



EDITORIALS

# ROLE AND CRITERIA FOR PUBLICATION OF CONCEPT PAPERS IN THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PARAMEDICINE

Michael (Mic) R. Gunderson, EMT-P(Ret), FAEMS\*<sup>1,2,3</sup>

*Author Affiliations:* 1. International Journal of Paramedicine (IJOP), Hagerstown, MD, USA; 2. Center for Systems Improvement, Madisonville, TN, USA; 3. Cambridge Consulting Group, Wayne, PA, USA.

*Recommended Citation:* Gunderson, M. (2025). Role and criteria for publication of concept papers in the International Journal of Paramedicine. *International Journal of Paramedicine*. (12). 10-12. <https://doi.org/10.56068/COAB3488>. Retrieved from <https://internationaljournalofparamedicine.com/index.php/ijop/article/view/3525>

*Keywords:* guidelines for authors, emergency medical services, EMS, paramedicine

*Disclosures:* None.

*Funding:* External funding was not used to support this work.

*Received:* September 26, 2025

*Accepted:* September 26, 2025

*Published:* October 8, 2025

\**Corresponding Author:* [mic.gunderson@internationaljournalofparamedicine.com](mailto:mic.gunderson@internationaljournalofparamedicine.com)

One of the goals of the *International Journal of Paramedicine (IJOP)* is to increase the range of scholarly work in our discipline. Many peer-reviewed journals have an almost exclusive focus on publication of empirical research and literature reviews. The vision for *IJOP* is much broader, as described by the range of sections laid out in our submission guidelines (<https://internationaljournalofparamedicine.com/index.php/ijop/about/submissions>). This editorial describes our vision for Concept Papers and explains the criteria by which they are evaluated in our peer review process.

Concept Papers are intended to present new concepts and ideas for consideration by the paramedicine community. The intention of the author may be to stimulate discussion and debate. They may also wish to encourage others to implement, test, or research the idea or concept—especially if the author does not have the means or opportunity to do so themselves or in appropriate settings.

With these goals in mind, a strong topic and manuscript for a concept paper should ideally meet several criteria: novelty and meaningfulness; elegance; insight; and generativity.

**Novelty and Meaningfulness.** Novelty refers to originality, distinct from what has previously been articulated in the literature. This may involve the introduction of new constructs or frameworks, the application of theories from other disciplines to paramedicine, or the reorganization of existing knowledge in ways that yield fresh insights. Importantly, novelty is not defined solely by being new; rather, it derives its value from coupling originality with meaningfulness. A novel conceptual contribu-

tion is therefore one that not only advances thinking in an original direction but also does so in a manner that is relevant, useful, and impactful for paramedicine research, education, and practice.

**Elegance** refers to the explanation of complex ideas and concepts with simplicity and clarity. An elegant framework presents complex challenges, such as system design or clinical decision-making, into forms that are comprehensible and practical, without oversimplifying essential detail. Elegance is valued in scholarly work because it enhances the accessibility and utility of ideas and concepts, making them more readily understood and adopted by both researchers and practitioners.

**Insight** denotes the ability of a conceptual contribution to reorganize existing knowledge in ways that reveal new patterns, relationships, or interpretations. In paramedicine, insight may be achieved by integrating disparate strands of evidence, reframing entrenched assumptions, or offering a synthesis that clarifies connections between clinical practice, operational processes, and system outcomes. Insightful contributions move beyond simple descriptions to provide new frameworks that alter how the field conceptualizes and addresses challenges.

**Generativity** refers to the ability of a conceptual paper to stimulate subsequent inquiry, innovation, and application. A generative idea is not an endpoint but rather a catalyst, sparking new research questions, theoretical refinements, and practice innovations. In paramedicine, generativity may inform future clinical trials, policy development, or inspire novel educational strategies. The hallmark of generativity is that the contribution continues to influence scholarly and practical advancements beyond the original work.

High-quality Concept Papers articulate a central idea and engage thoughtfully with the questions that emerge from it. Authors should define key constructs and assumptions explicitly, present arguments coherently, and ensure that each component of the manuscript builds systematically toward a unified whole. Conceptual rigor is achieved through the application of multiple modes of reasoning: envisioning (identifying and reframing issues), explicating (delineating and clarifying assumptions and frameworks), relating (integrating and differentiating concepts across domains), and debating (presenting competing perspectives and advancing reasoned arguments) (MacInnis, 2011).

Concept Papers should enrich the paramedicine literature by advancing theory, informing practice, and guiding future inquiry. By fostering new ways of thinking, such contributions serve as a catalyst for innovation and improvement in our discipline.

#### PEER-REVIEW CRITERIA

*IJOP* reviewers utilize several types of peer-review forms to guide and score various aspects of their reviews. The information from these forms is aggregated from all reviewers and then sent to the authors along with the editorial decision to accept, request revisions, or reject the submission.

The review forms are based on the applicable international consensus guidelines published by the EQUATOR Network (Enhancing the QUALity and Transparency Of Health Research; <https://www.equator-network.org>). In the case of Concept Papers, there isn't

an applicable EQUATOR guideline, so the criteria for peer-review and the associated form have been developed by *IJOP* staff.

Several sections of our peer-review forms apply to most all types of manuscripts, such as the quality of the title, abstract, writing, length, and references. Most sections of the review form include a 1 to 5 Likert scale rating with labels relevant to the section. They also have a space for the reviewer to provide a succinct explanation of the reasoning for the section score and to provide constructive feedback and suggestions to the authors.

Specific to Concept Papers, the review form asks reviewers to evaluate the following:

- Does the paper provide a novel idea or concept that is distinct from what has been previously described in the literature or is currently in use?
- Does the paper adequately describe relevant prior research, ideas or concepts?
- Is the idea or concept relevant, useful, and impactful to paramedicine?
- Do the authors indicate what is inside and what is outside the scope of the idea or concept?
- Is the idea or concept likely to stimulate subsequent research, improvement projects, innovations, or direct applications?

The *IJOP* editorial team looks forward to receiving and publishing more Concept Papers in the future.

#### REFERENCES

MacInnis, D. J. (2011). A framework for conceptual contributions in marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 75(4), 136–154. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.75.4.136>



**JOIN  
NEMSMA**

**With nearly 800 members, NEMSMA represent CEO's, chiefs, and managers from every state and type of service, offering voice and vision for professional development and leadership.**

NEMSMA is a frequent participant in panels, workgroups, and boards involving EMS in both governmental and non-governmental sectors.



NATIONAL  
**EMS**  
MANAGEMENT  
ASSOCIATION