

## Brief Communications and Communications Arising

### 1. Brief Communications

This is a peer-reviewed section of *Nature* which is less formal than Articles and Letters, aimed at the broadest possible readership. The Brief Communications section is vastly oversubscribed; more than 90 per cent of contributions are returned without review because of *Nature's* very limited space for this section (on average, only two contributions a week can be published).

Contributions are considered only if their conclusions are clearly of discernible interest to readers in any discipline of science. Presubmission enquiries are not considered, nor can the editor provide detailed explanations for declining to publish contributions. Appeals are not considered except in special circumstances in the case of Communications Arising, see below.

#### 1.1 Types of contribution

The following types of contribution are published:

- Short reports of a novel, topical finding of general interest, usually needing only one small figure or table. Contributions of this type are often submitted as Letters and are shortened at the editor's suggestion and after advice from referees. They are **not** preliminary reports or 'addenda' to published Articles or Letters.
- Short, focused reports of results of exceptional topical relevance, needing fast publication.
- A scientific perspective on a topical issue of international public interest.

Submissions presenting preliminary data that confirm or extend a previously published paper (in *Nature* or elsewhere) are not considered. In the case of Brief Communications Arising, submissions that contradict only part of the *Nature* paper, are not considered unless it concerns a matter of exceptional interest.

#### 1.2 Manuscript preparation and formatting

Before submission, contributors should read some published issues of *Nature* to appreciate the style of this section of the journal, and to get an idea of whether their contribution is of sufficient interest, and should prepare their manuscripts according to the instructions below:

- Contributions should not exceed 500 words, or 700 words if there is no figure or table.
- Titles must be brief. They may be changed on acceptance by the editors for space or other

reasons. Authors will be consulted about title changes but *Nature* will make the final decision.

- Contributions should start with a three-sentence paragraph summarizing the message of the article without specialized terminology, for a non-specialist readership. This should be used as the abstract for submission purposes.
- Contributions should have a simple message that requires only one small figure or table.
- Figures and tables should be sized so that they can be reduced to single-column width (56mm). At submission, figures should be of good enough quality to be assessed by referees, ideally as JPEGs.
- Do not submit publication-quality figures until asked to do so by an editor (at acceptance), after which time they must be prepared according to our guidelines at [www.nature.com/nature/authors/submissions](http://www.nature.com/nature/authors/submissions).
- Contributions should not have more than 10 references; reference style is as for Letters and Articles: see [www.nature.com/nature/authors/gta](http://www.nature.com/nature/authors/gta).
- Methods should be supplied as Supplementary Information (SI). It is not permitted to use SI to present additional new data. Movies and other useful illustrative material are allowed.
- Acknowledgements and joint first authors are not allowed. People or organizations providing essential non-funding assistance can be mentioned briefly in the text or figure legend.

#### 1.3 Submissions

Contributions can be submitted online as Word documents, with figures as JPEGs, with a combined limit of no greater than 3 MB (ideally much smaller). If online submission is not possible, manuscripts may be sent on disk. **E-mail contributions are not considered.**

Authors must provide current e-mail, phone, fax and address details.

Before submitting, all contributors must agree to *all* of *Nature's* [publication policies](http://www.nature.com/nature/authors/policy) ([www.nature.com/nature/authors/policy](http://www.nature.com/nature/authors/policy)).

## 2. Brief Communications Arising

Communications Arising are exceptionally interesting or important comments and clarifications on original research papers or other peer-reviewed material published in *Nature*.

**Brief Communications Arising are published only online, usually in a comment-and-reply format.**

### 2.1 Submissions

When submitting a scientific comment on a recent paper published in *Nature*, please bear in mind the following **additional** points to those detailed above:

- Contributions should be written as focused articles comprehensible to nonspecialists: lists of technical points are not appropriate for publication. They should pertain to the main conclusion of the published paper and should not concern relatively unimportant points.
- All contributions should be measured in tone, and should not contain inflammatory or otherwise intemperate language.
- Comments should be sent to the authors of the paper under discussion before submission to *Nature*, so that disputes can be resolved directly whenever possible and points where both parties agree removed from the submitted contribution. Allow 2 weeks for the original authors to respond.
- When a contribution is submitted to *Nature*, copies of correspondence with the original authors should be enclosed for the editor's information, even if the original author has failed to respond, otherwise delays will occur.

### 2.2 Decisions

The Brief Communications editor will decide how to proceed on the basis of whether the central conclusion of the earlier paper is brought into question; of the length of time since the original publication; and of whether a comment or exchange of views is likely to seem of interest to nonspecialist readers. Because *Nature* receives so many comments, those that do not meet these criteria are referred to the specialist literature.

*Nature* does **not** consider Communications Arising on papers published in other journals.

## 2.3 Procedures

Communications Arising submissions that meet *Nature's* initial selection criteria are sent to the authors of the original paper for a response, and the exchange to independent referees. The original authors are given 10 days to respond.

This response is not a referee's report, but is helpful to the editor in making a decision about publication of the comment and/or a reply. The responders (defined as the authors of the published contribution that is the subject of the comment, and no-one else) must keep the comment confidential and must not use it for their own research or for any other purpose apart from replying to the comment, nor can they distribute it without first obtaining *Nature's* permission.

If the *Nature* author does not respond within 10 days of receipt of the comment, the editor will proceed without the response. Late responses may not be considered for publication.

Responses are published only when they add to the debate. They should not contain new data, but be confined to replying to the specific issue raised about the published paper.

Authors of Brief Communications Arising will be shown the initial response from the *Nature* authors. In the event that the exchange is accepted for publication, they will see a proof of their own contribution but not of the final reply (if a reply is being published). Responders will see a proof of the whole exchange but are allowed only to change typographical errors.

### 2.4 Appeals

The Brief Communications editor will not consider appeals against decisions not to publish Communications Arising from *Nature* Articles and Letters unless the grounds for appeal consist of a previously overlooked and important scientific point and are explained in these terms.

### 2.5 Complaints

Important technical complaints pertaining to published Articles and Letters to *Nature* should be submitted as Communications Arising using the online submission service. Those endorsed after editorial discussion, comments from the criticized authors and peer-review are published as corrections at the end of the Letters to *Nature* section, not as Brief Communications Arising, for indexing purposes.