

2. WHO house style

A word about spelling

Within WHO-HQ, British rather than American spelling is normally used. The general rule is to follow the spelling listed in the latest edition of *The concise Oxford dictionary*. There are, however, a number of exceptions.

For more information on WHO house style for spelling of words commonly used in WHO information products, see the “Spelling” entry in this section and the WHO spelling list (see section 5).

The following alphabetical list provides some general guidelines on rules to be followed in the preparation of material for WHO publications.

Abbreviations

The purpose of abbreviations is to save space in figures and tables or when the same word or phrase occurs many times in an article.

Abbreviations may be formed in any one of the following ways:

- By omitting the end of a word, which should be replaced by a full stop:
Jan., Co.
- By suppressing the middle of a word:
Dr, Mr (a full stop is not usually required).
- By combining the initial letters of the main words, or components of words, in expressions such as titles of organizations or certain medical terms:
WHO (World Health Organization)
CNS (central nervous system)
DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane).

In abbreviations of this type, capitals should be used without full stops.

Some general rules regarding abbreviations are provided below.

- All abbreviations should be defined and spelt out the first time they are used, unless likely to be familiar to readers. A few abbreviations, such as e.g., i.e., etc., are so widely used that the complete words are almost never given.

The World Health Organization (WHO) was established on 7 April 1948.

- Keep the number of abbreviations to a minimum and avoid using any that may be confusing.
- If the text includes many abbreviations, a separate list of the abbreviations and their definitions should be provided.
- Where an abbreviation requiring a full stop falls at the end of a sentence, a second full stop is not needed.

A list of commonly used abbreviations is given below. Section 7 provides further information on abbreviations, including abbreviations used in the medical sciences, abbreviations of international and other organizations, and abbreviations for use in addresses.

Abbreviations commonly used in WHO publications

ad lib	<i>ad libitum</i> ; as desired
& (to be used between authors' names in bibliographic references)	and
cont.	continued
ed. (to be used in bibliographic references)	edition
ed., eds (to be used in bibliographic references)	editor(s)
e.g.	for example
et al. (to be used in bibliographic references)	<i>et alii</i> ; and others
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> ; and so on
Fig., Figs (to be used to refer to particular figures in text and in figure captions)	Figure(s)
i.e.	<i>id est</i> ; that is
no., nos, No., Nos	number(s)
p., pp.	page(s)
per cent, %	<i>per centum</i> ; per hundred
rev.	revised, revision
sp., spp.	species (singular and plural)
Vol. (to be used in bibliographic references)	volume(s)

Alphabetical order

In lists of names and addresses and in indexes and alphabetical reference lists, etc. the following general rules apply.

- When the first component of a family name is a particle, such as *al-*, *de*, *Le*, *Van* or *von*, the first letter of the particle should normally be used for alphabetizing, unless established usage or another specific reason dictates otherwise.
- Names beginning with the prefix “Mac” or “Mc” should be arranged as if the letter “a” were present in all cases.

- When Chinese personal names are written in the traditional way – meaning the single-syllable family name is placed first – the family name should be used for alphabetizing. For example, Dr Hu Ching-Li should be listed under *H*.
- Any listing of Member States should be presented in alphabetical order, unless there is a good reason to present them in another order (e.g. if you want to rank countries in order of gross national product or according to infant mortality rates). The list provided in section 8 is presented in alphabetical order.
- In the alphabetization of chemical names, Greek letters and italicized prefixes should be ignored.

Anatomy

In general, the anglicized versions of Latin anatomical terms should be used, as found in the standard medical dictionaries. If, for a specific reason, Latin terms are preferred in a given context, they should not be italicized.

Bibliographies

A bibliography is a list of references relevant to the subject matter of a publication that is recommended for further reading; these are references not cited in the publication. The references within a bibliography should be presented alphabetically, according to the names of the authors. A bibliography may be subdivided into sections by subject, in which case items should be presented alphabetically within each section.

Authors are responsible for ensuring the accuracy, completeness and correct presentation of all material in bibliographies. An editor may check any details that are obviously wrong or that appear doubtful, but the primary responsibility rests with the author.

For more information on how to format each entry in a bibliography, see **References**.

Capitalization

Use of initial capital letters for words should be limited and consistent throughout a publication.

- Proper names, titles and institutions should have an initial capital, but descriptive appellations should not, unless the result would appear odd or confusing:
 - the French Government *but* a government leader
 - the New Zealand Ministry of Health *but* she reviewed the policies and programmes of various ministries of health
 - the Department of the Environment *but* government departments.
- The use of trade names should be avoided if possible, but if they are included, they should be identified by an initial capital letter.
- Generic names in the Linnaean binomial nomenclature, such as *Trypanosoma* spp. and *Schistosoma* spp., take an initial capital letter, but the English names of such organisms, trypanosome and schistosome, do not.

- The following words and expressions used frequently within WHO publications normally require capitalization:

Associate Member (of WHO)
Constitution (of WHO)
(Eighth) General Programme of Work
Fifty-... World Health Assembly
Member (country)
Member State
officials (specific): President, Vice-President, Chairman, Rapporteur, Secretary
the Organization (WHO)
Region (of WHO) (cap. in specific reference, e.g. “in the European Region”)
Regional Committee (specific)
Regional Director(s) (specific)
Regional Office (specific) *but* regional offices (pl.)
Secretariat (WHO).

For information on capitalization in headings, see **Headings**.

Chemical names

Chemical names should follow the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) rules, as interpreted by the American Chemical Society. Some exceptions and spellings to note are:

sulfur *instead of* sulphur
aluminium *instead of* aluminum
caesium *instead of* cesium.

Chemical names should be spelt out in text unless the symbolic formula is graphically useful.

Contractions

Contractions should be avoided in WHO information products:

do not *instead of* don't
is not *instead of* isn't
it is *instead of* it's.

Copyright and the WHO copyright notice

All printed, electronic and audiovisual materials issued by WHO should bear a copyright notice, including the standard copyright line:

© World Health Organization [year]

WHO has standard copyright notices and disclaimers for inclusion in printed and electronic materials, which are available on the WHO-HQ Intranet. A copyright notice also appears on the WHO web site, accessible from the WHO home page. This

notice is not strictly necessary in all countries, but it is always useful in establishing copyright and avoiding copyright infringement.

Information on copyright, including protection of WHO's copyright, joint copyright, transferring copyright and using copyright material owned by someone else, is available on the WHO-HQ Intranet.

Currency

- When two or more countries use the same name for their currencies, the appropriate distinguishing adjective should be used at first mention, or throughout the text if confusion is possible:

100 US dollars, 200 Canadian dollars

100 Irish pounds, 300 pounds sterling.

- When the monetary unit is written in full, it should follow the number for the amount, as in the examples above, but when the abbreviation is used, it should always precede the amount. Where a symbol is used to represent the monetary unit, there should be no space between the symbol and the amount:

€200

£19.95.

- Where the abbreviation is a letter or letters or a combination of letter(s) and symbol, there should be one space between the abbreviation and the amount:

US\$ 6000.

- WHO's three-letter currency codes (CHF, GBP, USD, etc.) are for internal use only and should not appear in publications.
- Lists of the official basic units of currency and the appropriate currency abbreviations are given in the following publications.

Names of countries and their capital cities, including adjectives of nationality and currency units. Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1993 (FAO Terminology Bulletin, no. 20/rev. 11).

Turner B, ed. *The statesman's yearbook 2004: the politics, cultures and economies of the world*, 140th ed. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.¹

Dates

Write dates in the following order, with no commas: day, month (spell out in full), year. Avoid beginning a sentence with a year.

