

Age and Sex Referents Quiz

by Laura King, MA, MFA, ELS

ANSWER KEY

Directions: Edit the following sentences to eliminate incorrect age and sex referents. Refer to §11.7, Age and Sex Referents of the *AMA Manual of Style*.

1. A subpopulation at higher risk for sexually transmitted disease may be adolescent females seeking sexual health services.

ANSWER: A subpopulation at higher risk for sexually transmitted disease may be female adolescents seeking sexual health services.

Editor's Note: Whenever possible, a patient should be referred to as a man, woman, boy, girl, or infant, not as a male or female. However, *male* and *female* are appropriate adjectives, and *adolescent* is an appropriate noun. In this example, making *female* the adjective and *adolescent* the noun resolves the usage problem.

2. The study participants ranged in age from 10 to 25 years and included both boys and girls.

ANSWER: The study participants ranged in age from 10 to 25 years and included both males and females.

Editor's Note: Occasionally, a study group may comprise children and adults of both sexes. Then, the use of *male* and *female* as nouns is appropriate.

3. Incidence was estimated as the proportion of newborn babies who met the specified cutoff for mild hypothermia or moderate to severe hypothermia.

ANSWER: Incidence was estimated as the proportion of newborns who met the specified cutoff for mild hypothermia or moderate to severe hypothermia.

Editor's Note: The preferred term for persons from birth to 1 month of age is *neonate* or *newborn* (do not use the term *baby*).

4. The infants were examined immediately after birth for the presence of hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy.

ANSWER: The newborns were examined immediately after birth for the presence of hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy.

Editor's Note: The preferred term for individuals from birth to 1 month of age is *neonate* or *newborn*.

5. The investigators studied the incidence of acute respiratory illness in neonates 1 to 12 months old.

ANSWER: The investigators studied the incidence of acute respiratory illness in infants 1 to 12 months old.

Editor's Note: *Infants* are children aged 1 month to 1 year (12 months). Sometimes the term *children* may be used more broadly to encompass persons from birth to 12 years of age. They may also be referred to as *boys* or *girls*.

6. Patients included in the study had a mean age of 6½ years (range, 2-15 years).

ANSWER: Patients included in the study had a mean age of 6.5 years (range, 2-15 years).

Editor's Note: When age is presented as a mean, use the decimal form (eg, 6.5 years) (see also §19.4.1, Significant Digits).

7. The study examined the risk of HIV among males and females treated at the local community health clinic.

ANSWER: The study examined the risk of HIV among male and female patients treated at the local community health clinic.

Editor's Note: Whenever possible, a patient should be referred to as a man, woman, boy, girl, or infant, not as a male or female. However, occasionally, patient ages are not known. In this case, the use of *male* and *female* as nouns is appropriate. However, if the terms *male* and *female* can be easily changed to adjectives by following them with a noun (eg, patient, individual, study participant), this approach is recommended.

8. From the population sample, 25 men (mean age, 35 years; range, 26-49 years) and 25 girls (mean age, 32 years; range, 24-47 years) were selected for participation in the study.

ANSWER: From the population sample, 25 men (mean age, 35 years; range, 26-49 years) and 25 women (mean age, 32 years; range, 25-47 years) were selected for participation in the study.

Editor's Note: Female adults are persons 18 years and older and should be referred to as *women* not *girls*.

9. The primary outcome of the study was hearing assessment of adolescents 18 to 24 years of age with various types of craniosynostosis.

ANSWER: The primary outcome of the study was hearing assessment of young adults 18 to 24 years of age with various types of craniosynostosis.

Editor's Note: *Adults* are persons aged 18 years and older and should be referred to as *men* or *women*. Persons 18 to 24 years of age may also be referred to as *young adults*.

10. This survey study investigates trends in noncombustible marijuana use from 2015 to 2018 among US teens.

ANSWER: This survey study investigates trends in noncombustible marijuana use from 2015 to 2018 among US teenagers.

Editor's Note: The terms *adolescents* or *teenagers* is preferred to *teens*. *Adolescents* are persons aged 13 through 17 years. They may also be referred to as *teenagers* or as *adolescent boys* or *adolescent girls*, depending on context.