

MANAGEMENT SCIENCE

Healthcare Management Executive Summary

All submissions to the Healthcare Management Department must include an executive summary specifically tailored for industry leaders to whom the research is pertinent. This summary should be positioned at the start of the main manuscript, before the Introduction, to make it accessible to anonymous referees.

Before drafting your executive summary, please review the appended note, titled “Assessing the Practical Impact Potential of an HCM Submission,” which outlines how we evaluate the practical impact potential of your paper.

Please use the following templated structure for your executive summary (copy-paste):

Title

Practical Context [Briefly describe the general healthcare issue your paper tackles and provide high-level quantitative evidence to highlight the significance of this challenge (e.g., data on mortality, morbidity, waiting times, cost, sickness, lost productivity, or other relevant metrics).]

[Your text]

Problem Specification and Practitioner Audience [For papers focused on informing decisions directly, define the specific managerial or policy decision your paper explores and identify the decision-makers involved. Provide a brief outline of the complexities of this decision. Alternatively, if the paper seeks to contribute to a broader public debate, outline the main stakeholders (individuals or institutions) and delineate the specific controversy your research addresses.]

[Your text]

Core Insight for the Practitioners Audience [Emphasize the main novel insight your research offers concerning the problem specification. Where possible, articulate this insight as a compelling newspaper headline or tweet, and quantify its potential impact (e.g., “Adopting top decile continuity of care in primary care practices could reduce annual primary care consultations in England by 10 million”).]

[Your text]

Please avoid technical jargon and include these headings and descriptors in your executive summary to assist the review panel. **Your executive summary should not exceed 250 words**, not counting the headings and descriptors from the template. It should engage non-academic audiences and encourage them to explore the non-technical sections of your paper.

Department Editors, Healthcare Management

Assessing the Practical Impact Potential of an HCM Submission

Department Editors, Healthcare Management

The editorial statement of the HCM department specifies three criteria for publication:

1. The paper's potential for practical impact.
2. The strength of its analysis and evidence.
3. The originality of its main insight.

Authors are generally familiar with the criteria used by Management Science reviewers to evaluate a paper's methodological rigor and the originality of its findings. We expect authors to connect their work to relevant studies in management journals to assist the review team in contextualizing the paper's contribution within the existing literature. However, authors may be less familiar with how we evaluate a paper's potential for practical impact. This note provides guidance on our assessment process for this criterion.

Why prioritize practical impact?

The HCM department adopts a division of labor that mirrors common practices in medical research. Medical journals fall into two groups: those that emphasize foundational science (e.g., Nature and its sister journals, Science, Cell) and those that focus on immediate clinical applications (e.g., NEJM, JAMA, Lancet). As the only industry-focused department within Management Science, HCM aligns naturally with the latter category, prioritizing research with direct practical implications for decision-makers such as managers, clinical leaders, and policymakers, who face critical health and care decisions. This approach also extends to research that directly informs important current public debates. Papers that primarily contribute theoretical knowledge with limited practical relevance are better suited to other departments within Management Science or other journals in the healthcare literature.

Evaluating Practical Impact Potential

Practical impact occurs when decision-makers use insights from a paper to change or defend their decisions, or when a paper significantly contributes to an important and current public debate and is referenced by its stakeholders. As a first step towards demonstrating the practical impact potential of their paper authors should therefore

- Either specify the target decision-makers who will benefit from the research and clearly define the decisions that the findings seek to influence.
- Or identify an important current public debate that the paper's insights substantially inform, including key individual and institutional stakeholders in this debate.

Vague statements like "this paper is relevant for clinicians and managers..." are not enough. Authors must provide detailed examples of decision-makers and of specific decisions their research addresses. Early engagement with these decision-makers will allow authors to gain a thorough understanding of their decision context and pressures.

We recommend crafting the introduction, results, and conclusion sections in clear, non-technical language accessible to the decision-makers or public debate stakeholders targeted

by the research. Where appropriate, we will attempt to recruit practitioner referees who will solely assess the practical relevance of the paper, assuming the paper's insights are rigorously defended.

Effect Sizes and Generalizability

The likelihood that practitioners will consider and apply the findings of a research paper increases significantly if authors can clearly demonstrate the potential improvements in clinical, financial, or operational outcomes that could result from these findings. Ideally, this should involve reporting actual outcomes from practical implementations. When such direct evidence is not feasible, authors should provide informative counterfactual analyses, based on real data and well defended assumptions, that allow readers to assess the potential impact and effectiveness of applying the paper's findings in credible real-world scenarios.

While it is beneficial for a research paper's results to be generalizable beyond its specific study context, there is a risk that papers can become so broad that they lose relevance for specific situations. We balance the scope of a paper's generalizability against the potential impact of the findings. For studies addressing narrowly focused or specific decisions, the findings need to show practically significant effects within this context. Conversely, research that tackles broader issues affecting many decision-makers, or that influences a large number of patients, providers, or firms beyond the scope of the study, can yield substantial practical benefits from more modest improvements in the study context.

Pathways to Practical Impact

Not every insight leads straight to recommendations for decision-makers or influences public debates. The HCM department also values research that explores the complexities of decision-making contexts and enhances our understanding of the intricate dynamics and systemic mechanisms underlying decisions and the institutional context in which these decisions are taken. For example, a paper may offer novel insights on the complex interactions in the US pharmaceutical supply chain that help us understand the mechanisms that lead to drug shortages and excessive drug prices. The primary aim of these papers is to generate novel hypotheses rather than confirm them, making them more likely to resonate with a scholarly audience. Authors of such papers must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the healthcare challenge they are addressing and convincingly justify any simplifying assumptions used in their analysis.

When complex economic models are used, it is essential for authors to succinctly summarize the key points of their model-based findings in an accessible and intuitive manner. This should be done in an appropriate section of the paper using non-technical language that is clear and easily understandable to practitioners. Additionally, to highlight the practical relevance of their work, authors should outline a future research pathway that has the potential to connect their insights to actionable recommendations for decision-makers, such as by testing and quantifying the hypotheses developed in the paper.

Conclusion

To publish a paper in the HCM department, methodological rigor and originality of the findings alone are not enough. Authors must also demonstrate the practical impact potential of their

paper. They need to clearly articulate who will benefit from their research and how it will influence decision-making processes, either directly through actionable recommendations or by guiding future research towards such recommendations. Engaging with decision-makers and striking the right balance between specificity and generality of the decision-making context that the paper addresses are essential to making a compelling case for the practical impact of their work.