The meeting was held on 12 September 1999.

Nineteen ninety-nine was the first year in which data on participants were gathered.

becomes

Data on participants were first gathered in 1999.

¹ Revised annually.

Decades

Use figures rather than words for decades. Note that there is no apostrophe before the “s”.

The first case of HIV/AIDS was reported in the eighties [or the '80s].

becomes

The first case of HIV/AIDS was reported in the 1980s.

Disclaimers

Information on disclaimers for printed and electronic materials is available on the WHO-HQ Intranet.

Diseases

As far as possible, the International Nomenclature of Diseases (IND) (several volumes published by the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) or CIOMS/WHO; see section 10) should be followed for disease names and their spelling; otherwise, standard medical dictionaries, such as those listed below, should be consulted. Note that British, rather than American, spellings should be used (e.g. “haemoglobin” *not* “hemoglobin”; see section 5).

Dorland's illustrated medical dictionary, 29th ed. Philadelphia, PA, Saunders, 2000.

Stedman's medical dictionary, 26th ed. Baltimore, MD, Williams & Wilkins, 1995.

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is a statistical classification and is not intended to be a reference for nomenclature.

Drugs and pesticides

For pharmaceuticals, the International Nonproprietary Names (INN) established by WHO should be used. For pesticides, the common names adopted by the International Organization for Standardization (see International Standard ISO 1750:1981, and subsequent addenda and amendments) should be used. When no internationally approved name exists, an approved national name may be used. Proprietary names should be avoided whenever possible.

To request access to the latest INN list, contact the administrator at <http://mednet.who.int>.

Emblem and logo

Within WHO, *emblem* refers to the United Nations symbol surmounted by the Aesculapian staff and serpent, as recorded in World Health Assembly resolution WHA1.133. The term *logo* refers to WHO programme logos.

For more information on WHO policies regarding the use of the WHO emblem and WHO programme and project logos, see Cluster Notes 2002/17 and 2002/15 (available on the WHO-HQ Intranet) or contact IMDQueries@who.int.

Figures

Figures should be kept as simple as possible, with brief titles. Figures that contain too much information can confuse rather than clarify issues. Graphs should have their axes clearly labelled with the relevant units of measurement included in parentheses. Be aware that for photographs and drawings of human subjects, there are ethical issues involved, including discrimination on the basis of sex, minority, racial groupings and privacy.

- Figures should be clearly labelled, using the same font and style of heading as that used for tables (see **Tables**). The abbreviation “Fig.” may be used in the figure title:

Fig. 3

Design of a case-control study

- The abbreviation “Fig.” may also be used in the text to refer to a specific figure; however, it should not be used when referring to a generic figure.

This trend is illustrated in Fig. 1.

The figure below illustrates this trend.

- Figures must agree with, and be referred to in, the body of the text and should appear in the order in which they are cited.
- If figures are reduced for publication purposes, care should be taken to ensure that any text and labels are legible in the final version.
- For footnotes to figures, see **Tables**.
- As in the case of tables, if a figure is reproduced from material previously published by another publisher, permission must be obtained from the author(s) and/or publisher(s) and a footnote acknowledging the source included (see “Copyright and permissions” on the WHO-HQ Intranet).

Footnotes

Footnotes are used to provide additional details, such as references or explanations of unfamiliar terms, that would disrupt continuity if included in the body of the text. They should be kept to a minimum. As a general rule, very short notes, such as cross-references to other sections or pages in the same work, should be given in parentheses in the text. For footnotes to tables, see **Tables**.

- Place footnotes at the bottom of the page on which the footnote reference appears.
- Use superscript Arabic numerals to identify footnotes. When this may cause confusion, such as in scientific text containing mathematical exponents, lower-case letters should be used. Asterisks and other special typographical signs are used only rarely, such as in lists of participants in reports of WHO expert groups.
- Number footnotes to the text consecutively, beginning with “1”, throughout each page of a book or journal article. If two or more passages appearing on the same page require the same footnote, the footnote should appear only once and the reference mark should be repeated. Note that the footnote numbering should restart on each page.

- Place the reference mark after any punctuation that immediately follows the word, part of a sentence, or sentence to which the footnote refers. The reference mark should be placed after the closing parenthesis if it refers to the text within the parentheses; otherwise, it should be placed immediately after the word or phrase to which it refers.

ICD-10 provides a diagnosis of diseases, disorders or other health conditions, and this information is enriched by the additional information given by ICF on functioning.¹

ICD-10 and ICF are therefore complementary,² and users are encouraged to utilize these two members of the WHO family of international classifications together.

ICD-10 (which is enriched by the additional information given by ICF on functioning)¹ provides a diagnosis of diseases, disorders or other health conditions.

Researchers stated that “ICD-10 and ICF are therefore complementary, and users are encouraged to utilize these two members of the WHO family of international classifications together”¹.

Fractions, non-decimal

Write non-decimal fractions in words, not figures, and do not hyphenate.

Two thirds of the patients exhibited symptoms of the disease.

Four fifths of the participants were female.

Geographical designations and regions

Merriam-Webster’s geographical dictionary, 3rd ed. (Springfield, MA, Merriam-Webster, 1997) can be used as a guide to the spelling of common geographical entities. In general, WHO follows United Nations practice with respect to geographical terminology. However, situations may change, making it difficult to keep up with the latest developments. If you have any doubts on the acceptability of a particular name or designation or the status of a country with respect to membership of WHO, you should check with the Office of the Legal Counsel (LEG).

For further information on geographical designations, see **Member States** and **Structure of WHO**.

Country, state, territory

All WHO publications carry a standard disclaimer regarding the designation of countries, territories, cities, areas and their authorities, and the delimitation of frontiers (available on the WHO-HQ Intranet). The term “country” is often construed as meaning a sovereign state. Territories not responsible for their international relations, such as Gibraltar, should not be included in listings bearing the title “country”. Normally, the heading “country or area” can be used to cover such cases.

If it is necessary to refer to the status of self-governing territories, they should be referred to as “territories that are not responsible for the conduct of their international relations”; the words “colony” and “colonial” should not be used.

Directions

Use initial capitals for *North*, *South*, *East* and *West* when they are part of a proper name or if they refer to a formal geographical area. Do not use initial capitals for these terms when they are used to refer to a direction or a general geographical area.

The fourth largest continent is South America.

The roads to the north and to the south are seriously damaged.

The programme was to be launched in eastern Europe.

Compass points should be abbreviated in indications of latitude and longitude and in all tables and figures. Capital letters should be placed immediately after each other without the interposition of full stops or spaces:

7° 10'N to 0° 40'S, SSE.

Geographical regions

For geographical regions, avoid terms such as “the western world”, which imply that everything is viewed from the standpoint of western Europe. Avoid using “westernized” to mean “developed” or “industrialized”. There is also an increasing tendency for the terms “North” and “South” to be used to imply a particular stage of development. Usage of such terms should be restricted to a geographical context only. Similarly, refer to “developing countries” rather than to “underdeveloped countries” or “the Third World”.

Maps

All maps used in WHO publications should follow United Nations practice with respect to place names and drawing of boundaries. Maps should be cleared with LEG (see Cluster Note 2001/4) unless they have been prepared by Graphics (GRA) or unless they are based entirely on either the template map of the world prepared by the Department of Evidence for Health Policy (GPE) (available at http://snow.who.int/whosis_stage/menu.cfm?path=whosis,gis&language=english) or maps downloaded from the web site of the United Nations Cartographic Section (<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/geoname.pdf>). If maps are downloaded from the United Nations Cartographic Section, however, permission will need to be obtained from this Section to reproduce them.

