



Inclusive Language Quiz by Laura King, MA, ELS

Directions: Rephrase the following sentences to eliminate potentially offensive language. There are many different ways to rephrase language to make it more inclusive. Choose the way that sounds best to you. Refer to [section 11.10](#) of the [AMA Manual of Style](#).

1. Responsivity in a premature infant may be secondary to his heightened level of autonomic arousal.

ANSWER:

Responsivity in a premature infant may be secondary to a heightened level of autonomic arousal.

Editor's Note: Avoid sex-specific pronouns in cases in which sex specificity is irrelevant. Reword the sentence to use a singular or plural pronoun that is not sex specific, a neutral noun equivalent, or a change of voice (§[11.10.1](#), Sex/Gender, Personal Pronouns, pp 413-414 in print).

2. The study included 32 asthmatics and 30 diabetics.

ANSWER:

The study included 32 patients with asthma and 30 patients with diabetes.

Editor's Note: Avoid labeling (and thus equating) people with their disabilities or diseases (eg, asthmatics, diabetics). Instead, put the person first (eg, patients with diabetes or diabetic patients, patients with asthma or asthmatic patients) (§[11.10.4](#), Disabilities, pp 416-417 in print).

3. The study examined the incidence of stroke in the elderly.

ANSWER:

The study examined the incidence of stroke in elderly patients.

Editor's Note: Because the term *elderly* connotes a stereotype, avoid using it as a noun. When referring to the entire population of elderly persons, use of *the elderly* may be appropriate (as in the impact of prescription drug costs on the elderly, for example). Otherwise, terms such as *older persons*, *older people*, *elderly patients*, *geriatric patients*, *older adults*, *older patients*, *aging adults*, *persons 65 years and older*, or *the older population* are preferred (§[11.10.3](#), Age, p 416 in print).

4. The study population consisted of 50 white patients and 50 nonwhite patients (blacks and Hispanics).

ANSWER:

The study population consisted of 50 white patients and 50 black and Hispanic patients.

Editor's Note: Avoid using *non-* (eg, white and nonwhite participants), which is a nonspecific convenience grouping and label. Such a category may be oversimplified and misleading, even incorrect. Occasionally, however, one sees these categorizations used for comparison in data analysis. In such cases, the author should be queried. *Multiracial* and *people of color* are sometimes used in part to address the heterogeneous ethnic background of many people (§[11.10.2](#), Race/Ethnicity, pp 414-416 in print).

5. We studied the incidence of AIDS among inner-city homosexuals.

ANSWER:

We studied the incidence of AIDS among inner-city gay men and lesbians [or homosexual men and women].

Editor's Note: The nouns *lesbians* and *gay men* are preferred to the broader term *homosexuals* when referring to specific groups of women and men, respectively. Avoid using *gay* or *gays* as a noun. *Heterosexual* and *homosexual* may be used as adjectives (eg, heterosexual men) (§[11.10.5](#), Sexual Orientation, p 417 in print).

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6. The emergency department must be manned at all times.

ANSWER:

The emergency department must be staffed at all times.

Editor's Note: Choose sex-neutral terms that avoid bias, suit the material under discussion, and do not intrude on the reader's attention (§[11.10.1](#), Sex/Gender, pp 412-414 in print).

7. Of the entire group, 13 men (mean age, 35 years; age range, 26-49 years) and 14 girls (mean age, 32 years; age range, 24-47 years) were selected for participation in the study.

ANSWER:

Of the entire group, 13 men (mean age, 35 years; age range, 26-49 years) and 14 women (mean age, 32 years; age range, 24-47 years) were selected for participation in the study.

Editor's Note: *Adults* are persons aged 18 years and older and should be referred to as *men* or *women* (§[11.5](#), Age and Sex Referents, p 410 in print).

8. Patients confined to wheelchairs were prescribed a series of upper body exercises to increase their flexibility and upper body strength.

ANSWER:

Patients who used wheelchairs were prescribed a series of upper body exercises to increase their flexibility and upper body strength.

Editor's Note: Avoid describing patients in terms that suggest helplessness (eg, patients confined to wheelchairs) (§[11.10.4](#), Disabilities, pp 416-417 in print).

9. The study population consisted of 60 Caucasian patients and 75 African-American patients.

ANSWER:

The study population consisted of 60 white patients and 75 African American patients.

Editor's Note: *Caucasian* is sometimes used to indicate white but is technically specific to people from the Caucasus region in Eurasia and thus should be avoided. In the United States, the term *African American* may be preferred to *black* (note, however, that this term should be allowed only for US citizens of African descent). A hyphen is not used in either the noun or adjectival form (§[11.10.2](#), Race/Ethnicity, pp 414-416 in print).



LEARNING RESOURCES

10. Each patient revealed that s/he had been engaging in rigorous exercise immediately before experiencing heart palpitations.

ANSWER:

Each patient revealed that he or she had been engaging in rigorous exercise immediately before experiencing heart palpitations.

or

The patients revealed that they had been engaging in rigorous exercise immediately before experiencing heart palpitations.

Editor’s Note: Do not use common-gender “pronouns” (eg, “s/he,” “shem,” “shim”). Reword the sentence to use a singular or plural pronoun that is not sex specific, a neutral noun equivalent, or a change of voice; or use “he or she” or “he/she” (§[11.10.1](#), Sex/Gender, Personal Pronouns, pp 413-414 in print).

11. Patients suffering from AIDS were treated with potent antiretroviral therapy.

ANSWER:

Patients with AIDS were treated with potent antiretroviral therapy.

Editor’s Note: Avoid describing persons as victims or with other emotional terms that suggest helplessness (*afflicted with, suffering from, stricken with, maimed*) (§[11.10.4](#), Disabilities, pp 416-417 in print).

12. This study analyzed postrhinoplastic deformities in the noses of Oriental patients.

ANSWER:

This study analyzed postrhinoplastic deformities in the noses of Asian patients.

Editor’s Note: Do not use the descriptor *Oriental* or *Orientials*. Instead use *Asian* or *Asians* unless the specific country or geographic area of origin is provided (eg, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Sri Lankan) (§[11.10.2](#), Race/Ethnicity, pp 414-416 in print).



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13. Many of the rape victims feared seeking care because of the extreme stigma sexual violence carries in Darfur.

ANSWER:

Many of the rape survivors feared seeking care because of the extreme stigma sexual violence carries in Darfur.

Editor's Note: Avoid describing persons as victims or with other emotional terms that suggest helplessness (§11.10.4, Disabilities, pp 416-417 in print). Terms such as *victim* should be edited; for example, *rape victim* can be changed to *rape survivor* and *stroke victim* can be changed to *person who has had a stroke*.



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