ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Aims and Scope
Spinal Cord is a specialised, international journal that has been publishing spinal cord related manuscripts since 1963. It appears monthly, online and in print, and accepts contributions on spinal cord anatomy, physiology and management of injury and disease. Spinal Cord is multi-disciplinary and publishes contributions across the entire spectrum of research ranging from basic science to applied clinical research. It focuses on high quality original research, systematic reviews and narrative reviews.

Spinal Cord’s sister journal Spinal Cord Series and Cases: Clinical Management in Spinal Cord Disorders publishes case reports, small case series and studies of regional interest. For more information, please see the aims and scope of Spinal Cord Series and Cases.

Journal Details
Editor-in-Chief: Professor Lisa Harvey, The University of Sydney, Australia, spinalcord@iscos.org.uk
Editorial Office: spinalcord@iscos.org.uk
Impact factor: 1.936 (2017 Journal Citation Reports, Thomson Reuters, 2018). 137/197 Clinical Neurology | 19/65 Rehabilitation
Frequency: 12 issues a year

Abstracted in:
- EBSCO Discovery Service
- Google Scholar
- Medline
- OCLC
- Scopus
- Summon by ProQuest
- BIOSIS
- Current Contents/Clinical Medicine
- Science Citation Index Expanded (SciSearch)
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- EBSCO Biomedical Reference Collection
- EBSCO CINAHL
- EBSCO SPORTDiscus
- EBSCO STM Source
- EBSCO Rehabilitation & Sports Medicine Science
- EBSCO TOC Premier

Patient consent
If a patient or participant of a study can be identified in any way through information or clinical photographs presented in a paper, the patient or participant must provide written and signed consent. The consent needs to be emailed or posted to the editorial office. Alternatively, please indicate where a photograph can be cropped to remove identifiable features. If consent has not been obtained, then any recognizable features must be masked so that the individual is ‘officially unrecognizable’.

ARTICLE TYPE SPECIFICATIONS

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<th>ARTICLE DESCRIPTION</th>
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<td>Review Article</td>
<td>Spinal Cord prioritises systematic reviews about treatment effectiveness which</td>
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Article
Please see ‘Preparation of Articles’ below for further details.

Spinal Cord prioritises original research that contains prospectively collected data driven by clear a priori hypothesis. This includes but is not limited to:
- Randomised and non-randomised clinical trials (please see requirement for trial registration above)
- Diagnostic studies
- Cohort studies (if the sample is representative of the target population)
- Case-control studies
- Psychometric studies
- Basic cellular studies
- Animal studies
- Qualitative studies
- Explanatory or mechanistic studies
- Economic evaluation studies

The following types of studies are of low publication priority:
- Retrospective chart audits
- Studies of the demographics of patients presenting with onset of SCI
- Studies that are only of regional interest
- Studies examining the reliability of outcome measures translated into a non-English language
- Surveys

Exceptions will be made if the authors can demonstrate that the study is particularly novel and would be of wide interest to an international readership.

Protocol
Protocols of large cohorts or clinical trials may be published from time-to-time. However, the studies need to be of high importance with a strong likelihood of completion (evident by sufficient funding).

The headings for the Structured Abstract and within the article text should be the same as for Articles as outlined below with the following exception:
- The Results and Discussion sections should be replaced with one section titled ‘Ethics and Dissemination’

Additional subheadings within these sections are allowed

Structured abstract max 250 words;
Main body of text (excluding abstract, references, figures/tables)
not to exceed 3,500 words*;
Max of 4 tables and 3 figures

Please Note: all submissions should include a Title Page and a Conflict of Interest Statement. More information can be found below.

Clinical Trials
Important Message: Mandatory requirements starting 1st January 2018
From 2018: All clinical trials starting on or after 1 January 2018 MUST be registered BEFORE the first participant is randomised to be accepted for publication in Spinal Cord. A clinical trial is any study in which participants are allocated to a treatment. Trials commenced before 2018 must be retrospectively registered. Read here and see the below section on Clinical Trials for more details.