Governing bodies of WHO

WHO's highest decision-making body is the World Health Assembly. Avoid the abbreviation WHA, except in references to World Health Assembly resolutions (e.g. “... in resolution WHA55.3”); outside audiences often think WHA is a misspelling of WHO. Note that the short name is “Health Assembly”, not “Assembly”. References to a specific Health Assembly should include the word “World” and the number of the Health Assembly, for example “the Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly”.

The Executive Board of WHO, which has the dual role of making proposals to the Health Assembly and ensuring that the decisions of previous Health Assemblies are put into effect, is made up of members designated by Member States. Until 1998, members served on the Executive Board in a personal capacity, but now represent the Member States who designate them.

The Health Assembly is made up of *delegates* of Member States. The regional committees are composed of *representatives* of Member States and, if applicable, Associate Members.

It is important not to confuse the terms *delegates* and *representatives* since they reflect the status of the views these people express and of the decisions they make. It is also important not to confuse the terms *members* and *Members*, the latter meaning the Member States themselves.

When referring to the “governing bodies” of WHO, use lower-case letters. Use initial capitals when referring to the External Relations and Governing Bodies (EGB) cluster of the Organization.

Further information on WHO’s governing bodies can be found on the WHO-HQ Intranet. See also **Structure of WHO**.

Headings

Headings ensure the consistency of and provide clarity in a publication by indicating the hierarchy and structure. When preparing a manuscript for publication, keep a record of the font type and size used for each level of heading.

- Where possible, limit the number of heading levels to three.
- Numbered headings are obligatory in the WHO Technical Report Series and may be used in other publications if warranted (for example, where there is extensive cross-referencing to the various sections). In the former case, the heading levels are as follows:

3. **Specific food additives**

3.1 **Safety evaluations**

3.1.1 **Emulsifiers**

- Use initial capital letters for the first word of the heading and for any of the exceptions noted under “Capitalization”.
- No full point is required for headings or chapter titles.

Italics

Use italics sparingly to indicate emphasis. Italics are used in texts, reference lists and bibliographies in WHO publications for:

the titles of books, journals and documents

foreign words and expressions not in common use (including Latin genera and species)

variables in mathematical expressions

certain letters, prefixes and terms in scientific use.

Italics should not be used for foreign words and expressions that are in common use, such as *ex officio*, *fait accompli*, *in situ* and *in vitro* (see section 5).

Lists

Lists, which draw the reader's eye to particularly important text, should be used sparingly to maximize their impact. To increase clarity and add emphasis, items in a list should be set apart by bullets. Dashes or "em rules" may also be used for short items or incomplete sentences (Formats A and B below). If the list highlights sequential steps, numbers should be used. It is also easier to refer to a number if one of the items listed is mentioned in the text.

The formatting of a list depends on the nature of the items. Examples of the three most frequently used formats are provided below.

Format A

If each item comprises less than a complete sentence, the list is actually a single large sentence. In this case, use a colon to start the list, begin each bulleted item with a lower-case letter, and place a full stop at the end of the last item.

The various components of the microscope can be classified into four systems:

- the support system
- the magnification system
- the illumination system
- the adjustment system.

Format B

If some of the bulleted items are longer than one line, end each bulleted item with a semicolon and place a full stop at the end of the final bulleted item.

The disadvantages of wide-mesh mosquito nets are:

- the nets offer no protection once the insecticide has lost its activity;
- wide-mesh nets are more easily torn than standard nets;
- they are not yet commercially available (but can be made out of curtain or other wide-mesh netting material).

Format C

If the items in the list comprise one or more complete sentences, each sentence should begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

Fuerstein has written a seminal work on participatory evaluation, and suggests that a participatory evaluation in the development context include certain steps.

- All those involved in a programme decide jointly to use a participatory approach. They decide exactly what the objectives of the evaluation are. This can turn out to be far harder than originally thought.
- When agreement is reached, a small group of coordinators is elected to plan and organize the details.
- The best methods for attaining the objectives are chosen. The capabilities of the people involved and the available time and other resources will influence this choice.

Medical abbreviations

A list of common medical abbreviations is provided in section 7. More extensive lists are available in the following publications.

Fuller Delong M. *Medical acronyms, eponyms & abbreviations*, 4th ed. Los Angeles, CA, Health Information Press, 2002.

Ritter RM, ed. *The Oxford dictionary for writers and editors*, 2nd ed. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000.

Member States

A list of Member States and Associate Members of WHO (valid as of 22 July 2003) is provided in section 8. The list includes the short country name, the full name, the capital city, the relevant adjective and advice about how to refer to the people of each country. Information on how to refer to Member States may also be found on the Internet at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/geoname.pdf>.

Information on the regional distribution of Member States and Associate Members may be found on the WHO-HQ Intranet. See also **Structure of WHO**, which provides information on how to refer to the different WHO regions.

General information

- Any listing of Member States should be presented in alphabetical order, unless there is a good reason to present them in another order (e.g. if you want to rank countries in order of gross national product or according to infant mortality rates).
- The term “Member States” is written with initial capital letters and “Member countries” with an initial capital letter only for the word Member. These two terms are synonymous. When the term “State” is used to refer to Member States, it should be capitalized.
- Maps should be cleared with LEG (see Cluster Note 2001/4) unless they have been prepared by GRA or unless they are based entirely on either the template map of the world prepared by GPE (available at http://snow.who.int/whosis_stage/menu.cfm?path=whosis.gis&language=english) or maps downloaded from the web site of the United Nations Cartographic Section (<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/geoname.pdf>). See also **Geographical designations and regions**.
- It is not acceptable to refer simply to Laos, Libya, Syria or Tanzania. These countries must be referred to as “the Lao People’s Democratic Republic”, “the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya”, “the Syrian Arab Republic” and “the United Republic of Tanzania”, respectively.
- It is not acceptable to use the term “the former USSR”. This area should be referred to as “the former Soviet Union”.
- It is not necessary to include the definite article preceding the names of certain Member States where space is limited, in a table or index for instance. However, the definite article should be included where those names appear in text, including

addresses (e.g. “Amsterdam, the Netherlands”), or where it forms part of the official name (e.g. “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”).

- If you are in doubt about the acceptability of a particular name or designation or the status of a country or area, check with LEG.

*Information relating to the Member States of specific WHO regions
(listed in alphabetical order)*

WHO African Region

- Congo: this is the short form for the Republic of the Congo, which has Brazzaville as its capital city. It should not be confused with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (no short form), which has Kinshasa as its capital.
- Côte d’Ivoire: this should always be referred to as such, and not translated into English.

WHO Region of the Americas

- United States of America: once the full name has been used or where space is limited (as in a table or index for instance), the shorter forms “the United States” or “the USA” may be used. Note that the abbreviation “US” should not be used, except when referring to the US dollar (see **Currency**).
- Venezuela: in February 2000, the full name was changed to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The short form of the name remains “Venezuela”.

WHO South-East Asia Region

- Democratic People’s Republic of Korea: the designation “North Korea” should not be used and the term “Korea” should never be used alone (for the Republic of Korea, see the WHO Western Pacific Region).
- Timor-Leste: the State formerly known as “East Timor” was admitted to membership in WHO on 27 September 2002 with the full name “Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste” and the short name “Timor-Leste”.

WHO European Region

- Germany: it is not acceptable to refer to the “former Federal Republic of Germany”. Expressions such as “the Federal Republic of Germany before reunification” and “the former German Democratic Republic” may be useful for clarifying the geographical area to which health statistics predating October 1990 apply.
- Israel: it is not acceptable to refer to either Tel Aviv or Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. WHO follows United Nations practice and omits references to the capital of Israel or leaves a blank space.
- Serbia and Montenegro: on 4 February 2003, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia changed its name to “Serbia and Montenegro” (short form and full name).
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: do not use “Macedonia” or “Republic of Macedonia”. In alphabetical lists and tables, this country should be listed under “t” rather than “f”.

- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: this area should be referred to by its full name on title pages, in signatures and in recording nominations, elections and votes. Once the full name has been mentioned or where space is limited (as in a table or index for instance), the form “the United Kingdom” may be used. Neither form should be used in addresses; the specific country should be mentioned instead (e.g. England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales). Note that the abbreviation “UK” should not be used.

WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region

- Iran (Islamic Republic of): this form is acceptable only for alphabetical lists or name-plates; for other purposes the term “the Islamic Republic of Iran” should be used.
- Palestine: the term Palestine is used in WHO to designate the Palestine Liberation Organization as an entity enjoying observer status in WHO. The use of the expression “occupied Palestinian territory” is acceptable in reports prepared by the Secretariat in response to requests contained in resolutions of WHO governing bodies using the same expression. Otherwise, the expression “West Bank and Gaza Strip” should be used to designate the territory in question. To refer to the parts of the territory in question under the direct control of the Palestinian Authority (e.g. the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area), the expression “Palestinian Self-Rule Areas” can be used in the first instance, after which it is acceptable to use the abbreviation “PSRA”.

WHO Western Pacific Region

- China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong SAR): do not use “Hong Kong”. This area should be referred to by its full name in the first instance, after which it is acceptable to use “Hong Kong SAR”. If data for this area are to be presented separately from those concerning China in a list or table they should be given immediately following the data for China, with the identification “China, Hong Kong SAR”.
- China, Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao SAR): do not use “Macao”. This area should be referred to by its full name in the first instance, after which it is acceptable to use “Macao SAR”. If data for this area are to be presented separately from those concerning China in a list or table they should be given immediately following the data for China, with the identification “China, Macao SAR”.
- China, Province of Taiwan: do not use “Taiwan”. This area is considered, within the United Nations system, as a province of China, under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Government in Beijing. If it is mentioned, it should be referred to as “China (Province of Taiwan)” or as “Taiwan, China”. If data for this area are to be presented separately from those concerning China in a list or table they should be given immediately following the data for China. It is advisable to consult LEG before mentioning Taiwan or including information or data concerning this area in WHO documents and publications, including those accessible online.
- Micronesia (Federated States of): this form is acceptable only for alphabetical lists or name-plates; for other purposes the term “the Federated States of Micronesia” should be used.

- Republic of Korea: the designation “South Korea” should not be used and the term “Korea” should never be used alone (for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, see WHO South-East Asia Region).
- Viet Nam: not Vietnam.

Months

- Spell out the names of months in full when they appear in text.

The study was conducted in January 2001.

- If necessary, months may be abbreviated in tables.

Jan.

Feb.

Mar.

Apr.

May

Jun.

Jul.

Aug.

Sept.

Oct.

Nov.

Dec.

Non-decimal fractions

See **Fractions, non-decimal**.

Numbers

- In text, the general rule is to spell out whole numbers that are less than 10 and to use figures for 10 or more.

The physician saw nine patients on Tuesday and six on Wednesday.

In the past few months, 17 institutional lists of essential drugs have been updated.

- Figures should always be used in specific numerical contexts, such as with unit symbols and abbreviations; the figure should be separated from the unit by a non-breaking space.

The health clinic was 3 km from the village.

The budget for the programme was US\$ 3 billion.

Samples were collected on day 3 of the study.

For further information, see Chapter 5.

- If a sentence begins with a number, spell it out or rewrite the sentence.

Fifteen of the 75 samples tested positive.

becomes

Of the 75 samples tested, 15 were positive.

- In a series of numbers, use figures for every item of the list.

The results of the study will be included in Chapters 2, 5 and 12.

A total of 19 patients were treated with drug A and 7 with drug B.

- A four-digit number is not normally split unless it appears in a column of a table that contains larger numbers when a split is used to maintain alignment. When a number has more than four digits, it should be split by means of a non-breaking space, not a comma, after every three digits to the left or right of the decimal point:

10 000 or 0.234 56.

Organizations

When using “the Organization” as a synonym for WHO, use an initial capital letter.

A list of abbreviations of international and other organizations frequently encountered in WHO publications is included in section 7.

Percentages

Use numbers and the percentage symbol to express percentages, not per cent. There should be no space between the figure and the symbol.

The incidence rate increased by 20% between 1994 and 1997.

Politically sensitive material

As a general rule, any text that describes the workings of, or criticizes, a particular government or national health system should have been cleared by the government concerned; this is the responsibility of the technical department. Brief statements of this nature presented as examples from particular countries or as attributed views from other publications are generally acceptable, but the possibility of causing embarrassment to governments should always be borne in mind. LEG should be consulted if there is any doubt regarding the acceptability of any statement of this nature.

See also **Geographical designations and regions** and **Member States**.

Punctuation

Punctuation eases reading and clarifies meaning. Well-written text should require only the minimum of punctuation. If a great deal of punctuation is required for clarification, the text should be revised. Punctuation marks should be printed in the same style and type font as the text in which they appear.

Apostrophe (')

Apostrophes are most commonly used to show possession. They may also be used to form contractions, but as this use is informal, it is not described here.

- Add an apostrophe followed by the letter “s” to the singular form of nouns, even if they end in an “s”.

The doctor's patients were asked to complete a questionnaire.

James's research project will be completed by the end of the month.

- Add an apostrophe followed by the letter "s" to plural forms of nouns that do not end in an "s".

The doctor asked the children's mother to stay behind for a moment.

- Add an apostrophe to plural forms of nouns that end in an "s".

The mothers' group meets every Tuesday afternoon.

- Add an apostrophe followed by the letter "s" to the last noun to show joint possession.

Strunk & White's book on style is very popular with writers.

- It is not correct to use apostrophes with possessive pronouns as these already show possession.

The Executive Board made its decision.

They said that the books were theirs.

Brackets ([])

The word brackets usually signifies square brackets; round brackets are parentheses and curly brackets, sometimes used to group items in a table, are braces.

Square brackets are used to indicate words interpolated in quotations. Their contents do not affect the punctuation of the quotation. Similarly, square brackets may be used to enclose an explanation within the text by someone other than the author.

Square brackets are also used in reference lists, to enclose English translations of non-English language references.

Jordan JR. Desarrollo psicomotor del niño [Psychomotor development of the child].

In: *Temas de pediatría [Aspects of paediatrics]*. Havana, Editora Universitaria, 1976.

See also "Parentheses".

Colon (:)

The colon has three main uses:

- to mark the antithesis between two statements more sharply than a semicolon
- to introduce a list or series – never followed by a dash
- to indicate that the second statement is an explanation or amplification of the first.

Colons are also used to indicate a ratio. When used in this manner, there should be a non-breaking space on either side of the colon.

Comma (,)

Correct usage of the comma is often a question of judgement. Commas are now used much less frequently than in the past, and their main purpose is to indicate a pause or to avoid ambiguity.

- In a list of three or more items, a comma should, in general, be consistently omitted or inserted before the final "and".

Patients were prescribed a combination of drug treatment, light exercise and a special diet.

or

Patients were prescribed a combination of drug treatment, light exercise, and a special diet.

- Care should be taken to ensure that each text is internally consistent in this respect. However, even when a comma is consistently omitted before the final “and”, an additional comma should be inserted wherever necessary to avoid ambiguity.

The plan should include elements such as the review and reform of existing legislation and policy, building data collection and research capacity, strengthening services for victims, and developing and evaluating prevention responses.

