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Aims and Scope

Annals of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery is an international, peer-reviewed, open access journal that publishes significant and novel contributions in thoracic surgery. The journal, which is supported by the Japanese Association for Coronary Artery Surgery, aims to facilitate the communication and progress of thoracic surgery worldwide.

Article types include Original Articles, Review Articles, Case Reports, Editorials, New Methods, and Letters to the Editor. The journal publishes articles related to cardiovascular surgery, thoracic surgery, and esophageal surgery in the fields of general medicine, social medicine, nursing science, clinical medicine, and related areas. Articles can take basic, experimental, applied, or clinical approaches, and the journal welcomes articles that present work at the interface of these areas.

The journal provides its authors with rapid but rigorous peer review. Articles are available freely online as soon as they are published and are collated into issues six times a year. They are a vital resource for the journal's broad global audience of researchers and clinicians.

Manuscript Types

The journal publishes 5 manuscript types, all of which are subject to peer review, as well as Editorials.

Review Articles

Articles presenting novel or unique overviews of recent or important developments in the field. Reviews must be insightful and must address the question(s) of interest using appropriate and fully presented evidence; exhaustive general summaries will not be published. Reviews are generally 10 printed pages, or approximately 8,000, words and can explore several aspects of importance in a broader subject area. Reviews are occasionally commissioned by the Editor-in-Chief, and the journal welcomes proposals from interested authors.

Original Articles

Full and comprehensive reports describing original research presented in the standard format of Abstract, Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion and References. The

main text (excluding references, tables, and figure legends) should not exceed 5 printed pages or approximately 5,000 words.

Case Reports

A brief description of one or two cases of interest in the standard format of Abstract, Introduction, Case Report, Discussion, and Conclusion. Case Reports should not exceed 3 printed pages or approximately 2,400 words.

New Methods

Brief report on a new technique or procedure, modification of a certain technique, or new equipment in the field of Thoracic and cardiovascular surgery. New Methods should not exceed 3 printed pages or approximately 2,400 words

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor is brief, constructive commentaries that can be submitted in response to a recently published article in ATCS. Letters to the Editor should not exceed 2 printed pages or approximately 1,600 words

Manuscript Submission

All manuscripts must be submitted via the journal's online submission system, Editorial Manager: <http://www.editorialmanager.com/atcs/>. The original or revised manuscript text may be uploaded as a PDF or Microsoft Word file, but a Word file is required for the final manuscript text. Submit Tables and Figures as separate files.

The allowable file formats are: Text: Word; Tables: Word, Excel (Tables must not be images) Figures: JPEG, TIFF, PowerPoint; Video: WMV, MP4.

If you encounter any problems with online submission, please contact the Editorial Office as per the details in the Contact section.

Journal & Ethics Policies

ATCS upholds the highest standards in scholarly publishing.

Before submitting a manuscript to the journal, authors must ensure that they have read and complied with the journal's policies. The journal reserves the right to reject without review, or retract, any manuscript that the Editor believes may not comply with these policies.

The responsibilities of the journal's authors, editors, reviewers and publisher regarding research and publication ethics are described in full below.

Submission to the journal implies that the manuscript has not been previously published (in part or in whole, in any language), is not in press, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Authors must inform the editors if any related manuscripts are under consideration, in press or published elsewhere. The availability of a manuscript on a publicly accessible preprint server does not constitute prior publication (see 'Preprints').

If authors choose to submit their manuscript elsewhere before a final decision has been made on its suitability for publication in *ATCS*, they must first withdraw it from the journal.

Secondary Publication

ATCS aims to ensure the dissemination of knowledge, especially that which is inaccessible to the journal's broad international audience. In line with ICMJE policies, the journal therefore considers articles that have been previously published in different languages if the following conditions are met:

- All authors of the original publication agree to the secondary publication, but understand that acceptance in the journal is not guaranteed.
- The manuscript undergoes full peer review.
- Editors from both journals approve of the republication.
- Full copyright permissions, per the section 'Reproducing copyrighted material', are supplied upon manuscript submission.
- A reasonable period of time has elapsed before the publication of the English version, to maintain the priority of the original publication. This time will be decided by the editors of both journals.
- The journal's audience is different to the original publication's audience. Differentiating elements can include that the original publication and the original journal are published wholly in other languages; the original journal is not in the Science Citation Index Expanded (Clarivate Analytics), Scopus (Elsevier) or other large international database; and the original journal has a restricted distribution (e.g. in print to members of a society only). Authors should contact the Editor-in-Chief for clarification if needed.
- The secondary publication faithfully reflects the data and interpretations of the original publication.

