The Pharmacy Citation Formatting Task Force was charged with crafting a simple standard for students to use when referencing information from drug resources. This report is designed to highlight the needs for such a guide and illustrate the resulting recommendations and citation structure.

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Introduction

“There is hardly any one detail of a well prepared and well written article that will give a better and clearer idea of a writer’s methods or foster a greater confidence in the accuracy and soundness of his views than well chosen, well arranged, absolutely correct references.”


The Internet has made many things very simple. Bibliographies aren’t among them. To build up reader’s confidence with “well analyzed absolutely correct references” as suggested by George Simmons (who was the editor of Journal of the Medical Library Association for 25 years)\(^1\) is as difficult as ever. In fact, “What you used to think of as difficult and boring is now really difficult and boring,” says Peggy Morrison, a librarian and bibliographer at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock.\(^2\)

\(^{1}\) Dr. George H. Simmons. *JAMA*. 1924;83(14):1080. doi:10.1001/jama.1924.02660140038012.

Although there are multiple published guides to commonly used bibliographic citation style formats, these guides rarely provide adequate guidance concerning the continuously evolving resources available online. Many library educators have been left to interpret the suggested format and nuances of each resource, and develop their own examples to guide the citation of electronic resources.

Two commonly used citation styles in the medical and health sciences are the Vancouver/ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) style, published electronically in Citing Medicine, The NLM Style Guide for Authors, Editors, and Publishers and last updated in 2015, and the AMA style (American Medical Association). The Vancouver style was originally created in 1978 by editors from major English language biomedical journals, based on reference formatting developed by the NLM (National Library of Medicine), and has been revised and updated several times. The AMA referencing system, created for use in AMA publications, can be traced to the six pages on bibliographic references included in a book on medical writing published by a Journal of the American Medical Association editor in 1925; the tenth and most recent edition was published in 2007.

Neither of these systems gives specific instructions for citing drug compendia or many other resources available online, leaving students to guess whether those should be treated as an electronic book, database or web site. Moreover, the publishers of drug compendia often change, as do the platforms on which they are published, making it especially difficult to include accurate and up-to-the-minute citations. It is often the librarian who takes on the role of citation consultant.

Our task force has sought to address this situation by producing a new suggested method of citing pharmacy-specific sources, explained further in the document that follows. For each source type, we suggest a basic template followed by specific examples. We then list resource-specific notes.

Although our suggested format is loosely based on the 10th edition of the AMA handbook, especially for drug databases and compendia, in many instances we are creating new citation formats that we hope will be adopted.
The basic template:

Name of monograph or document. Database name. Company, Publisher or vendor maintaining the database. URL. Updated Month day, year. Accessed Month day, year.

Additional points regarding the suggested citation format:

● We only give the publisher or vendor’s URL since not all users will have access to the tool.

● We have tried to stick to the template as much as possible except where there was a specific reason to include additional information to help locate the item. For example, the publisher Wolters Kluwer now owns the company Lexicomp, so we recommend listing both.

● After extensive discussion on what belongs in a “proper” citation the committee reached a consensus that creating references should be as simple as possible. That is why we decided to leave out publisher locations and extraneous words like “Available at” and “In”.

● The guide also includes a citation format for books, journals, government documents and websites. In these cases, we have followed the AMA format.

● Some pharmacy databases include a link to obtain a suggested format. We point this out in the notes section as students and faculty may prefer to use this format.

Conclusion

We hope this citation format and related suggestions will help pharmacy students, librarians, researchers and teaching faculty. Task Force members would like to hear from those of you who opt to use or recommend this guide, and/or have comments or suggestions for future versions. Please let us know by contacting Natalie Kupferberg (kupferberg.1@osu.edu), Task Force Chair.
AccessPharmacy

Format


Examples


Database Specific Notes

- When citing electronic books available in this database, use the electronic book citation style from AMA.
- Click “Get Citation” at the top of the search results for AccessPharmacy’s recommendations. This includes a suggested AMA citation format for book chapters. Students may choose to use this suggested format.
- Some drug monographs are lengthy. To aid readers, consider adding a comma and the name of the section of the monograph where the specific data of interest is found. See example 2 above.
Lexicomp

Format


Examples


Database Specific Notes

- Last modified/updated date found in the index search result panel.
- Lexicomp provides citing instructions at http://webstore.lexi.com/s.nl/ctype.KB/it.l/id.342/KB.3234/f. These instructions do not match the style in this page.
- Use the drug name or name of the interaction, calculator, or drug product you are citing as the title.
- The book, source, or section name is in parentheses after the drug name, or immediately under the blue toolbar.
- Interactive tools in this database do not include an update date. State this in the citation. See example 2.
Micromedex

Format


Examples


Database Specific Notes

- Last modified/updated date found at the end of references in drug monographs.
- For drug monographs, indicate whether you used “Quick Answers” or “In Depth Answers”.
- Interactive tools in this database do not include an update date. State this in the citation. See example 2.
Websites

Format

Author(s), if given (often, no authors are given). Title of the specific item cited (if none is given, use the name of the organization responsible for the site). Name of the website. URL [provide URL and verify that the link still works as close as possible to publication]. Published [date]. Updated [date]. Accessed [date].

Examples


Notes

- AMA recognizes that many websites do not include all this information and states that you should include as much relevant information as possible.
- Check the URL to make sure it works.
- For government websites see Government Documents.
Government Documents

Format

Author(s), if given (often, no authors are given). Title of the specific item cited (if none is given, use the name of the organization or agency responsible for the site). Name of the website. Location. URL [provide URL and verify that the link still works as close as possible to publication]. Published [date]. Updated [date]. Accessed [date].