- Commas can often be used instead of parentheses and when separating relative clauses within a sentence.

By exercising for 30 minutes three times a week, you could lower your risk of cardiovascular disease.

Participants kept a record of their exercise routines, which ranged from walking to running to swimming, and reported the results to the researchers.

- A comma should be used to introduce a quotation.

At the press conference, the chief researcher reported, “The results of the study were encouraging, but more work is needed in the area”.

- A comma should be used to set off phrases that express contrast.

Some participants reported feeling more tired, not less.

Dash

See “Hyphen, em rule and en rule”.

Ellipses

See “Omitting and adding words”.

Full point (.)

A full point, or period, should be used to separate statements between which there is no continuity of thought. This results in shorter, more concise sentences, and helps to avoid including too much information in a single sentence.

No full point is required for column headings, running heads, chapter titles and legends, or after abbreviations ending with the final letter of the word (see **Abbreviations** for examples).

An abbreviating full point, as at the end of etc. and Co., is omitted before a full point ending a sentence. Similarly, a stronger punctuation mark, such as a question mark or an exclamation mark, will replace a full point at the end of a sentence.

Hyphen (-), em rule (—) and en rule (-)**Hyphen (-)**

Hyphens are used to connect words that are more closely linked to each other than to the surrounding syntax and to avoid ambiguity. There are no hard and fast rules about their use. Certain conventions exist, but if there is a choice it is better to introduce hyphens only to avoid ambiguity. There is an overall tendency to use hyphens less than in the past and a few general rules are applicable, as follows.

Hyphen after a prefix

A hyphen should be used after a prefix to prevent the word being mistaken for another one, e.g. co-op, coop (but cooperate needs no hyphen); re-cover, recover; re-treat, retreat; un-ionized, unionized.

Prefixes such as anti- and semi- can often be used without a hyphen, e.g. antihypertensive, antidysrhythmic, semiconductor, semicircular. However, a hyphen is required to avoid doubling a vowel or a consonant, e.g. anti-inflammatory, anti-infective.

A hyphen is also required when the prefix is to a word beginning with a capital letter, e.g. anti-Darwinian, sub-Saharan.

Hyphens with compound nouns and adjectives

Some compound words remain hyphenated irrespective of their grammatical use, e.g. well-being, side-effect, extra-articular and Director-General. Others are hyphenated according to whether they are used as nouns or adjectives, e.g. breast milk (n.) *but* breast-milk substitutes (adj.), low cost (n.) *but* low-cost treatment (adj.), or whether they are used attributively or as predicates, e.g. up-to-date data *but* the data are up to date.

It is usually unnecessary to insert a hyphen after an adverb, e.g. carefully developed plan, but a hyphen is appropriate when an adverb might be mistaken for an adjective, e.g. *compare* little-used car and little used car.

The spelling list in section 5 includes hyphenated terms that commonly appear in WHO information products.

Em rule (—)

The em rule is used:

- to introduce an explanation or amplification of what immediately precedes it
- to gather up the subject of a long or complicated sentence
- to introduce a paradoxical or humorous ending to a sentence
- to indicate the omission of a word or part of a word
- to indicate a parenthetical statement
- to introduce items in a list (see **Lists**) or lines of dialogue, or to list phrases.

For typographical reasons, a spaced en rule is sometimes used – as in this guide – to perform the functions of an em rule.

En rule (–)

An en rule is longer than a hyphen and is most commonly used to convey a distinction in sense when the first part of the compound does not modify the meaning of the second part – unlike the hyphen. The en rule in these circumstances can usually be thought of as standing for “and” or “to”, and is usually unspaced, for example:

case–control study
benefit–risk ratio
gas–liquid chromatography
oil–water interface.

The en rule signifies “to” in the following examples:

12–24 September
pp. 5–55
London–Brighton race.

However, if the words “from” or “between” are used, the en rule is inappropriate and “to” or “and” should be used, for example:

from 1990 to 1995
between 7 and 12 members of the treatment group.

Parentheses ()

Parentheses should be used sparingly since they tend to break up sentence structure and can too often be used to avoid having to organize one’s thoughts. A parenthesis can be marked off by commas, dashes or brackets, depending upon the closeness of its relationship to the sentence.

Spaced em or en rules are used as parenthetical dashes.

See also “Brackets”.

Question mark (?)

Question marks are necessary at the end of direct questions.

Requests in question form for the sake of politeness, e.g. “would you kindly tell me whether ...”, usually have question marks, although they are not strictly necessary.

Semicolon (;)

The semicolon marks a longer pause or more definite break than the comma. It links clauses or sentences too closely related to be cut off by a full point, but not closely enough related to be joined by a conjunction. The semicolon is also used to separate two or more linked clauses of more or less equal importance.

In a sentence containing long clauses with commas, the semicolon is used to indicate major breaks or appropriate pauses. The first word following a semicolon always starts with a lower-case letter, unless it is a proper noun.

Word breaks

The 10th edition of Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (Springfield, MA, Merriam-Webster, 1993) gives syllable breaks and appropriate hyphenation points for each entry. This dictionary should not be used as a guide to spelling, however, as British spelling is preferred within WHO.

Quotations

All quotations from printed material should correspond exactly to the original in wording, spelling, punctuation, use of capital letters, etc.

Punctuation of quotations

- If a question mark or an exclamation mark is part of the sentence quoted, put the punctuation mark within the quotation marks. If the punctuation mark is part of a longer sentence within which the quotation stands, put the punctuation mark outside the quotation marks. If the quotation and the sentence containing the quote end together, place a single full stop outside the closing quotation mark. Do not put a full stop at the end of the sentence when the question or exclamation mark is merely inside the quotation mark.

I asked him, "Are you feeling better?"

Why did you ask him, "Are you feeling better"?

She said, "I asked him if he was feeling better".

- If the quotation is part of a dialogue and is a sentence, put the full stop inside the closing quotation mark.

"I suppose," she said, "that he admires your work."

- When giving only a partial quotation or citing expressions as examples, put the full stop outside.

You should use hyphens in "easy-to-understand directions" but not in "the directions are easy to understand".

Long quotations

Short quotations should be enclosed in quotation marks and incorporated in the body of the text. Quotations that are longer than three typed lines should be indented or placed in smaller type; quotation marks are not needed.

Omitting and adding words

When part of the original text is omitted from a quotation, the text in question should be replaced by an ellipsis, with a space on either side (. . .). When an ellipsis is used at the end of an incomplete sentence, a full point should not be added. However, where the sentence is complete, the closing point is set close up, followed by an ellipsis for omission. Omissions should not change the meaning of the quotation.

"The goal," said Dr Smith, "is to enhance health by supporting countries and partners in identifying ... evidence-based approaches that foster health development".

Words added to a quotation for clarity should be enclosed in square brackets.

She said, “I go to my favourite country [Italy] every year on vacation”.

Quotations of material from a foreign language

Quotations from a foreign language should be translated into English, with the words “(translation from [the original language])” inserted at the end of the quotation. If a quotation contains only a few foreign words, they may be left in the original language.

References

A reference list should contain only those unrestricted works cited in the text as sources of data or information. Because much of the information produced by WHO builds on existing research and opinion, it is imperative that the Organization fulfils its ethical and legal requirements to acknowledge sources. It is also important that WHO provides readers with accurate and consistent links to additional information on a topic.

Creating a reference list is a two-step process: citing the source and informing the reader that more information is available; and creating the reference list that includes the necessary information for each citation.

