Please also provide a brief "running title" of not more than 50 characters.

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1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work;
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
3. Final approval of the version to be published;
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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- Postal code
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- Country

One of the authors should be designated as the corresponding author to whom inquiries regarding the paper should be directed. It is the corresponding author's responsibility to ensure that the author list and the summary of the author contributions to the study are accurate and complete. Place an asterisk after the name of the corresponding author and provide us with a valid e-mail address. Footnotes can be used to present additional information (for example: permanent, adequate, present postal addresses). If the article has been submitted on behalf of a consortium, all consortium members and affiliations should be listed after the [Acknowledgments](#).

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## Abstract and Image accompanying abstract

The abstract should not exceed 200 words. The abstract should give a summary of the content of the paper and is usually conceptually divided into: Background, Methodology, Principal Findings/Results, and Conclusions/Significance. Mention the techniques used without going into methodological detail and summarize briefly the most important items of the paper. Please do not include any citations or references to tables or figures, and avoid specialist abbreviations and symbols. Because the abstract will be published separately by abstracting services, it must be complete and understandable without reference to the text.

Authors may provide a striking image to accompany their article, if one is available. If the image (photo, graph, scheme) is judged by the editors to be suitable for publication, it may be featured on the web to highlight the paper online. It is preferable, but not essential, that these should be related strictly to the subject reported in the manuscript. The image could originate from the experimental findings reported in the manuscript but does not have to constitute a part of the original work and need not be reprinted in the article. Images must be original and should be submitted as separate files.

## Keywords

List keywords for the work presented (maximum of 10), separated by commas. We suggest that keywords do not replicate those used in the title. Authors should use keywords that are specific and emphasize what is essential in the presented study.

## Introduction

The introduction should put the focus of the manuscript into a broader context and should supply sufficient background information to allow the reader to understand and evaluate the results without referring to previous publications on the topic. As you compose the introduction, think of readers who are not experts in this field. Include a brief review of the key literature - use only those references required to provide the most salient background rather than an exhaustive review of the topic. Relevant controversies or disagreements in the field should be mentioned so that a non-expert reader can delve into these issues further. The introduction should conclude with a brief statement of the rationale for the study, the hypothesis that was addressed or the overall purpose of the experiments reported, and should provide a comment about whether that aim was achieved.

## Methods

This section should include sufficient technical information to enable the experiments to be reproduced. Protocols for new methods or significant modifications to existing methods should be included, while previously published or well-established protocols should only be referenced. Describe new methods completely and give sources of unusual chemicals, equipment, strains etc. Studies presented should comply with our recommendations for distribution of materials and data (see below). In theoretical papers comprising the computational analyses, technical details (methods, models applied or newly developed) should be provided to enable the readers to reproduce the calculations.

## Results

This section should provide statistical analyses of all of the experiments that are required to support the conclusions of the paper. Reserve extensive interpretation of the results for the Discussion section. Details of experiments that are peripheral to the main thrust of the article and that detract from the focus of the article should not be included. Present the results as concisely as possible in text, table(s), or figure(s) (see below). Avoid extensive use of graphs to present data that might be more concisely presented in the text or tables. Graphs illustrating methods commonly used need not be shown except in unusual circumstances. Limit photographs to those that are absolutely necessary to show the experimental findings. Number figures and tables in the order in which they are cited in the text, and be sure to cite all figures and tables. Styles and fonts should match those in the main body of the article. Large datasets, including raw data, should be submitted as supporting files. The section may be divided into subsections, each with a concise subheading.

## Discussion

The Discussion should provide an interpretation of the results in relation to previously published work and to the experimental system used. It should not contain extensive repetition of the Results or reiteration of the Introduction. This section should spell out the major conclusions of the work along with some explanation or speculation on the significance of these conclusions. The discussion should be concise and tightly argued.