Secondary publications will include text that indicates they are fully peer-reviewed translations of an original publication. They will contain a statement such as: "Part or all of this article was originally published in (e.g. Japanese) as [citation (20ZZ)]".

Submission

ATCS welcomes manuscript submissions from authors based anywhere in the world.

Submission of a manuscript to the journal implies that all authors: have approved it, warrant it is factual, have agreed to its submission, and have the right to publish it.

Originality

Submission to the journal implies that the manuscript is original work. The journal may use Crossref's Similarity Check plagiarism software to screen manuscripts for unoriginal content. By submitting a manuscript to the journal, authors agree to this screening. Any manuscript with an unacceptable level of unoriginal material may be rejected or retracted at the Editors' discretion.

Preprints

To support the wide dissemination of research, the journal encourages authors to post their research manuscripts on community-recognized preprint servers, either before or alongside

submission to the journal. This policy applies only to the original version of a manuscript that describes primary research. Any version of a manuscript that has been revised in response to reviewers' comments, accepted for publication or published in the journal should not be posted on a preprint server. Instead, forward links to the published manuscript may be posted on the preprint server. Authors must notify ATCS of any preprint related to their manuscript upon submission. Authors are recommended to post a link to the ATCS article on the preprint server after the manuscript is accepted.

Authors should retain copyright in their work when posting to a preprint server.

Scooping

When assessing the novelty of a manuscript submitted to the journal, the editors will not be influenced by other manuscripts that are posted on community-recognized preprint servers after the date of submission to *ATCS* (or after the date of posting on a preprint server, if the manuscript is submitted to the journal within 4 months).

Authorship

Submission to the journal implies that all authors have seen and approved the author list. Changes to the author list after manuscript submission – such as the insertion or removal of author names, or a rearrangement of author order – must be approved by all authors and the editor.

First Author is the author listed at the top of the author list.

Identify one author as the corresponding author. This author will reply to questions, provide more information, and take responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the entire manuscript.

Authors are encouraged to consider the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) Recommendations on 'Defining the Role of Authors and Contributors'. The ICMJE recommends that authorship is based on four criteria:

- making a substantial contribution to the conception or design of the work, or the acquisition, analysis or interpretation of data for the work
- drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content
- approving the final version of the manuscript for publication
- and agreeing to be held accountable for all aspects of the work.

Any contributor who has met all four criteria should be an author on the manuscript. Contributors who do not meet all four criteria should not be authors of the manuscript but may be included in the Acknowledgements section instead.

Image integrity

Authors may digitally manipulate or process images, but only if the adjustments are kept to a minimum, are applied to the entire image, meet community standards, and are clearly described in the manuscript. All images in a manuscript must accurately reflect the original data on which they are based. Authors must not move, remove, add or enhance individual parts of an image. The editors reserve the right to request original, unprocessed images from the authors. Failure to provide requested images may result in a manuscript being rejected or retracted.

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Animal/human experimentation and informed consent

Authors of manuscripts describing experiments involving humans or materials derived from humans must demonstrate that the work was carried out in accordance with the principles embodied in the Declaration of Helsinki, its revisions, and any guidelines approved by the authors' institutions. Where relevant, the authors must include a statement in their manuscript that describes the procedures for obtaining informed consent from participants regarding participation in the research and publication of the research.

All papers reporting experiments using animals must include a statement in the Methods section giving assurance that all animals have received humane care in compliance with the "Principles of Laboratory Animal Care" formulated by the National Society for Medical Research and the "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals" prepared by the Institute of Laboratory Animal Research (ILAR), published by the National Academies Press (2011; see <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK54050/>).

