

The American Academy of Family Physicians National Research Network and its sub-networks (collectively known as the AAFP NRN) anticipate that all its research will result in publishable reports in a scientific journal. Each publication increases the dissemination of credible and innovative research in support of better patient care and brings further awareness of the benefits of practice-based research.

The AAFP NRN conducts many studies with many different investigators. We want to make preparing publications as efficient and effective as possible. Therefore, the following guidelines were developed for writing and publishing manuscripts from data collected in the AAFP NRN.

Investigators for each study will agree to follow these guidelines, or develop a mutually-acceptable agreement prior to the publication or dissemination of information (including manuscripts or presentations) for all studies in which the AAFP NRN is a partner.

## Primary Publication Requirements and Guidelines

The following are guidelines the AAFP NRN expects all investigators to follow when producing primary publications based on research conducted in collaboration with the AAFP NRN. A primary publication is one that details the design, methods, or primary results of an AAFP NRN study.

## Approval for publication

Any data collected in the AAFP NRN and its sub-networks that are used to produce a manuscript or presentation must be reviewed and approved by the AAFP NRN research director or designated representative, unless a senior member of the AAFP NRN has been actively engaged in the writing and is listed as an author.

Interpretation and publication of study findings by the AAFP NRN is the sole responsibility of the AAFP NRN. If at any time the AAFP NRN Leadership Group determines that the data does not adequately represent the AAFP NRN and its membership, they reserve the right to attach a disclaimer stating non-support of the results.

## Timeline

The results of all AAFP NRN studies should be submitted for publication within one year of completion of data collection for the study.

## Journals

It is the expectation of the AAFP NRN to publish research results in peer-reviewed scientific journals. The manuscript should be written to follow the style requirements of the journal to which the author wishes to submit.

## Authorship

The AAFP NRN expects that individuals closely involved in the conduct of the study will be authors of the paper by following the authorship guidelines defined in the Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts (URMs) Submitted to Biomedical Journals ([International Committee of Medical Journal Editors Recommendations – “The Uniform Requirements”](#)). Authorship of any manuscript using data collected by AAFP NRN shall include credit given to the AAFP NRN.

## Title Requirements

Primary publications created based on data collected by the AAFP NRN should include the suffix: “A report from the AAFP National Research Network” or “An AAFP National Research Network study.” Similar wording is recommended for all NRN sub-networks, i.e. “A Collaborative Care Research Network (CCRN) study” or “An Electronic National Quality Improvement and Research Network (eNQUIRENet) study.” We recognize that titles are often prescribed by the publishing journal and we will work with the author to identify viable options.

In the case of joint projects where the AAFP NRN is not the primary data collection site or there are multiple data collection sites, the AAFP NRN director will contact the principal investigator (PI) and other co-investigators of the study to negotiate titles and attestation statements prior to public dissemination of study results, including study methods papers.

## Acknowledgements

Primary publications should acknowledge the contribution of AAFP NRN members of the study. This contribution can be acknowledged by listing the names of AAFP NRN practices in the acknowledgement section, unless a practice specifically requests not to be listed or the journal prohibits an acknowledgement of this type. All acknowledgements will follow “The Uniform Requirements” for the acknowledgement section. ([ICMJE Recommendations](#))

If the suffix mentioned in the title requirements is not permitted to be included in the title, then a standard acknowledgement of the AAFP NRN’s participation should be included within the abstract and method section of the paper. A phrase, such as “A study of the AAFP National Research Network” should be used. Similar wording is recommended for all AAFP NRN sub-networks. Examples are available upon request.

## Confidentiality and Proprietary Information

Information deemed “confidential” by the funding company prior to commencing the research project may be withheld from publication, but all findings and discoveries that are derived from the research project will be available for publication.

## WRITING AND PUBLICAITON GUIDELINES

Interpretation and publication of study findings by the AAFP NRN is the sole responsibility of the AAFP NRN.

### Key Words

Most journals ask authors to submit keywords that relate to the content of the article. Authors should include keywords that describe the topic of the study. All articles related to AAFP NRN studies or data must also list “practice-based research network” or “PBRN” as a keyword.

### Secondary Publications

A secondary publication is one that entails a secondary goal of an AAFP NRN study.

The PI may approve the release of data gathered in the AAFP NRN study for others to use in secondary publications. Appropriate approvals, as outlined in the study specific data sharing agreement, or by the AAFP NRN director, are required. All secondary data analysis is the responsibility of the secondary publication author. Any publications, presentations, or abstracts developed through secondary data analysis will follow the requirements specified within the data sharing agreement.

The PI must agree to the preparation of manuscripts that do not directly relate to the original stated purposes or hypotheses of a study. In the event the PI is no longer involved with AAFP NRN, the AAFP NRN director will assume responsibility for approving manuscripts not related to the original study purposes.

Many of the guidelines listed for primary publications also apply to secondary publications. See below for guidelines that differ.

### Authorship

The authorship guidelines listed for primary publications apply to secondary publications. The investigators who conduct the secondary analysis of AAFP NRN study data are generally listed as authors of the secondary publication. Additionally, those conducting the secondary analysis must consult with the PI or designee from the original research. The PI or designee is expected to assist with writing the methods section for the secondary publication, particularly as the methods relate to the primary data collection.

### Title Requirements

A secondary publication may follow the requirements of a primary publication at the discretion of the AAFP NRN director.

### Acknowledgements

A secondary publication should also include in the acknowledgement section a statement that the source data came from AAFP NRN. The author can also reference a primary article that lists all collaborators in the original study.

### Writing Team Roles and Responsibilities

This section describes the key roles and responsibilities for writing papers related to studies conducted by the AAFP NRN. We have had great success with this team structure and highly recommend its use.

### Principal Investigator

The PI is responsible for ensuring that the primary results of the study are disseminated in the form of a scientific paper. The PI will work with the study investigators to identify and a core writing group, primary author, and production manager.

### Primary Author

The primary author is responsible for the main writing task and is the corresponding author for the paper. For main effects papers, this is typically the PI of the study. Authorship decisions are delineated in the guidelines above.

### Core Writing Group

The core writing group consists of 3-4 people (including the primary author). They are responsible for the content of the paper, including the main outcomes and messaging. It is expected that the core writing group will be representative of the researchers and research organizations involved in the study. They prepare the initial abstract and determine which journal will be the initial target. The core writing group is responsible for responding to peer reviews and revising the manuscript as required in a timely manner.

### Production Manager

The production manager works with the primary author to identify a timeline for the project and assign writing tasks. This person is responsible for setting appropriate deadlines, maintaining progress, compiling sections written by others into a single draft, setting up a document template, and formatting the paper in accordance with the journal's style.

### Conflict Resolution

The PI is ultimately responsible for the authorship of all manuscripts and presentations according to the guidelines listed above. Any disputes that arise as a result of these guidelines that cannot be resolved by the PI should be referred to the AAFP NRN director.