PREPARATION OF ARTICLE

House Style: Authors should adhere to the following formatting guidelines:
- We accept UK English or American English, however authors should be consistent in their use of either within the manuscript
- Text should be double spaced with margins of between 1cm and 3cm wide
- All pages and lines to be numbered continuously (do not restart line numbering at the beginning of each page). To add page numbers in MS Word, go to Insert > Page Numbers. To add line numbers go to File, Page Setup, Layout tab. In the Apply to box select Whole document, click Line Numbers then select the Add line numbering check box, followed by Continuous.
- Do not make rules thinner than 1pt (0.36mm).
- Use a coarse hatching pattern rather than shading for tints in graphs.
- Colour should be distinct when being used as an identifying tool.
- Commas, not spaces should be used to separate thousands.
- At first mention of a manufacturer, the town (and state if USA) and country should be provided.
- Normally distributed data should be expressed as mean (SD). Skewed data should be expressed as median (25% to 75% percentiles).
- Sole reliance on statistically significance (and p values) is discouraged. Instead, we encourage reporting of effect sizes preferably in the units of the original scale. For example, we encourage authors to write “people with tetraplegia are twice as likely to experience respiratory problems than people with paraplegia (OR 2.13, 95% CI 1.91 to 2.37)” or “people with spinal cord injury walked 0.45 m/s (95% CI 0.35 to 0.55) slower than their age matched healthy counterparts”. We discourage statements such as “people with spinal cord injury had a significant decrease in psychological distress after counselling (p = 0.02)“.
- Units: Use metric units (SI units) as fully as possible. Preferably give measurements of energy in kilojoules or Megajoules with kilocalories in parentheses (1 kcal = 4.186kJ). Use % throughout.
- Express all 95% confidence intervals in this format – “95% CI, xx to xx”.
- Express all means and standard deviations in this format – “the mean (SD) was xx (xx).”
- Abbreviations: On first using an abbreviation place it in parentheses after the full item. Note these abbreviations: gram g, litre l, milligram mg; kilogram kg; kilojoule kJ; megajoule MJ; weight wt; seconds s; minutes min; hours h. Do not add s for plural units.
- Use person centred terminology throughout e.g. “people with tetraplegia” (not “tetraplegics”).
- Use the term “tetraplegia” (not “quadriplegia”).

* Unless these restrictions prevent authors from conveying key messages. If these restrictions are exceeded then authors need to provide an explanation in their covering letter and be aware that they may be asked to reduce the number of Figures, Tables and length of the manuscript. Authors can put extensive descriptions of particular methods or statistical techniques, and extra Figures or Tables in Supplementary Files.

Revised 03/01/2019
- Use the words “person/s”, “people” or “individual/s” where ever possible (rather than “patient/s”) unless this distracts from the readability or meaning.
- Use the word “participant/s”, not “subject/s”.
- Avoid spurious precision. As a general rule, report numbers between 0 and 1 to 2 decimal places, between 1 and 10 to 1 decimal place, and above 10 with no decimal place.

Please note that Articles must contain the below components (if the authors wish Reviews can also be split under these headings). All sections of the article text where noted (*) must be included in a single article file and uploaded in Word format.

- Cover letter
- Title page (excluding acknowledgements)*
- Structured Abstract*
- Introduction*
- Methods*
- Results*
- Discussion*
- Data Archiving*
- Acknowledgements*
- Statement of Ethics*
- Conflicts of Interest*
- Author Contributions*
- Funding*
- Legend for Supplementary Material (if applicable)*
- References*
- Figure legends*
- Tables
- Figures

**Cover Letter**
Authors should provide a cover letter that includes the affiliation and contact information for the corresponding author. Authors should briefly discuss the importance of the work and explain why it is considered appropriate for the diverse readership of the journal. The cover letter should confirm the material is original research, has not been previously published and has not been submitted for publication elsewhere while under consideration. If the manuscript has been previously considered for publication in another journal, please include the previous reviewer comments, to help expedite the decision by the Editorial team. Please also include a Conflict of Interest statement, see [Editorial Policies](#) for more details.

**Title Page**
The title page should contain:
- Title of the paper - brief, informative, of 150 characters or less and should not make a statement or conclusion but where possible reflect the study design.  
  E.g. 1: Effectiveness of robotic gait training: a clinical trial  
  E.g. 2: The need for ventilator support following recent spinal cord injury: a retrospective chart audit  
In addition, the title shouldn't include abbreviations unless readers are likely to search for it in PubMed.  
Appropriate use of abbreviation: Adaptation and validation of the Caregiver Burden Inventory in Spinal Cord Injuries (CBI-SCI) / Rasch analysis of the University of Washington Self-Efficacy Scale short-form (UW-SES-6) in people with long-standing spinal cord injury
- Running title – should convey the essential message of the paper in no more than 50 characters. Should not contain any abbreviations as above with the Title they are well known abbreviations within the field.