## Acknowledgments

This section should describe sources of funding that have supported the work. Please also describe the role of the study sponsor(s), if any, in study design; collection, analysis, and interpretation of data; writing of the paper; and decision to submit it for publication. Recognition of personal assistance should be given as a separate paragraph: people who contributed to the work, but do not fit the criteria for authors should be listed along with their contributions. You must ensure that anyone named in the acknowledgments agrees to being so named. Following the [Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals](#) from the [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\)](#) editors are advised to require that the corresponding author obtain written permission to be acknowledged from all acknowledged individuals.

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## References

Because all references will be linked electronically to the papers they cite, proper formatting of the references is crucial. A complete reference should give the reader enough information to find the relevant article. Please pay particular attention to spelling, capitalization and punctuation.

References to unpublished or submitted work, unpublished conference presentations, personal communications, patent applications and patents pending, computer software, databases, and websites should be referred to as such only in the body of the text. These should be kept to a minimum. The examples are as follows:

(J. Smith, unpublished data),

(J. Smith and P. Brown, submitted for publication),

(J. Smith, personal communication),

(J. Smith and P. Brown, presented at the 4th Symposium on Food Microbiology, Overton, IL, 13 - 15 June 1989),

(J. C. Odell, April 1970, Process for batch culturing, U.S. patent 484,363,770),

(J. Smith, 20 June 1999, Australian Patent Office),

... from the GenBank database (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Genbank/index.html>),

... using ABC software (version 2.2; Department of Microbiology, State University, <http://www.stu.micro>),

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For all references, list the first six authors; add "et al." if there are additional authors. [Standard abbreviations of journal names according to the style used for MEDLINE](#) should be used.

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### Published Papers

Kulig P., Zabel B.A., Dubin G., Allen S.J., Ohyama T., Potempa J., et al., Staphylococcus aureus-derived staphopain B, a potent cysteine protease activator of plasma chemerin, *J. Immunol.*, 2007, 178, 3713-3720

### **Accepted Papers**

Kulig P., Zabel B.A., Dubin G., Allen S.J., Ohyama T., Potempa J., et al., Staphylococcus aureus-derived staphopain B, a potent cysteine protease activator of plasma chemerin, *J. Immunol.*, (in press), DOI: 12.3412/01

### **Electronic Journal Articles**

Dionne M.S., Schneider D.S., Screening the immune system, *Genome Biol.*, 2002, <http://genomebiology.com/2002/3/4/reviews/1010>

### **Books and book chapters**

Sambrook J., Russell D.W., *Molecular cloning - a laboratory manual*, 3rd ed., Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor, 2001

### **Theses**

Agutter A.J., Analysis of sigma factors in *S. aureus*, PhD thesis, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh, UK, 1995

### **Conference proceedings**

Smith J., Brown P., Reference style guide, In: M. Scott (Ed.), *Proceedings of Biochemical Society Conference (11-13 July 2007, Warszawa, Poland)*, Versita Warsaw, 2007, 1335-1791

### **Newspaper articles**

Sherwin A., The post-genomic era, *The Times*, 13 July 2007, 1-2

M. Dzierzanowski, *Horyzonty, Wprost*, 8 July 2007, 18 (in Polish)

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Authors may use photographs, schemes, diagrams, line graphs and bar charts to illustrate their findings. Figures included with online submissions should be suitable for onscreen viewing and desktop printing. High resolution images should be provided on request or on manuscript acceptance. The figures and their lettering should be clear and easy to read, e.g., no labels should be too large or too small. Photomicrographs should include a scaled bar and indicate the size. We remind authors that it is not acceptable scientific conduct to modify any separate element within an image (adjustments of the entire image in brightness, contrast and color balance are justified only if they do not misrepresent the original, observed data). Composite figures composed of grouped images such as insets from different fields or separate parts of gels must be explained in the figure legend and differentiated by use of dividing lines or other means to make composites unambiguous. Figures should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals and referred to in the text by number. Figure legends should follow the main text, each on a separate page. Each figure legend should have a concise title and should provide enough information so that the figure is understandable without frequent reference to the text. It should inform the reader of key aspects of the figure, but the figure should also be discussed in the text. The legend should be succinct, while still explaining all symbols and abbreviations. Avoid lengthy descriptions of methods.