Responsibility for the accuracy of references

Authors are responsible for ensuring the accuracy, completeness and correct presentation of all material in reference lists and bibliographies. An editor may check any details that are obviously wrong or that appear doubtful, but the primary responsibility rests with the author.

Citing the source

Citations can be inserted in the text using either the Harvard system or a numerical system. In WHO information materials the numerical system is preferred; it is obligatory for the WHO Technical Report Series.

The Harvard system shows the author and date in the body of the text. This may be done in one of two ways:

Ballance, Ewart & Fitzsimmons (2001) have reported ...

It has been reported (Ballance, Ewart & Fitzsimmons, 2001; Allsopp, 2002) that ...

With the numerical system, the references are numbered consecutively as they occur in the text. In the citation, the number is given in italics and placed in parentheses in the same point size as the text. The authors' names may or may not be given:

Hobbs & Wynn (12) have reported ...

A recent study in India (3) showed ...

The following table highlights the advantages and disadvantages of the Harvard and numerical systems.

System	Advantages	Disadvantages
Harvard	Immediately identifies the reference: if readers are familiar with the literature in the field, they will be able to identify the work cited without having to turn to the full reference; if the exact work is not known, the date will indicate how recent it is	<p>If many references are cited, long lists of authors may break up the text and make it difficult to follow the argument</p> <p>Care must be taken to ensure consistency between the text and the list, particularly if any references have been added or deleted</p> <p>Listing by author can be burdensome if there are corporate authors</p>
Numerical	Less intrusive	<p>Reader must turn to the reference list to identify the reference</p> <p>Last-minute changes may require the renumbering of the reference list and citations throughout the text</p>

Formatting items in a reference list

The format for presenting items in a reference list in WHO publications is based on the “Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals” (the so-called Vancouver style), formulated by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, but with certain adaptations to meet WHO’s particular needs.

- List all authors when there are three or fewer; when there are four or more, give only the first author’s name and add “et al.”.
- Write out journal names in full – this is particularly helpful to readers whose mother tongue is not English.
- Italicize the titles of books and journals (use initial capital letters for the latter), but not the titles of individual papers or articles.
- Use punctuation as given in the examples below – note that there is no space between the colon and the page numbers.

References to unpublished findings should simply be followed, in parentheses, by the statement “unpublished data” or “unpublished observations”, as appropriate, accompanied by the name of the authority cited and the date:

... (L. Daley, unpublished data, 2003).

Personal communications should be dealt with similarly. However, if a document intended for general distribution is known to be available, it should be included in the reference list (see example below).

Examples of references

The examples included here are those most commonly encountered in WHO publications; advice on the presentation of references not covered by these examples may be obtained from IMD (IMDQueries@who.int).

Article in a journal

Burt BA, Pai S. Sugar consumption and caries risk: a systematic review. *Journal of Dental Education*, 2001, 65:1017-1023.

When using the Harvard system the format should be modified slightly, the date being placed in parentheses immediately after the authors' names, followed by a full stop:

Willet MC (1995). Diet, nutrition, and avoidable cancer. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 103(Suppl. 8):S165-S170.

Book

Krug EG et al., eds. *World report on violence and health*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002.

Chapter in a book

Melton LJ III. Epidemiology of fractures. In: Riggs BL, Melton LJ III, eds. *Osteoporosis: etiology, diagnosis, and management*, 2nd ed. Philadelphia, Lippincott-Raven, 1995:225-247.

Corporate author

Heart Protection Study Collaborative Group. MRC/BHF Heart Protection Study of antioxidant vitamin supplementation in 20 536 high-risk individuals: a randomised placebo-controlled trial. *Lancet*, 2002, 360:23-33.

If the corporate author is also the publisher, it need be mentioned only once. Where a WHO publication has no named author, WHO should be shown as the publisher:

The international pharmacopoeia, 3rd ed. Vol. 5. *Tests and general requirements for dosage forms; quality specifications for pharmaceutical substances and tablets*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2003.

Databases and electronic publications

Information from electronic sources, such as online journals and databases and CD-ROMs, can be referenced according to the styles that would be used for the equivalent print publications with a note added, if necessary, to indicate the electronic version:

Harrison CL, Schmidt PQ, Jones JD. Aspirin compared with acetaminophen for relief of headache. *Online Journal of Current Clinical Trials*, 2 January 1992.

CANCERNET-PDQ [online database]. Bethesda, National Cancer Institute, 29 March 1996.

Lewin SA et al. Interventions for providers to promote a patient-centred approach in clinical consultations. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 2001, (4):CD003267.

Dissertation or thesis

Rodrigues CS. *Dietary guidelines, sugar intake and caries increment. A study in Brazilian nursery school children* [thesis]. London, University of London, 1997.

Document (numbered)

Montresor A et al. *Guidelines for the evaluation of soil-transmitted helminthiasis and schistosomiasis at community level*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1998 (WHO/CDS/SIP/98.1).

Foreign language reference

Jarquín E, Carrillo F. *La economía política de la reforma judicial [The political economy of judicial reform]*. Washington, DC, Inter-American Development Bank, 1999.

Legal and government documents

Legal systems vary between countries, and the conventions for referring to legislation and judgements vary accordingly. The same is true for systems of government and the resolutions of parliaments.

When citing a court case in the body of a text the following style is suggested:

Sidaway v. Bethlehem Royal Hospital Governors [1985].

When providing more comprehensive information in the reference list, the exact format will vary according to the conventions of the legal system in question, but may resemble the following style:

Australian Federation of Consumer Organisations v. Tobacco Institute of Australia, 6.2 TPLR 2. Federal Court of Australia, 1991.

Legislation should be described according to local conventions, for example:

In Brazil, Order No. 490 of 25 August 1988 permits ...

Both New Zealand (Smoke-free Environments Act 1990) and Spain (Crown Decree No. 192/1988 of 4 March 1988) require ...

The information given in the citation may be sufficient to guide the reader to the source document. Alternatively, more detail can be given in a reference:

Nigeria. The Tobacco Smoking (Control) Decree 1990, Decree No. 20. Dated 25 June 1990. *International Digest of Health Legislation*, 1990, 41:640-641.

Meeting reports and decisions

Reference can be made to a statement recorded in a summary record of a meeting or to resolutions of the Executive Board and World Health Assembly. Citing the year and resolution number for a World Health Assembly resolution in the body of the text will be sufficient to allow the reader to look up the resolution. For example:

... as endorsed by the Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly in resolution WHA55.27 in 2002.

If you wish to include more comprehensive information in the reference list:

Resolution WHA39.27. The rational use of drugs. In: *Thirty-ninth World Health Assembly, Geneva, 5-16 May 1986. Volume 1. Resolutions and decisions, and list of*

participants. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1986 (WHA39/1986/REC/1), Annex 5:93–105.

Monograph in a series

Prevention and control of schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis. Report of a WHO Expert Committee. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002 (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 912).

WHO Expert Committee on Biological Standardization. Fiftieth report. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002 (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 904).

Newspapers and television

Scientific information in WHO publications and documents must refer to reliable, authoritative sources. Because of this, newspaper and magazine articles, or radio or television programmes, are unlikely to be the best sources available. However, it may occasionally be appropriate to cite these media as sources of information about popular opinion or public statement.

The formatting styles for references to medical and scientific journals are not easily applicable to other types of popular media, and may need to be adapted. The reference should provide sufficient information to guide the reader to the source document. For television and newspapers it is essential to identify the day, month and year of broadcast or publication. It may also be helpful to provide information such as the section designator, the page number and possibly the column number for the newspaper, or the time of broadcast for a television programme. If the name of the country or city is not included in the title, it should be added in parentheses and not italicized.