Please note the running head for a manuscript on all pages after the title page will be the shortened manuscript title followed by an ellipsis.
- Full names of all the authors and their affiliations, as well as the e-mail address of the corresponding author (addresses are no longer required). If authors regard it as essential to indicate that two or more co-authors are equal in status, they may be identified by an asterisk symbol with the caption ‘These authors contributed equally to this work’ immediately under the address list.
- Group Authorship/Collaborations - Please note that if in the list of authors you wish to include additional authors/collaborators/groups/consortiums that aren’t part of the core list of authors as ‘on behalf of’, ‘for the’ or ‘representing the’ you need to ensure you list the authors correctly within the paper to ensure these are deposited correctly in PubMed.
  - Groups where there is an ‘on behalf of’, or ‘representing the’, or ‘for the’ will appear in the HTML/PDF as follows: Author A, Author B, Author C and Author D on behalf of...
  - The list of individual members should then appear in the Acknowledgements section and not under Notes or Appendix.
  - A Group name who is an author in its own right should have the list of authors as usual and then all the individual authors of the group listed in their own section at the end of the article, NOT in Acknowledgement/Appendix or Notes.

**Structured Abstract**
Articles must be prepared with a structured abstract designed to summarise the essential features of the paper in a logical and concise sequence under the following mandatory headings. Authors can also apply this layout to Review Articles if they wish to do so.
- **Study Design** (e.g. Retrospective chart audit; cohort study; clinical trial; Systematic Review: Narrative Review – see “Article Description” for other examples)
- **Objectives**
- **Setting** (e.g. hospital in Gothenburg, Sweden; University-based laboratory in Chicago, USA; community in Sydney, Australia; hospitals from multiple countries in Asia.)
- **Methods**
- **Results**
• Conclusions: Framed with respect to the objectives and primary results
• Sponsorship (this is only relevant if a commercial company has sponsored the study. This does not include funding from grants or other sources)

Please note: As with all Springer Nature titles, *Spinal Cord* does not collect keywords. Keywords that are provided to us will not be published. If a term is important in the discoverability of the paper, it should be in the title or abstract of the paper.

**Introduction**

The introduction should assume that the reader is knowledgeable in the field and should therefore be as brief as possible but can include a short historical review where desirable.

**Methods**

This section should contain sufficient detail, so that all experimental procedures can be reproduced, and include references. Methods, that have been published in detail elsewhere can be summarised with a reference to the full methodology. Authors should provide the name of the manufacturer and their location for any specifically named medical equipment or instrument. All drugs should be identified by their pharmaceutical names, and by their trade name if relevant.

**Results**

The results section should briefly present the experimental data in text, Tables or Figures. Tables and Figures should not be described extensively in the text. All results comparing groups should be presented as point estimates with measures of precision (e.g. mean between-group differences, odds ratios or hazard ratios with 95% confidence intervals).

**Discussion**

The discussion section should focus on the interpretation and the significance of the findings with concise objective comments that describe the authors’ work in relation to the work of others in the area. It should not repeat information presented in the results section. The final paragraph should highlight the main conclusion(s) and clinical implications, and provide some indication of the direction of future research.

**Data Archiving**

All articles should contain a Data Availability statement, which includes information on where data supporting the results reported in the article can be found. More information on the journal’s Research Data Policy can be found in the Editorial Policies section of this document which can be found further down or accessed here and for examples of data availability statements please see here.

**Acknowledgements**

These should be brief, and should include sources of technical assistance, critical advice or other assistance, which contributed to the final manuscript.

**Statement of Ethics**

Where a manuscript concerns animal experimentation or the use of human volunteers, the authors need to place a statement detailing the name of the ethics committee that approved the study and the reference number (where appropriate). In addition, the following statement needs to be added - I/we certify that all applicable institutional and governmental regulations concerning the ethical use of human volunteers/animals were followed during the course of this research” (delete inappropriate words). See section on “Human and other animal experiments” for further details of what needs to be stated in this section and what can be placed in the Methods section of the paper.

