

STS Policy on Publication of Clinical Practice Guidelines in *The Annals*

Guidelines for “best” practice for diseases treated by members of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons are developed by the STS Workforce on Evidence Based Surgery. This workforce selects diseases/conditions that merit development of clinical practice guidelines. The purpose of the guidelines is to improve outcomes and enhance patient safety by disseminating current, evidence based knowledge for managing the selected disease.

Advance notice of guideline development. In order to allow planning for publication in *The Annals*, the Chair of the Workforce on Evidence Based Surgery will inform the Editor whenever a task force is formed to develop a guideline, and will provide an estimated completion date. The guideline must adhere to the formatting requirements described below for publication in *The Annals* (print and electronic).

Frequency of publication. Theoretically there is no limit, but because demand for more clinical practice guidelines is strong, up to one per month is a reasonable, although currently an unattainable goal.

Length and format. The formatting requirements for a guideline submitted for publication in the monthly issue should follow the format for a review article as described in “Information for Authors.” The word limit for review articles is **6500** words including abstract, text, figure legends, and references (all words submitted regardless of location). In addition, references are limited to no more than 80. **An executive summary focused on the major conclusions is required and replaces the abstract.** The executive summary does not have a word limit, but is included in the total word count.

Supplement publication of guidelines. Clinical practice guidelines submitted for publication as supplements to the journal are not subject to word or reference limits and will be considered for publication provided that the costs of publication are borne by the STS.

Because of perceived conflicts of interest, industry-sponsored “guidelines” are prohibited.

Electronic publication. Guidelines published in *The Annals* are immediately made available for electronic publication. These articles are open access when posted on CTSNet. Supplemental materials (e.g., additional references, text, tables, figures) incur page costs and are not published on either CTSNet or Science Direct, but are available on the STS website.

Guidelines submitted only for electronic publication on the STS website do not require review by the Editor of *The Annals*, but must be approved for posting by the STS Board of Directors or Executive Committee. No word limits are prescribed.

Approved by the STS Executive Committee: December 8, 2010