Clinical trial registration

The journal adheres to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) policy on Clinical Trials Registration, which recommends that all clinical trials are registered in a public trials registry at or before the time of first patient enrollment as a condition of consideration for publication. Manuscripts describing clinical trials must include the registration number of the trial and the name of the trial registry.

Reporting guidelines

The journal requires authors to follow the EQUATOR Network's Reporting Guidelines for health research. Study types include, but are not limited to, randomized trials, observational studies, systematic reviews, case reports, qualitative research, diagnostic and prognostic studies, economic evaluations, animal pre-clinical studies and study protocols.

Author competing interests and conflicts of interest

In the interests of transparency, the journal requires all authors to declare any competing or conflicts of interest in relation to their submitted manuscript. A conflict of interest exists when there are actual, perceived or potential circumstances that could influence an author's ability to conduct or report research impartially. Potential conflicts include (but are not

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When submitting a manuscript, all authors are required to disclose financial relationships with commercial manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies, or other commercial entities that have an interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in the manuscript. This includes any interests held by spouses, other immediate family or close associates.

Authors shall disclose matters relevant within 3 years prior to submission must be disclosed. Authors must complete the [disclosure form](#) and upload it at the time of submission. In addition, each manuscript must include a “Disclosure Statement” section (which comes before the “References” section) that is based on the sample text as per the form.

Confidentiality

The journal maintains the confidentiality of all unpublished manuscripts. By submitting their manuscript to the journal, the authors warrant that they will keep all correspondence about their manuscript (from the Editorial Office, editors and reviewers) strictly confidential.

Self-archiving policy

Self-archiving enables authors to deposit a copy of their manuscript in an online repository. *ATCS* encourages authors of original research manuscripts to upload their article to an institutional or public repository immediately after publication in the journal.

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J-STAGE preserves its full digital library, including *ATCS*, with Portico in a dark archive (see <https://www.portico.org/publishers/jstage/>). In the event that the material becomes unavailable at J-STAGE, it will be released and made available by Portico.

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All journal content is independently curated and advertising does not in any way influence editorial decisions. Advertising is clearly marked as such and the editors have full and final authority for approving print and online advertisements and for enforcing advertising policy. The journal will not carry advertisements for products proven to be seriously harmful to health and the editors will consider all criticisms of advertisements for publication.

Peer Review Process

Editorial and peer review process

The journal uses single-blind peer review. When a manuscript is submitted to the journal, it is assigned to the Editor-in-Chief, who performs initial screening. Manuscripts that do not fit the journal’s scope or are not deemed suitable for publication are rejected without review. The Editor-in-Chief allocates each of the remaining manuscripts to an Editor, who handles peer review. The Editor selects two appropriate reviewers to provide their assessment of the manuscript. Reviewers are selected based on their expertise, reputation and previous experience as peer reviewers. The deadline for submission of the reviewers’ reports varies by article type.

Once the reviewers’ reports have been received, the Editor determines whether the manuscript requires revision. Authors who are asked to revise their manuscript must do so within two

months, otherwise it may be treated as a new submission. The Editor may send revised manuscripts to peer reviewers for their feedback or may use his or her own judgement to assess how closely the authors have followed the comments on the original manuscript. The Editor then makes a final decision on the manuscript's suitability for publication in the journal.

The Editor-in-Chief acts as an arbitrator when necessary.

Reviewer selection, timing and suggestions

Reviewers are selected from an international pool and need not belong to ATCS's Editorial Board. Reviewers are selected based on their expertise in the field, reputation, recommendation by others, and/or previous experience as peer reviewers for the journal.

Reviewers are invited within 1-2 weeks of an article being submitted. Reviewers are asked to submit their first review within 2 weeks of accepting the invitation to review. Reviewers who anticipate any delays should inform the Editorial Office as soon as possible.

When submitting a manuscript to the journal, authors may suggest reviewers that they would like included in or excluded from the peer review process. The Editor may consider these suggestions but is under no obligation to follow them. The selection, invitation and assignment of peer reviewers is at the Editor's sole discretion.

Reviewer reports

It is the journal's policy to transmit reviewers' comments to the authors in their original form. However, the journal reserves the right to edit reviewers' comments, without consulting the reviewers, if they contain offensive language, confidential information or recommendations for publication.