## **Tables and Table Captions**

Tables must include enough information to warrant table format and should be used only where information cannot be presented in the text. Tables should be typed as text, using either 'tabs' or a table editor for layout; please do not use graphics software to create tables. Tables occupying more than one printed page should be avoided, if possible; larger tables can be published as an appendix. Do not use picture elements, text boxes, tabs, or returns in tables. Tables that contain artwork, chemical structures, or shading must be submitted as illustrations. Tables should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals and referred to in the text by number. Table legends should follow the main text, each on a separate page. Each table should have an explanatory caption which should be as concise as possible. The headings should be sufficiently clear so that the meaning of the data is understandable without reference to the text. Footnotes can be used to explain abbreviations but should not include detailed descriptions of the experiment. Citations should be indicated using the same style as outlined above.

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In-line equations should be typed as text. The use of graphics programs and 'equation editors' should be avoided.

## Abbreviations

Please keep abbreviations to a minimum. In addition to abbreviations for Systeme International d'Unités (SI) units of measurement, other common units (e.g., bp, kb, and Da), and chemical symbols for the elements, the following should be used without definition: DNA; cDNA; RNA; cRNA; RNase; DNase; rRNA; mRNA; tRNA; AMP, ADP, ATP, dAMP, ddATP, GTP, etc.; ATPase, dGTPase, etc.; NAD; NAD<sup>+</sup>; NADH; NADP; NADPH; NADP<sup>+</sup>; poly(A), poly(dT), etc.; oligo(dT), etc.; UV; PFU; CFU; MIC; Tris; DEAE; EDTA; EGTA; HEPES; PCR; and AIDS. Abbreviations for cell lines (e.g., HeLa) as well as viruses (e.g., HIV-1, JC virus, BK virus) also need not be defined. Non-standard abbreviations should not be used unless they appear at least three times in the text. List all non-standard abbreviations, acronyms and symbols in alphabetical order, along with their expanded form, at the end of the text. Define them as well upon first use in the text.

## Supplemental Material

We encourage authors to submit essential supplementary files that additionally support the authors' conclusions along with their manuscripts (the principal conclusions should be fully supported without referral to the supplemental material). Supplemental material will always remain associated with its article and is not subject to any modifications after publication. The decision to publish the material with the article if it is accepted will be made by the Editor. Supporting files of no more than 10 MB in may be submitted in a variety of formats, but should be publication-ready, as these files will be published exactly as supplied. Material must be restricted to large or complex data sets or results that cannot be readily displayed because of space or technical limitations. Material that has been published previously is not acceptable for posting as supplemental material.

Supporting files should fall into one of the following categories:

- Dataset
- Additional Figure or Table
- Text
- Protocol
- Multimedia - Audio/Video/Animations (AVI, MPEG, WAV, Quicktime, animated GIF or Flash)

If the software required for users to view/use the supplemental material is not embedded in the file, you are urged to use shareware or generally available/easily accessible programs. To prevent any misunderstandings, we request that authors submit a text file (instruction.txt) containing a brief instruction on how to use the files supplied. All supporting information should be referred to in the manuscript, with titles (and, if desired, legends) for all files listed under the heading 'Supporting Information'.

## Nomenclature

We strongly recommend the use of correct and established nomenclature wherever possible. Always report numerical data (length, weight, and volume) in the appropriate SI units. Please refer to International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) recommendations available for standard metric units. For these units and for molarity, use the prefixes ( $p = 10^{-12}$ ,  $n = 10^{-9}$ ,  $\mu = 10^{-6}$ ,  $m = 10^{-3}$ ,  $c = 10^{-2}$ ,  $d = 10^{-1}$ ,  $h = 10^2$ ,  $k = 10^3$ ,  $M = 10^6$ ,  $G = 10^9$ , etc.). Use  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  or  $\mu\text{g/g}$  in place of the ambiguous ppm. When fractions are used to express units, it is preferable to use whole units, such as 'g' or 'min', in the denominator instead of fractional or multiple units, such as  $\mu\text{g}$  or 10 min (for example 'pmol/min' is preferable to 'nmol/10 min', and ' $\mu\text{mol/g}$ ' is preferable to 'nmol/ $\mu\text{g}$ '). It is also preferable that an unambiguous form such as exponential notation be used; for example, ' $\mu\text{mol g}^{-1} \text{min}^{-1}$ ' is preferable to ' $\mu\text{mol/g/min}$ '. Units of temperature are presented in degrees centigrade (i.e. 37°C).

