

Tips for Creating Original Tables and Algorithms

The nature of *AFP*'s clinical review articles makes it seem reasonable to use tables and algorithms from other sources and perhaps add additional or customized information. However, the recent trend is for publishers to deny permission to make *any* changes to previously published material (other than minor layout or font changes). In addition, the Copyright Act does not provide clear definitions about how much of a copyrighted table or algorithm may be reused without obtaining permission.

Scientific facts and established facts are not subject to copyright law; however, *the presentation* of these facts (i.e., the way they are displayed) can be copyrighted. For these reasons, **we strongly encourage authors to create original tables and algorithms, and we provide some tips for doing so below.**

- If information is available only from copyrighted publications, obtain the same information from multiple sources. It is even better to add your own, original information not found in these sources.

Please note:

Cite all sources from which you obtained any information.

Your new table should not be clearly identifiable as primarily being from one source, with only minor additions from the other sources.

Example 1: If one source has columns A, B, C, D, and you use all of that and simply add column E from another source, it is still an adaptation. At a glance, it still looks like the original source.

Example 2: If multiple sources have similar original tables, gather information from those sources to create your new table; cite those multiple sources (see below).

- Do not use tables/algorithms from other journals that obtained information from other multiple and/or common sources. Gather your own information and develop a table/figure that will be the best to accompany your article. Resist the temptation to use what was created in the past; remember that it's the *presentation* of the facts that is copyrighted.

Example 1: If a table lists drugs and their dosage, indications, contraindications, adverse effects, etc., obtain that information yourself from the *Physicians' Desk Reference*, *Epocrates*, or a similar drug reference. Start from scratch, even though your final table will inevitably look similar, given the generic and conventional nature of this kind of information. That way, the table is something you've created, rather than taken from a copyrighted source. Cite the reference(s) you used to create the table.

Example 2: If a table in another journal cites information from other sources, obtain that information from those sources yourself and set up the table/algorithm in a way that is not like the primary source. Your table should be unique, and the multiple sources should be clearly cited.

Exception: The publishers of the DSM-5 will not allow any modifications to diagnostic criteria tables. Because this information is usually not available from other (original) sources, it is acceptable to submit these tables to *AFP*; be sure to note the source details.

- Find a source (one or more) that includes the desired information in the text itself (i.e., not arranged in table format). Create a table using that information and cite your source(s).
- If possible, find information from government sources (e.g., CDC, NIH), which are typically "public domain."

NOTE: Not all content on ".gov" websites is public domain. Each one needs to be investigated.

Typically, if there is not a clear copyright notice on content from a government site, it is public domain. Provide the exact URL so the *AFP* staff can verify.

Note: If the information taken from another source is a small component (e.g., a small section of a table), copyright permission is not usually needed. *AFP* professional staff will make that determination. Please include the appropriate citation with your table.

The key is to make the presentation of facts unique to your article. Gather your own information and develop a table/figure that will be the best to accompany your article. Resist the temptation to use what was created in the past; remember that it's the *presentation* of the facts that is copyrighted.

If information is truly unique to one copyrighted source, the *AFP* professional staff will work with you to ensure that the appropriate permissions are obtained, or to rework the information to avoid a problem with obtaining permission to reprint. It is important to include clear and complete citations of all sources you used to develop your tables and figures.