Acceptance criteria

If a manuscript satisfies the journal's requirements and represents a significant contribution to the published literature, the Editor may recommend acceptance for publication in the journal.

Articles in ATCS must:

- be within the subject area of the journal's scope
- be novel and original
- be important additions to the field
- describe technically rigorous research
- be of high interest to the journal's audience

The journal particularly welcomes articles that demonstrate conceptual breakthroughs.

If a manuscript does not meet the journal's requirements for acceptance or revision, the Editor may recommend rejection.

Editorial independence

As the owner of the journal, the Editorial Committee of Annals of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery (the ECATCS) has granted the journal's Editorial Board complete

and sole responsibility for all editorial decisions. The ECATS will not become involved in editorial decisions, except in cases of a fundamental breakdown of process.

Editorial decisions are based only on a manuscript's scientific merit and are kept completely separate from the journal's other interests. The authors' ability to pay any publication charges has no bearing on whether a manuscript is accepted for publication in the journal.

Appeals

Authors who believe that an editorial decision has been made in error may lodge an appeal with the Editorial Office. Appeals are only considered if the authors provide detailed evidence of a misunderstanding or mistake by a reviewer or editor. Appeals are considered carefully by the Editor-in-Chief, whose decision is final. The guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) are followed where and when relevant.

Editor confidentiality

The journal maintains the confidentiality of all unpublished manuscripts. Editors will not:

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- discuss the manuscript or its contents with anyone not directly involved with the manuscript or its peer review
- use any data or information from the manuscript in their own work or publications
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Conflicts of interest in peer review

A conflict of interest exists when there are actual, perceived or potential circumstances that could influence an editor's ability to act impartially when assessing a manuscript. Such circumstances might include having a personal or professional relationship with an author, working on the same topic or in direct competition with an author, or having a financial stake in the work or its publication.

Members of the journal's Editorial Board undertake to declare any conflicts of interest when handling manuscripts. An editor who declares a conflict of interest is unassigned from the manuscript in question and is replaced by a new editor.

Errata and retractions

The journal recognizes the importance of maintaining the integrity of published literature.

A published article that contains an error may be corrected through the publication of an Erratum. Errata describe errors that significantly affect the scientific integrity of a publication, the reputation of the authors, or the journal itself. Authors who wish to correct a published article should contact the editor who handled their manuscript or the Editorial Office with full details of the error(s) and their requested changes. In cases where co-authors disagree over a correction, the Editor-in-Chief may consult the Editorial Board or external peer reviewers for advice. If a Correction is published, any dissenting authors will be noted in the text.

A published article that contains invalid or unreliable results or conclusions, has been published elsewhere, or has infringed codes of conduct (covering research or publication ethics) may be retracted. Individuals who believe that a published article should be retracted

are encouraged to contact the journal's Editorial Office with full details of their concerns. The Editor-in-Chief will investigate further and contact the authors of the published article for their response. In cases where co-authors disagree over a retraction, the Editor-in-Chief may consult the Editorial Board or external peer reviewers for advice. If a Retraction is published, any dissenting authors will be noted in the text.

The decision to publish Errata or Retractions is made at the sole discretion of the Editor-in-Chief.

Editors as authors in the journal

Any member of the journal's Editorial Board, including the Editor-in-Chief who is an author on a submitted manuscript is excluded from the peer review process. Within the journal's online manuscript submission and tracking system, they will be able to see their manuscript as an author but not as an editor, thereby maintaining the confidentiality of peer review.

A manuscript authored by an editor of *ATCS* is subject to the same high standards of peer review and editorial decision making as any manuscript considered by the journal.

Responding to potential ethical breaches

The journal will respond to allegations of ethical breaches by following its own policies and, where possible, the guidelines of COPE.

Reviewer Confidentiality

As part of their responsibilities, reviewers agree to maintain the confidentiality of unpublished manuscripts at all times. By accepting the invitation to review a manuscript, reviewers agree not to:

- disclose their role in reviewing the manuscript
- reveal their identity to any of the authors of the manuscript
- discuss the manuscript or its contents with anyone not directly involved in the review process
- involve anyone else in the review (for example, a post-doc or PhD student) without first requesting permission from the Editor
- use any data or information from the manuscript in their own work or publications
- use information obtained from the peer review process to provide an advantage to themselves or anyone else, or to disadvantage any individual or organization.

