

Inclusive Language Guide

Resource for Proper Terminology in Medical Writing

Main principles:

- Avoid the use of language that imparts bias
- Avoid generalizations and stereotypes
- Be specific when choosing words to describe people

	Avoid	Preferred
Sex & Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifying sex or gender unless it is relevant to the discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex-neutral terms that avoid bias, suit the material under discussion, and do not intrude on the reader's attention (eg, <i>layperson</i>)
Personal Pronouns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common-gender "pronouns" (eg, <i>s/he, shem, shim</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>He or she, him or her, his or her(s), they or their(s)</i>
Race & Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial and ethnic terms in noun form (eg, <i>Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, or Whites</i>) • <i>Other</i> as a convenience grouping or labeling unless it was a prespecified formal category in a database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial and ethnic terms in adjective form (eg, <i>Asian women</i>) • Racial and ethnic terms in adjectival form as a predicate adjective to modify the subject of a phrase (eg, <i>the patients self-identified as Asian</i>) • Unhyphenated terms such as <i>Asian American</i> • Capitalized names of races, ethnicities, and tribes
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seniors, elderly, the aged, aging dependents, old-old, young-old, and similar "other-ing" terms</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Older persons, older people, older adults, older patients, older individuals, persons 65 years and older, the older population</i> • Age should be given specifically (eg, <i>children younger than 12 years</i>)
Socioeconomic Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The poor</i> • <i>The unemployed</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Low income</i> • <i>No income</i>
Persons with Diseases, Disorders, or Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labeling (and thus equating) people with their disability or disease (eg, <i>asthmatics, diabetics</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person-first language (eg, <i>patients with asthma, persons with diabetes</i>)
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sexual preference</i> • <i>Gay or gays</i> as nouns • The broader term <i>homosexuals</i> when referring to specific groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lesbians</i> and <i>gay men</i> as nouns • <i>Heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and intersex</i> as adjectives (eg, <i>heterosexual men</i>)

Source: AMA Manual of Style, 11th Ed, Section 11.12