**Conflicts of Interest**

Authors must declare whether or not there are any competing financial interests in relation to the work described. This information must be included at this stage and will be published as part of the paper. Conflicts of interest should also be noted in the covering letter. Please see the Conflicts of Interest documentation in the Editorial Policies section for detailed information.

**Authors’ Contributions**

Authors must include a statement about the contribution of each author to the manuscript (see section on Authorship). The initials of each author may be used. This is an example for a systematic review:

MAW was responsible for designing the review protocol, writing the protocol and report, conducting the search, screening potentially eligible studies, extracting and analysing data, interpreting results, updating reference lists and creating ’Summary of findings’ tables.

SBM was responsible for designing the review protocol and screening potentially eligible studies. She contributed to writing the report, extracting and analysing data, interpreting results and creating ’Summary of findings’ tables.

DIH conducted the meta-regression analyses and contributed to the design of the review protocol, writing the report, arbitrating potentially eligible studies, extracting and analysing data and interpreting results.

NAL contributed to data extraction and provided feedback on the report.

**Funding**

The funding section is mandatory. Authors must declare sources of funding including grant and investigator funding from universities, charities, and commercial organizations, as well as sources of any study material (e.g. novel drugs) not available commercially. If no financial assistance was received in support of the study, please include a statement to this fact here.

**Legend for Supplementary Material**

Include a text summary (no more than 50 words) to describe the contents of the Supplementary Material. See Supplementary Information section below for more information.

**References**

Only papers directly related to the article should be cited. Exhaustive lists should be avoided. References should follow the Vancouver format. In the text they should appear as numbers in square brackets placed before punctuations and starting at one. Example “…the scale maintains adequate construct validity and measures the attributes it purports to measure [15,16].”
The full details of the References should appear at the end of the paper (double-spaced) in numerical order corresponding to the order of citation in the text.

All authors should be listed for papers with up to six authors; for papers with more than six authors, only the first six authors should be listed, followed by et al. Abbreviations for titles of medical periodicals should conform to those used in the latest edition of Index Medicus. The first and last page numbers for each reference should be provided. Abstracts and letters must be identified as such. Papers in press may be included in the list of references. Personal communications can be allocated a number and included in the list of references in the usual way or simply referred to in the text. In either case authors must obtain permission from the individual concerned to quote his/her unpublished work.

Examples:
Journal article, up to six authors:

Journal article, e-pub ahead of print:

Journal article, in press:

Complete book:

Chapter in book:

Abstract:

Correspondence:

Figure Legends
These should be brief, specific and appear on a separate manuscript page after the References section titled ‘Figure Legends’. All measures of variability should be defined either within the table, title or footnote.

Tables
Tables should only be used to present essential data; they should not duplicate what is written in the text. Reference to Table footnotes should be made alphabetically. Tables should consist of at least two columns; columns should always have headings. Ensure each Table is cited within the text and in the correct order, e.g. (Table 3). All measures of variability should be defined either within the table, title or footnote
It is imperative that tables are editable and ideally submitted in Excel format although Word format is acceptable. If uploading in Excel, each table must be uploaded as a separate workbook with a title or caption and be clearly labelled, sequentially. Files for Tables need to be saved with one of the following file extensions: .xls / .xlsx / .ods / .doc / .docx. Please ensure that you provide a 'flat' file, with single values in each cell with no macros or links to other workbooks or worksheets and no calculations or functions.

Tables should not include bold formatting unless there is a clear scientific significance of the bolding which is explained in the table legend. If not, all bold formatting will be removed at the copy editing stage to ensure the Table adheres to the journal style.

Figures
Figures and images should be labelled sequentially and cited in the text (e.g. Fig.1). Figures should not be embedded within the text but uploaded as separate files. The use of three-dimensional histograms is strongly discouraged unless the addition of the third dimension is important for conveying the results. Composite figures containing more than three individual figures will count as two figures. All parts of a figure should be grouped together. Where possible large figures and tables should be included as supplementary material.

Detailed guidelines for submitting artwork can be found by downloading Artwork Guidelines. Using the guidelines, please submit production quality artwork with your initial online submission. If you have followed the guidelines, we will not require the artwork to be resubmitted following the peer-review process, if your paper is accepted for publication.