Reviewer Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest exists when there are actual, perceived or potential circumstances that could influence a reviewer's ability to assess a manuscript impartially. Such circumstances might include having a personal or professional relationship with an author, working on the same topic or in direct competition with an author, having a financial stake in the work or its publication, or having seen previous versions of the manuscript.

Editors try to avoid conflicts of interest when inviting reviewers, but it is not always possible to identify potential bias. Reviewers are asked to declare any conflicts of interest to the Editor, who will determine the best course of action.

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Publication Charges

There are many costs associated with publishing scholarly journals, such as those of managing peer review, copy editing, typesetting and online hosting. To cover these costs in the absence of journal subscriptions, authors (or their representatives) are asked to pay article processing charges (APCs), which are listed below.

Color is free for the online version, but if authors select to have color in the print version, charges apply, as below.

Table of charges. All amounts are in Japanese yen. Color, offprints and priority publications charges are only charged if authors elect to take these services.

Charge	Review Articles and Original Articles	Case Reports, New Methods,	Letter to the Editor	Invited Review Articles
Article Processing Charges	100,000 per article	100,000 per article	50,000 per article	No charge
Color Charges	First page: 100,000; Extra pages: 50,000	First page: 100,000; Extra pages: 50,000	First page: 100,000; Extra pages: 50,000	Each page: 50,000
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Priority Publication charges	50,000 per article	50,000 per article	50,000 per article	50,000 per article

Note:

1. For Article Processing Charges, 20,000 JPY / page is charged after the page limits set out in the “Manuscript Types” section are exceeded
2. Offprints must be in lots of 50

Authors of accepted manuscripts will be invoiced for the APC and need to settle before their manuscript will be published.

The total publication charge is fixed on author's proof check. Authors receive an email which has a link to the payment page. The article will appear on advance publication online as soon as the payment is completed on the payment page. If payment is not made within three months of receiving the notification, the manuscript will be returned to the authors.

Waiver policy

Waivers for Article Processing Charges are provided automatically when the corresponding author is from a “Group A” Research4Life country. In cases of demonstrated financial hardship, the journal will consider a pre-submission application for a waiver from any corresponding author to [provide email address of person to contact]. Applications cannot be made after the peer review process has begun. If a waiver is provided, the article will appear in black and white in print, no offprints are provided, articles must be within the stated page limits and priority publication is not possible.

The ability of an author to pay the APC does not influence editorial decisions. To avoid any possibility of undue influence, Editors involved with the decision-making process for articles are not involved in any deliberations on waivers.

Manuscript Preparation

Style

Manuscripts should be prepared in Microsoft Word or other appropriate software using double line spacing throughout, with margins of at least 3 cm. Note that one printed page is approximately 800 words. One table or figure is approximately 400 words.

English standards

Manuscripts should be written in clear, grammatically correct English. Authors whose native language is not English are strongly encouraged to have their manuscript checked by a native English speaker or by an editing service prior to submission. If a manuscript is not clear due to poor English, it may be rejected without undergoing peer review.

Format

Each manuscript should have the following sections: Title page, Abstract, Main text, Disclosure Statement, References and Figure Legends on a new page, and number the pages.

Title page

The title page should contain the following:

- Title of the article. The title should describe the content of the article briefly but clearly and is important for search purposes by third-party services. Do not use abbreviations in the title, except those used generally in related fields.
- Name and affiliation of authors
First Author is the author listed at the top of the author list.
Each manuscript may have up to 7 authors.
- Name, address, telephone, fax and e-mail address of the corresponding author
Identify one author as the corresponding author.
- Manuscript Types: review article, original article, case report, new method, editorial, or others

- Running title (up to 50 characters)
- Keywords (add up to 5 keywords)

Abstract

The Abstract should clearly express the basic content of the paper in a single paragraph and should use the headings: Purpose, Methods, Results, and Conclusion. Abstracts must not exceed 200 words for Original Articles and Reviews, and 150 words for Case Report and New Methods. Avoid using specific abbreviations or acronyms.