Lundberg GD. *The medical profession in the 1990s* [transcript]. *American Medical Television*, 15 September 1993.

If the writer of a newspaper article is named:

Rensberger B, Specter B. CFCs may be destroyed by natural process. *Washington Post*, 7 August 1989, A:2.

or ... 7 August 1989, Section A:2.

If the writer is not named:

[Anonymous]. Gene data may help fight colon cancer. *The Times* (London), 24 August 1990:4.

or ... 24 August 1990:4 (column 5).

Published proceedings paper

DuPont B. Bone marrow transplantation in severe combined immunodeficiency with an unrelated MLC compatible donor. In: White HJ, Smith R, eds. *Proceedings of the third annual meeting of the International Society for Experimental Hematology*. Houston, TX, International Society for Experimental Hematology, 1974:44–46.

Video or audio cassette

Clark R et al., eds. *Topics in clinical microbiology* [audio cassette]. Baltimore, MD, Williams & Wilkins (for the American Society for Microbiology), 1976.

Information obtained on the Internet

Food allergens: when food becomes the enemy. Washington, DC, United States Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, and United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2001 (http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/fdac/features/2001/401_food.html, accessed 21 August 2002).

List style

Numerical system

The references should be listed in numerical order at the end of each chapter or the full text, as appropriate, before any annexes.

Harvard system

The references should be presented in alphabetical order at the end of each chapter or the full text, as appropriate, before any annexes. The Harvard system requires that each reference have a named author or be listed under Anon. It is preferable to list, for example, WHO publications without named authors under WHO. In all cases, the citation in the text should correspond exactly to the form used in the reference list.

The following rules for ordering items in the list should be observed:

- A single-author entry comes before a multi-author entry beginning with the same name:

Bloggs PQ (1997)
 Bloggs PQ, Grundy AS (1999)
 Bloggs PQ, Simon CL (1999)
 Bloggs PQ et al. (1977)

- All works attributed to one or more author should be listed together in chronological order, by year of publication, starting with the earliest work:

Daley L (1999)
 Daley L (2001)
 Daley L, Hyde J (2000)
 Daley L, Hyde J (2002)
 Daley L, Hyde J, Needham C (2001)
 Daley L, Hyde J, Needham C (2003)

- Two or more works by the same author and published in the same year are distinguished by letters after the date, as shown:

Clark S (1990a) ...
 Clark S (1990b) ...

Spelling

Within WHO, British rather than American spelling is normally used. The general rule is to follow the first spelling listed in the latest edition of *The concise Oxford dictionary*.

There are, however, a number of exceptions, including:

- where a different spelling has become established usage in WHO;
- where there is a need to respect the recommendations of international nomenclature-setting bodies;
- quoted materials, where the original spelling must be reproduced exactly;
- book and article titles and organization names, such as the United States Department of Labor, where the original spelling must be reproduced.

Section 5 gives the preferred spellings and usage of many of the commonly encountered exceptions; it also includes *The concise Oxford dictionary* spellings that should be followed for many words that often cause doubt or difficulty, and gives some guidance on choice of words. Section 6 gives the preferred spelling of words ending in -ize, -ise and -yse.

Spelling of medical terms

The spelling of disease names and other medical terms follows British rather than American usage. Some frequently found exceptions in WHO are:

estrogen, estrus, etc. (but oesophagus and oedema)
 etiology
 fetal, fetus, etc.
 leukocyte, leukopenia.

As far as possible, the International Nomenclature of Diseases (several volumes published by CIOMS and CIOMS/WHO; see section 10) should be followed for disease names and their spelling; otherwise, standard medical dictionaries, such as those given below, should be consulted.

Dorland's illustrated medical dictionary, 29th ed. Philadelphia, PA, Saunders, 2000.
Stedman's medical dictionary, 26th ed. Baltimore, MD, Williams & Wilkins, 1995.

The International Classification of Diseases is a tool for classification and is not intended to be a reference for nomenclature.

Eponymous names give no information about the nature of a disease or syndrome, and different names may be used in different countries. They should be avoided whenever possible; where eponymous names must be used, the apostrophe "s" is unnecessary:

Crohn disease *not* Crohn's disease
 Down syndrome *not* Down's syndrome.

Setting the spelling and grammar tool on your computer

WHO-recommended spellings have been incorporated into the default spellcheck dictionary for Synergy users of Microsoft Word 97 (shortly to be updated to Word XP). To activate this function in Word:

- Select the "Tools" menu.
- Scroll down to the "Language" bar.

- Drag over to and click on “Set Language”.
- Select “English (United Kingdom)”.

If you receive a document that has been prepared outside WHO, British English may not be the selected language. You will therefore need to reset the language for that document. However, even if British English is used, not all misspellings will be identified. For example, although WHO spells “breastfeed” as one word, the spellcheck function will accept the spellings “breast feed” (two words) and “breast-feed” because the words “breast” and “feed” are both valid in the spellcheck dictionary. Similarly, if you misspell a word, but the misspelling is a real word in its own right (e.g. “heath” instead of “health”), then the spellcheck cannot help you. Furthermore, the spellcheck will not address questions related to the use of capitals and italics; in these instances, you will need to refer to *The concise Oxford dictionary* or the WHO spelling list (see section 5). Careful checking of your documents will be as important as ever.

Structure of WHO

WHO regions

WHO Member States are grouped into six regions:

- WHO African Region
- WHO Region of the Americas
- WHO South-East Asia Region
- WHO European Region
- WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region
- WHO Western Pacific Region.

These regions are organizational groupings and, while they are based on geographical terms, are not synonymous with geographical areas. Note that the WHO regions are not the same as those of the United Nations.

The order of the region names in the above-mentioned list has become a convention within WHO. It is alphabetical by continent (or sea and ocean in the case of the last two) and ignores the qualifiers “south-east”, “eastern” and “western”. While another order of listing could be used, this one has the advantage of being identical to the French alphabetical order of the region names, so that a region will be in the same position in the list whichever language is used. This can be a help when preparing a document in both English and French that deals with a topic region by region.

Use initial capitals when referring to a specific WHO region, as in the list above. However, if you are making a general reference to WHO regions, lower case should be used.

WHO regional committees

Each WHO region has a regional committee made up of representatives of the Member States and Associate Members, if applicable, in that region. The regional committees are decision-making bodies. The correct names of the regional committees are:

- WHO Regional Committee for Africa
- WHO Regional Committee for the Americas (also: Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization)¹
- WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia
- WHO Regional Committee for Europe
- WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean
- WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific.

Use initial capitals when referring to a specific WHO regional committee, as in the list above. However, if you are making a general reference to WHO regional committees, lower case should be used.

WHO regional directors

Use initial capital letters when referring to a specific WHO regional director:

Dr E. Samba, Regional Director for Africa.

WHO regional offices

Each WHO region has a regional office. The correct names of the WHO regional offices are:

- WHO Regional Office for Africa
- WHO Regional Office for the Americas (also: Pan American Sanitary Bureau)²
- WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
- WHO Regional Office for Europe
- WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
- WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific.

Internally, WHO uses acronyms, such as AFRO, AMRO, etc. to refer to its regional offices. Avoid using these acronyms in documents intended for distribution outside the Organization, as they may lead to confusion.

It is especially important not to use expressions such as “AFRO decided ...” when in fact the WHO Regional Committee for Africa or the Member States in the Region made the decision and not the WHO Regional Office for Africa. Similarly, remarks about “the increase in alcohol dependence in parts of EURO” might be misconstrued as referring to the WHO Regional Office for Europe when in fact the reference is to the WHO European Region.

Use initial capital letters when referring to a specific WHO regional office, as in the list above. However, if you are making a general reference to WHO regional offices, lower case should be used.

