What is a "peer-reviewed" or "refereed" journal?
Definition

- A scholarly journal or periodical which requires that each article submitted for publication be judged by an independent panel of experts or scholarly/scientific peers.

- Articles not approved by a majority of these peers are not accepted for publication by the journal.

- Peer review is a well-accepted indicator of quality scholarship.
Many scholarly journals use a process of peer-review prior to publishing an article, whereby other scholars in the author's field or specialty (his or her peers) critically assess a draft of the article.

Peer-reviewed journals (also called refereed journals) are scholarly journals that only publish articles that have passed through this review process.
What is the purpose of peer-reviewed articles?

- These articles present the best and most authoritative information that disciplines have to offer. The review process helps ensure that the published articles reflect solid scholarship in their fields.

- Through the careful use of citations, a peer-reviewed article allows anyone who reads it to examine the bases of the claims made in the article.

- One drawback to the peer-review process is that articles may not appear for one or two years after they are written. For this reason they are not the best sources to seek for hot, news-driven topics.
Characteristics of scholarly, peer-reviewed, or refereed journals

- Formal in format
- Authors are scholars and researchers in the field and are identified as such
- Purpose of the article is to publish the results of research
- Sources are cited with footnotes or a bibliography at the end of the article
- Publisher may be a professional organization or research institution; usually not-for-profit
- Very little advertising
- Graphics are usually statistical illustrations, in black-and-white
What will they look like?

The presence of the following traits often indicates that an article is peer-reviewed:

- An Abstract (brief description of the article)
- The organization of the article into distinct sections such as Methodology, Results, and Conclusion
- Charts, tables, or graphs
- A lot of citations: these may appear in-text, and/or as footnotes, endnotes, works cited, reference list, bibliography
- Complex, formal language that is specific to the field
- Notes indicating when article was submitted and when it was accepted
How to be sure?

- If you want to be certain that the journal in which the article appears is peer-reviewed, you can explore the website of the journal on the Internet. You can find it by searching Google for the title of the journal.

- Look for a “About Us” link or “Information for the Author” link.

- Peer-reviewed journals are usually proud to announce that they are peer-reviewed.
“About the Journal” link on the AJN website

This shows where the information is located on the American Journal of Nursing website.
“About Us” information on the BMJ website (at the very bottom of the home page)

The BMJ (formerly the British Medical Journal) is an international peer reviewed medical journal and a fully...
Some databases identify peer reviewed articles or allow you to limit your search to find them.

- When searching full-text databases such as EBSCOHost’s Academic Search Premier or CINAHL, a search can be limited to peer-reviewed or refereed sources simply by checking a box on the search screen.
Using the Online Library’s link to EbscoHost’s Academic Search Premier
(or it’s CINAHL, Medline, and Cochrane databases)

Enter your topic, then select your limiters below.

Click on the box next to Peer Reviewed
Using the Online Library’s link to PubMed

PubMed is much larger than CINAHL. Because most journals indexed in PubMed are peer-reviewed, limiting your search to peer-reviewed articles is not an option.

With a little extra research, you can confirm that the journal the article appears in is peer-reviewed.

Look for a link like “About Us” or “Information for the Author” on the journal’s website as discussed previously.
Using the Online Library’s link to PubMed (continued)

Your filters can be found in this column. Clicking on more... will give you many more options to choose from.

REMEMBER: If your article needs to be peer-reviewed, you will want to check the journal’s website for the “About Us” or “Information for the Author” link as discussed previously.
Other sources of peer-reviewed articles

OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing
http://www.nursingworld.org/ojin/

OJIN is a peer-reviewed publication that provides a forum for discussion of the issues inherent in current topics of interest to nurses and other health care professionals. The intent of this journal is to present different views on issues that affect nursing research, education, and practice, thus enabling readers to understand the full complexity of a topic.

BMC Nursing
http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmcnurs/

BMC Nursing is an open access, peer-reviewed journal that considers articles on all aspects of nursing research, training, education and practice.

The Journal of Advanced Nursing (JAN)
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1365-2648

Jan is a world-leading international peer reviewed journal. JAN targets readers who are committed to advancing practice and professional development on the basis of new knowledge and evidence.
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