Main text

The following sections are required:

Review Article: No defined style. Disclosure statement and References are required.

Original Articles: Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion, and Conclusion.

Case Reports: Introduction, Case Report, Discussion and Conclusion.

New Methods: Introduction, Case Report, Discussion, and Conclusion.

Editorial: No defined style. Disclosure statement and References are required.

Letter to Editor: No defines style. Disclosure statement and References are required.

Disclosure Statement

See the “Author competing interests and conflicts of interest” described earlier in this document for further details of what to include in this section.

References

ATCS uses the Vancouver referencing style. References should be numbered serially in the text and listed, double-spaced, on a separate sheet at the end of the manuscript in the same numerical order. The Reference format should conform to that set forth in “Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals,” with sample references maintained by the National Library of Medicine. Journal abbreviations should conform to the style used in the Cumulative Index Medicus.

Each reference should be styled as per the following examples.

Journal articles

Surname of each author with initial(s), title of article, journal name, date, volume number, and inclusive pages (list all authors when three or less; when four or more, list only three and add et al.)

Example: Maroto E, Fouron JC, Douste-Blazy MY, Carceller AM, van Doesburg N, et al. Influence of age on wall thickness, cavity dimensions and myocardial contractility of the left ventricle in simple transposition of the great arteries. *Circulation* 1983; 67: 1311–7.

Books

Surname of each author with initial(s), chapter title, editor’s name, book title, city of publication, publisher, date, and pages

Example: Bugiasky L, Zak R. Biological mechanisms of hypertrophy. In: Fozzard HA, Haber E, Jennings RB, Katz AM, Morgan HE eds.; *The Heart and Cardiovascular System*. New York: Raven Press, 1986; pp 1491–506.

The number of references for each type of manuscript is limited to:

Review Article:	60
Original Article:	30
Case Report:	20
Editorial:	10
Letter to the Editor:	10

Tables

Submit as a separate Excel or MS Word File containing text data, not as images. Use Arabic numerals to number tables as they appear in the text and include a Title, placed above the table. Explanatory material and footnotes should be typed below the table and should be designated with superscript letters, such as a) or b). Units of measurement should be included with numerical values at the top of columns. Avoid detailed explanations of the experimental conditions used to obtain the data shown in tables (which should be included in other sections as relevant). Note the limits on the number of tables per the information below.

Figures

Submit figures, photography, graphs or diagrams in MS Word, PowerPoint, JPEG or TIFF. Figures should be of high enough resolution for direct reproduction for printing, and the resolution of the figure should be at least 300 dpi. Note that ‘figures’ includes line drawings and photographs, as well as charts. Magnifications of photographs should be indicated in the legends and/or by scales included in the photographs.

Figures must be self-explanatory and they should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals (i.e., Fig. 1, Fig. 2, etc.). Figure legends should be typed together on a new page after the References section. Figure legends should include sufficient experimental details to make the figures intelligible; however, duplicating the descriptions provided in other sections should be avoided.

The number of tables and figures is limited to:

Review Article:	not limited
Original Article:	up to 5
Case Report, New Methods, Editorial:	up to 3
Letter to the Editor:	1

Abbreviations

Each abbreviation should be defined in parentheses together with its non-abbreviated term when it first appears in the text (except in the Title and Abstract).

Units

SI or SI-derived units should be used. More information on SI units is available at the [Bureau International des Poids et Mesures \(BIPM\) website](http://www.bipm.org/).

Supplementary material

Supplementary material adds, but is not essential, to a reader’s understanding of a manuscript. Authors are encouraged to submit supplementary material for online-only publication.

Supplementary material may comprise data, text, audio or movie files, and is published online alongside the accepted manuscript.

As supplementary material is peer-reviewed, authors must submit it in its final form as part of their manuscript submission. After a manuscript has been accepted for publication, authors may not make any changes to the supplementary material.

Accepted Manuscripts

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Page proofs are sent to the corresponding author, who should check and return them within 48 hours via email. Only essential corrections to typesetting errors or omissions are accepted; excessive changes are not permitted at the proofing stage.

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