Colour Charges
There is a charge if authors choose to publish their figures in colour in print publication (which includes the online PDF):

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(VAT or local taxes will be added where applicable)
Colour charges will not apply to authors who wish to have their figures in colour online only (HTML version of the article but NOT the PDF. If you wish figures to appear in colour in the PDF, colour charges apply). Authors must supply figures in colour but advise the Editorial Office that they wish them to be in colour in the web version of their paper only.

Colour charges will NOT apply to authors who choose to pay an article processing charge to make their paper Open Access.

**Standard abbreviations**

Abbreviations should be defined in full at their first usage in the Abstract, and again at their first usage in the body of the manuscript, in the conventional manner. Terms used less than four times should not be abbreviated. It is not advised to use more than five abbreviations in total unless they are extremely common abbreviations.

**Reporting of demographic and neurological details**

Demographic data should be reported as mean and standard deviation, or median and interquartile range depending on whether the data are skewed or not. If data are to be grouped, then authors are encouraged to follow the recommendations of Biering-Sørensen et al.1 e.g. age should be grouped in 15 year increments: 0–15, 16–30, 31–45... to 76+. The reporting of the paediatric SCI population was updated as age groups 0–5, 6–12, 13–14, 15-17 and 18–21. When time since injury is grouped, 5 year increments should be used: <1 year, 1–5 years, 6–10 years, and 5 year increments thereafter. Calendar time (years during which the study is conducted) should be grouped by either 5 or 10 year increments with years ending in 4 or 9. The severity of injury should be grouped as C1-4 ASIA Impairment Scale grade (AIS) A, B, or C; C5-8 AIS A, B, or C; T1-5S AIS A, B, or C; AIS D at any injury level; Ventilator-dependent at any injury level or AIS grade. If data are limited, the above groups can be collapsed.

**Supplementary Information**

Supplementary Information is material directly relevant to the conclusion of an article that cannot be included in the printed version owing to space or format constraints. The article must be complete and self-explanatory without the Supplementary Information, which is posted on the journal’s website and linked to the article. Supplementary Information may consist of data files, graphics, movies or extensive tables. Please see the Artwork Guidelines for information on accepted file types.

Authors should submit Supplementary Information files in a FINAL format as they are not edited, typeset or changed, and will appear online exactly as submitted. When submitting Supplementary Information, authors are required to:

- Include a text summary (no more than 50 words) to describe the contents of each file.
- Identify the types of files (file formats) submitted.

**Please note:** We do not allow the resupplying of Supplementary Information files for style reasons after a paper has been exported in production, unless there is a serious error that affects the science and, if by not replacing, it would lead to a formal correction once the paper has been published. In these cases we would make an exception and replace the file; however there are very few instances where a Supplementary Information file would be corrected post publication.

**Subject Ontology**

During submission, choosing the most relevant and specific subject terms from our subject ontology will ensure that your article will be more discoverable and will appear on appropriate subject specific pages on nature.com, in addition to the journal’s own pages. Your article should be indexed with at least one, and up to four unique subject terms that describe the key subjects and concepts in your manuscript. Click here for help with this.

**Language Editing**

*Spinal Cord* is read by scientists from diverse backgrounds and many are not native English speakers. In addition, the readership of *Spinal Cord* is multidisciplinary; therefore authors need to ensure their findings are clearly communicated. Language and concepts that are well known in one subfield may not be well known in another. Thus, technical jargon should be avoided as far as possible and clearly explained where its use is unavoidable. Abbreviations, particularly those that are not standard, should also be kept to a minimum. The background, rationale and main conclusions of the study should be clearly explained and understandable by all working in the area of spinal cord injuries. Titles and abstracts in particular should be written in language that will be readily understood by all readers.

Authors who are not native speakers of English sometimes receive negative comments from reviewers about the language and grammar in their manuscripts, which can contribute to a paper being rejected. To reduce the possibility of such problems, we strongly encourage authors to take at least one of the following steps.

- Have your manuscript reviewed for clarity by a colleague in whom English is his/her first language.
- Visit the English language tutorial which covers the common mistakes when writing in English.
- Using a professional language editing service where editors will improve the English to ensure that your meaning is clear and identify problems that require your attention. Two such services are provided by our affiliates Nature Research Editing Service and American Journal Experts.