¹ The Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) simultaneously serves as the WHO Regional Committee for the Americas except when it discusses issues relating to PAHO’s constitution, PAHO’s relations with WHO or the Organization of American States, or PAHO’s role as an Inter-American Specialized Organization.

² The Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB) is the executive arm of PAHO; the bureau simultaneously serves as the WHO Regional Office for the Americas.

Symbols

Symbols, which can be alphabetic, alphanumeric or graphic in form, are used to represent quantities, units, substances, chromosomes and mathematical operations. They are often, but not necessarily, abbreviations. Figures should always be used with unit symbols and abbreviations. The figure should be separated from the unit symbol by a non-breaking space. To avoid ambiguity, no more than one solidus should be used to divide units:

7 kg *not* seven kg.
 m/s² (or m·s⁻²) *not* m/s/s.

When a medial multiplication point is used, it should be clearly identified.

Systeme international d'Unités

See **Units of measurement**.

Tables

Tables should be kept as simple as possible, with brief titles and column headings.

- Restrict the use of rules, unless the table is particularly complex.
- Vertical lines should generally be avoided, but straddle rules over column headings are useful for clarifying hierarchical arrangements.
- When units of measurement or multiplication factors appear in column headings, ensure that there is no possibility of misinterpretation.
- A column should not contain any blanks. Use em rules or abbreviations where data are missing, e.g. NA for “not applicable” or ND for “not determined”.
- Additional information should be given in the form of footnotes, generally identified with superscript letters placed in the appropriate order in the table from left to right and top to bottom. The same mark may be used on two or more elements if the corresponding note applies. For a table consisting only of words or letters, superscript numbers may be used as reference marks to identify footnotes. For a table that includes mathematical or chemical equations, a series of symbols may be used because of the risk of mistaking letters or numbers for exponents.

The footnotes should be printed immediately below the table. They are of four general kinds and should appear in this order:

- Explanations of abbreviations and notes on levels of statistical significance: a single asterisk is used for the lowest level of significance, two for the next level, and so on.
- Source and general notes: if data for a table are not the author's own but are taken from another source, the author should include a source note, introduced by the word “Source(s):”.
- Notes on specific parts of the table.
- Acknowledgements: if the entire table is reproduced with little or no change from another source, this should be acknowledged in a statement. Permission

must also be obtained from the author(s) and/or publisher(s) (see “Copyright and permissions” on the WHO-HQ Intranet).

- Every table must agree with, and be referred to in, the body of the text.
- In text, capitalize the word “table” when referring to a specific table, but use lower-case letters when referring to a generic table.

The data in Table 1 show the mortality rate.

The table below presents the data.

Some of the above-mentioned points are illustrated in the example below; the precise format for the title and use of boldface and italic will depend on the style adopted for the information product in question.

Table 1

Concise descriptive title^a

Column heading ^c	Main column heading ^b	
	Extremely long subheading (unit) ^d	Subheading (unit)
Row heading indented on second and subsequent lines	10.3 ± 1.1 ^e	ND
Second row heading	9.1 ± 3.2	362
Subheading	2.3 ± 0.2*	
Subheading	6.8 ± 2.5	
Third row heading	3.0 ± 0.9	490
Fourth row heading	17.6 ± 4.4**	51

ND, not determined; * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$ (with appropriate details of the statistical test).

^a Explanatory note, for example concerning experimental design and method, or source of data.

^b Column headings may be ranged left or centred over the columns as appropriate (usually centred when the columns contain figures).

^c First column heading normally ranged left and aligned with the bottom line of column headings.

^d Explanatory note, for example concerning presentation of data (mean ± SD, etc.).

^e Align columns of figures on the decimal point.

Adapted, by permission of the publisher, from Bloggs & Grundy (16).

Temperature

Temperature should be given in degrees Celsius. The degree sign is part of the unit and should be adjacent to the C:

7 °C or 20–25 °C.

Time

For the time of day, the 24-hour clock should be used:

16:30 (*not* 4:30 pm)

12:00

06:00.

Titles

- Use initial capitals for formal titles, such as President, Vice-President, Chairman, Rapporteur and Secretary, when they appear immediately before a name.
- Do not abbreviate the title “Professor”.
- Do not separate the title from the name with a comma.
- For courtesy titles, such as Dr, Mr or Mrs, do not use a full point.

President Bush spoke on the anti-drug policy.

Dr Smith wrote the book on malaria.

Trade names

Generic names should be used instead of trade names whenever possible. This is to avoid the implication that WHO endorses or recommends a particular manufacturer’s product (drug, pesticide, item of medical equipment) in preference to others. If a specific proprietary product must be named, it should be distinguished by an initial capital letter. It may be necessary to justify its inclusion if the context is particularly sensitive. Please contact LEG for advice on this topic.

See also **Drugs and pesticides**.

Units of measurement

The *Système international d’Unités* is the culmination of over a century of international efforts to develop a universally acceptable system of units of measurement. The great expansion in world trade and exchange of scientific information following the Second World War gave added impetus to the development of such a system, and in 1954, the units that were to form its basis were adopted by the intergovernmental *Conférence générale des Poids et Mesures* (CGPM). In 1960, the CGPM adopted the name *Système international d’Unités* (International System of Units) and the international abbreviation SI. The SI is essentially an expanded version of the “metric system” that has been in use since 1901.

In 1977, in resolution WHA30.39, the World Health Assembly recommended the adoption of the SI by the entire scientific community, and particularly the medical community throughout the world. Therefore, SI units should always be used in WHO publications.

Exceptionally, for blood pressure, values may still be given in millimetres of mercury with the equivalent in kilopascals in parentheses:

120 mmHg (16 kPa).

The latest edition of the SI brochure, giving full details of the SI system, can be found on the Internet at <http://www.bipm.fr/pdf/si-brochure.pdf>.

A list of the most commonly used symbols, including those used for the SI base units, is given below. These symbols should be used only after a quantity expressed in figures, in tables, and in graphs.

ampere	A
becquerel	Bq
centimetre	cm
degree (angular)	°
degree Celsius	°C
gram	g
hour	h
kilogram	kg
kilometre	km
litre	l (spell out if confusion is possible)
metre	m
microgram	µg
milligram	mg
millimetre	mm
minute (of time)	min
mole	mol
newton	N
second (of time)	s
sievert	Sv
tonne	t
volt	V
watt	W

A compound abbreviation may sometimes be used to indicate a relationship between two different units of measurement:

mg/kg.

The SI incorporates the following prefixes, by means of which it is possible to form multiples of SI units.

Factor	Prefix	Symbol	Factor	Prefix	Symbol
10^{-1}	deci	d	10^1	deca	da
10^{-2}	centi	c	10^2	hecto	h
10^{-3}	milli	m	10^3	kilo	k
10^{-6}	micro	μ	10^6	mega	M
10^{-9}	nano	n	10^9	giga	G
10^{-12}	pico	p	10^{12}	tera	T
10^{-15}	femto	f	10^{15}	peta	P
10^{-18}	atto	a	10^{18}	exa	E

To avoid ambiguity, no more than one solidus should be used to divide units. Use “per” in place of the second solidus or use an exponent, if appropriate:

g/kg per day
m/s².

Versus

Versus should be spelt out in full in text or in figure/table captions. The abbreviation, *vs*, should be reserved for table column headings or within figures.

WHO headquarters telephone directory

The WHO headquarters telephone directory is a useful reference source for checking the names of individuals and programmes and the programme structure at WHO headquarters. It is updated on a regular basis, so ensure that you have the latest version. An organigram is also available on the WHO-HQ Intranet.