The recognized authority for the names of chemical compounds is Chemical Abstracts. For guidelines to the use of biochemical terminology, consult Biochemical Nomenclature and Related Documents. Do not express molecular weight in Daltons: molecular weight is a unitless ratio; molecular mass is expressed in daltons. For enzymes, use the recommended name assigned by the Nomenclature Committee of the International Union of Biochemistry. Use the EC number when one has been assigned.

For genes, proteins, strains, clones etc. use the recommended name by consulting the appropriate genetic nomenclature database. Genes, mutations, genotypes, and alleles should be indicated in italics; protein products of the loci are not italicized. It is sometimes advisable to indicate the synonyms for the gene the first time it appears in the text. Gene prefixes such as those used for oncogenes or cellular localization should be shown in roman: *v-fes*, *c-MYC*, etc.

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All pages must be numbered consecutively. The whole text (including legends, footnotes, and references) should be formatted double-spaced with no hyphenation and automatic word-wrap (no hard returns within paragraphs). Please type your text consistently, e.g. take care to distinguish between '1' (one), 'l' (capital l) and 'l' (lower-case l) and '0' (zero) and 'O' (capital O), etc. Manuscript pages should have line numbers. The font size should be no smaller than 12 points.

Footnotes and endnotes should be avoided. Allowable footnotes/endnotes may include: the designation of the corresponding author of the paper, the current address of an author (if different from that shown in the affiliation), abbreviations and acronyms.

Do not create symbols as graphics or use special fonts that are external to your word processing program; use the "insert symbol" function. Indicate paragraph lead-ins in bold type and italicize any words that should appear in italics. All Latin names should be italicized, including species names and common structures such as: *et al.*; *in vivo*; *in vitro*; *ex vivo*; *in silico*; etc.; *de novo*; *a priori*; *ab initio*; *vice versa*; *in situ*; *ad hoc*; *sensu stricto*; *i.e.*; *ca.* /circa; *n.b.* /nota bene. Decimal multiples or submultiples of units are indicated by the use of prefixes. There should be a single space between most units and the corresponding number; the only exceptions are: 1%, 1‰, 1°C, 1°, 1', 1".

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The publication of an article in the journal is subject to the understanding that authors will make all data and associated protocols available to readers on request. The Methods section should include details of how materials and information may be obtained. In cases of dispute, authors may be required to make any primary data available to the Journal Editor.

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- BioModels Database
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- DNA Data Bank of Japan (DDBJ)
- EMBL Nucleotide Sequence Database
- fMRI Data Center
- GenBank
- Gene Expression Omnibus (GEO)
- Nucleic Acid Database
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- UniProtKB/Swiss-Prot

In addition, as much as possible, please provide accession numbers or identifiers for all entities such as genes, proteins, mutants, diseases, etc., for which there is an entry in a public database, for example:

- Ensembl
- Entrez Gene
- FlyBase
- InterPro
- Mouse Genome Database (MGD)
- Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man (OMIM)

In the case of new software, source code should ideally be made available, for example as supporting information with the rest of the paper, or by deposition at a publicly accessible resource such as [sourceforge.net](http://sourceforge.net). For a new algorithm, a detailed description should be published in the paper. In cases where the software/algorithm is not central to the paper, we nevertheless encourage authors to make all relevant materials freely available. Software can be provided under license where necessary, but any restrictions on the availability or on the use of materials might be judged to diminish the significance of a paper, and therefore influence the decision about whether a paper should be published subject to those conditions.

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