Examples


Notes

- Dates published and updated might be missing. In many cases only the date accessed will be available.
- Include report numbers or other information that could help the reader find the document if the URL changes.
**Package Insert (Print)**

**Format**

Name - dosage form (tablets, capsules, etc.) [print package insert]. Manufacturer's name; Date (bottom-most date on print insert).

**Examples**

Aripiprazole tablet [print package insert]. Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc; March 2017.


**Notes**

- Print Package Insert Styles based on [AMA Style for Package Inserts](#).
- To cite online package inserts follow the style for government documents or websites.
Package Insert (Electronic)
Drug/Biologic Labeling (Inserts)

Introduction

“Package Insert” has been commonly used to describe print materials included with drugs. Because a variety of materials (e.g., Prescribing Information, Patient Information, Medication Guides, Instructions for Use) could be considered "package inserts," and because individual items target different audiences (e.g., healthcare providers versus consumers), the expression "package insert" obscures which item an author is citing. Moreover, many of these materials are now available online and viewed electronically, so the term is potentially misleading. Historically, "Patient Package Inserts" originated as written patient information distributed with oral contraceptives and estrogens.³

We advise adopting a citation format that identifies which particular "insert" is being cited. "Labeling" and "label" have different definitions under U.S. law⁴ as regulated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration.⁵

"Labeling" means all labels and other written, printed, or graphic materials on any article (or its containers or wrappers) or accompanying the article (e.g., Prescribing Information, FDA-approved Medication Guides, carton and container labels.⁶ Since “labeling” is the broadest, most encompassing term, the heading "Labeling" replaces "Package Insert" in this citation guide.

“Label” (narrower term and subset of "labeling") means a display of written, printed, or graphic matter upon the immediate container of any article. . . the outside container or wrapper, if any there be, of the retail package of such article, or is easily legible through the outside container or wrapper.”⁷

⁴ Section 201, Chapter II, (k) and (m) of Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act).
⁶ Ibid.
"Prescribing Information" is written for healthcare providers and its content must comply with federal regulations.\(^8\) Since the advent of the Physician Labeling Rule (PLR),\(^9\) some prescription drugs have the PLR-formatted Prescribing Information and others have the non-PLR "old" format of Prescribing information.

"Medication Guide" means FDA-approved patient-oriented labeling that meets the specifications of Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations Part 208, Medication Guides for Prescription Drug Products.\(^10\) Medication Guides sometimes appear after or are appended to Prescribing Information. Not all prescription drugs or biological products have Medication Guides, only certain prescribed drugs and biologics.\(^11\)

"Instructions for Use" mean FDA-approved labeling for "products that have complicated dosing instructions to help the patient use the product properly."\(^12\)

For example, see Noctiva (desmopressin acetate) nasal spray, for intranasal use [Labeling]. Renaissance Lakewood, LLC. https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/drugsatfda_docs/label/2017/201656lbl.pdf. Last Revised March 2017.

- In its current 20-page PDF format as of May 24, 2017, Noctiva Prescribing Information is on pages 1-12.
- Medication Guide is on pages 13-15 of Noctiva PDF.
- Noctiva Instructions for Use are on pages 16-20 of PDF.

**Format**

Proprietary name, if any, (drug/biologic name, no parentheses if there is no proprietary name), dosage form (tablets, capsules, etc.) and route of administration [Identify which type of labeling, Prescribing Information, Medication Guide, Instructions for Use, Patient Information, Label, etc., or refer to them collectively as Labeling]. Manufacturer's or repackager's name. URL [if any, provide URL and verify that the link still works as close as possible to publication]. Updated/Revised Date.

\(^8\) 21 C.F.R. § 201.56(a)(1) and (2).
\(^10\) 21 C.F.R. §208.3(h).
\(^12\) Id.
Examples


Notes

- Drug/biologic labeling format loosely based on AMA Style for Package Inserts.
- Dates accessed are omitted, because the revised date of the labeling is more important than the date accessed online. Since the date accessed might be more recent than the date revised, this also avoids mistaking the most recent date for the revised date.
**Journal (Print)**

**Format (Print)**
Authors. Article title: Subtitle. *Journal Title using NLM abbreviations*. Year; Volume (issue): page-page.

**Examples**


**Notes**

- List all authors unless there are more than six. If there are more than six, list the first three then use “et al.”
- Do not include punctuation between authors’ last names and initials.
Journal (Electronic)

Format

Author(s). Article title: Subtitle. Journal Title using NLM abbreviations. Year; Volume (issue): page-page. doi:

Examples


Notes

- Set off these elements with a period: authors, article title, journal title, and page number.
- The preferred citation style for an electronic journal uses a DOI (digital object identifier). The DOI provides a persistent link to the electronic item and is considered to be more stable than a URL. If there is no DOI give the URL and the date of access. Learn more about the doi system at [https://www.doi.org/](https://www.doi.org/)
**Book (Print)**

**Format**


**Examples**


**Chapter in a print book**

**Format**


**Examples**


Book (Electronic)

Format

Book Author(s). *Book title: subtitle*. Edition number (do not indicate first edition). City, State abbreviation: Name of publisher; Year. URL. Accessed [date].

Examples


Chapter in an Electronic Book

Format

Chapter Author(s), if given (often, no authors are given). Chapter title. In: Book Author(s). *Book title: subtitle*. Edition number (do not indicate first edition). City, State abbreviation: Name of publisher; Year. URL. Accessed [date].

Examples