Please note that the use of a language editing service is at the authors’ own expense and does not guarantee that the article will be selected for peer review or accepted.

**HOW TO SUBMIT**

**Pre-submission Enquiries**

The Editors encourage authors to submit manuscripts in full and aim to provide an efficient time to decision which, if the manuscript is deemed

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unacceptable for the journal, allows authors to submit elsewhere without delay. Pre-submission enquiries should be sent to the editorial office: 
E-mail spinalcord@iscos.org.uk

Online Submission
We only accept manuscript submissions via our online manuscript submission system. Before submitting a manuscript, authors are encouraged to consult both our Editorial Policies and the Submission Instructions for our online manuscript submission system. Authors need to register for an account with our online manuscript system if they have not already done so. Authors will be able to monitor the status of their manuscripts online throughout the editorial process.

Initial Quality Check – Corresponding Author Responsibility
The Corresponding Author is responsible for responding to emails sent from the manuscript tracking system starting with the Initial Quality Check as follows:

1. One the author clicks ‘Approve Submission’ the manuscript is queued for an initial quality check
2. The Editorial Office will then carry out the checks and if any changes need to be made the Corresponding Author (only) receives an email* with instructions to make technical amendments (e.g. layout, references) and a link to access their manuscript
3. Having made the required changes to their manuscript the Author should then click the link to access their submission and upload the amended manuscript.
4. The manuscript is checked again by the Editorial Office but may be returned at least once more before it is ready to be sent to review.

*IMPORTANT: A common error occurs when the Corresponding Author doesn’t receive the email but instead logs onto the system to see the progress of their submission and sees the following:

Author Tasks
Author Instructions
Submit Manuscript
Awaiting Author Approval # SC-2017-

If the author clicks on the link above they see the following prompt:
There are action items pending. Please click on the links next to the arrows.

Manuscript Workflow Tasks
Continue Halted Submission

As a result the Author then resubmits without making the required changes. This means that the file will be returned to them again. If the Author continues to do this without making the changes their submission will be withdrawn. In order to avoid this it is essential that the Corresponding Author receives and follows the instructions in the Quality Check email. It is advisable that authors check their institution does not block our system generated emails and they should always check their junk/spam folders.

Summary of the Editorial Process
- The author submits a manuscript and receives a tracking number
- The editorial office performs an initial quality check on the manuscript to ensure that the paper is formatted correctly
- The Editor-in-Chief then decides whether to send out for review. If the decision is not to send out the manuscript for review, the Editor-in-Chief contacts the author with the decision
- If the Editor-in-Chief decides the paper is within the Journal’s remit, the paper will be assigned to an Associate Editor
- The Associate Editor selects and assigns reviewers. This can take some time depending on the responsiveness and availability of the reviewers selected
- Reviewers are given 14 days from acceptance to submit their reports. Once the required reports are submitted the Associate Editor will make a decision recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief based on the comments received
- The Editor-in-Chief makes the final decision

Authors are able to monitor the status of their paper throughout the peer review process

Peer Review
To expedite the review process, only papers that seem most likely to meet editorial criteria are sent for external review. Papers judged by the editors to be of insufficient general interest or otherwise inappropriate are rejected promptly without external review.

Manuscripts sent out for peer review are evaluated by at least one independent reviewer (often two or more). Authors are welcome to suggest independent reviewers to evaluate their manuscript. By policy, referees are not identified to the authors, except at the request of the referee.

Reviewer selection is critical to the publication process, and we base our choice on many factors, based on expertise, reputation, and specific recommendations. A reviewer may decline the invitation to evaluate a manuscript where there is a perceived conflict of interest (financial or otherwise). Once a sufficient number of reviews are received, the editors then make a decision based on the reviewers’ evaluations:

- Accept – The manuscript is appropriate to be accepted as it stands
- Minor or Major revision – In cases where the editor determines that the authors should be able to address the referees’ concerns in six months or less the editor may request a revised manuscript that addresses these concerns. The revised version is normally sent back to the original referees for re-review. The decision letter will specify a deadline for receipt of the revised manuscript and link via which the author should upload to the online system
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Revised 03/01/2019
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