

IUGA Opinion Paper and Position Statement Policy

Opinion papers and position statements on topics of importance/priority are developed for healthcare professionals by members of the International Urogynecological Association (IUGA) on behalf of the Association. As these papers/statements are 'position' of the Association, they are referenced as authored by IUGA. Individual members of the writing group and their affiliations are listed at the end of each position paper/statement. Both papers as well as statements consist of positions declaring IUGA's official standpoint regarding an important issue which should be in line with the mission and objectives of IUGA. Board review and approval of all papers/statements is therefore required.

The primary difference between opinion papers and position statements are their length and structure (see below). A position statement is a concise explanation of IUGA's position on a certain issue that should include background information and clarify the rationale behind IUGA's position. The length of a position statement should not exceed 1,000 words. An opinion paper is a more in-depth description of IUGA's position on a certain issue. As such, an opinion paper provides a more detailed analysis of the issue and is preferred when the positions/opinions themselves are controversial or complex. The length of an opinion paper should not exceed 2,500 words. Both opinion papers and position statements must follow the structure outlined below, and both should be as evidence-based as the literature allows, recognizing that in some cases an opinion paper may be required or desirable on issues for which definitive evidence/data are lacking.

Purpose of the IUGA Opinion Paper/Position Statement

IUGA opinion papers/position statements should:

- Convey the opinion and recommendations of IUGA members on issues relevant to the field of urogynecology that may be controversial, need clarification for professionals, or represent an issue deserving advocacy on behalf of women with pelvic floor dysfunction (PFD);
- Inform and assist in the development of improved services for women with PFD;
- Provide direction to facilitate appropriate action from members, other professionals, policy- and law-makers, and the public;
- Make evidence-based (or expert consensus when evidence is not available) recommendations that could be used to guide clinical practice policy; and
- Express a positive and proactive call to action to promote the optimal health and well-being for all women.

Development Process

Intent for Opinion Paper/Position Statement:

The Intent for Opinion Paper/Position Statement Form (or Intent) is the mechanism by which the IUGA Board of Directors (BOD) approves the initiation and coordination of opinion papers/position statements development within IUGA. The Intent identifies the topic of the paper/statement, the need, and the methodology to be used.

Download:

[Intent for Opinion Paper/Position Statement Form](#)

Conception of IUGA opinion papers/position statements:

Suggestions for new and/or revisions of existing opinion papers/position statements may come from an IUGA member, another professional who might not be IUGA member, IUGA Committee, a professional society, or from the BOD.

Authoring Group:

All authors on opinion papers and position statements must be IUGA members. The lead author can request that a non-member consultant be added with Board approval. An authoring group may include a maximum of ten (10) individuals, with assurance that all have meet the authorship criteria provided below. Requests for additional authors are to be submitted to the BOD via the Intent document, *prior* to the development of the paper. Each authoring group must consider diversity in its composition: in background, geography and gender.

Authorship Criteria:

To be listed as a contributing author on an IUGA opinion paper/position statement, the author must have met the following criteria:

- Has made substantial contributions to the conception or design of the paper/statement; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data supporting these positions;
- Drafted the work or made revisions critically important to the intellectual content;
- Provided final approval prior to submission;
- Agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Individuals or committee members who participated in the development of the paper/statement but did not meet all of the above-mentioned criteria can be acknowledged at the end of the paper/statement as contributors.

Submission of Intent Form and BOD Review:

The authoring group is responsible for completing and submitting the Intent for Opinion Paper/Position Statement Form to the BOD (through the BOD and/or staff liaison to the committee or directly to the Executive Director). The Intent Form must be approved by the BOD *before* a draft of the paper or statement is developed. The BOD and/or staff liaison to the committee or the Executive Director will determine if the proposed materials are complete and will recommend changes to the Intent Form as needed prior to BOD review. If changes are required, the Intent Form will be returned to the lead author. If no changes are necessary, the Intent Form will be presented to the BOD for review at their next scheduled meeting.

Recommended changes in the Intent Form can be made by members of the BOD to ensure that the opinions/ positions are adequate and comprehensive. Upon review of the Intent Form, the BOD will do one of the following:

- Approve the Intent Form as presented

- Approve the Intent Form with minor edits
- Reject the Intent Form

When an Intent Form is approved with minor edits, the author group has 30 days to submit revisions based on BOD comments.

Financial Disclosures:

The authoring group of the Intent Form and draft paper/statement must disclose all conflicts of interest and affiliations with industry, government, and others. A Financial Disclosure Form will be provided by the IUGA Office/Staff Liaison and must be signed by all authors prior to developing an opinion paper or statement for the IUGA. All authors of papers/statements must disclose all financial interests or relationships within the past 2 years and the foreseeable future that are relevant to the subject matter or content of the paper/statement. Disclosure Forms will be maintained by the IUGA Office.

Drafting the Manuscript

Completed drafts of opinion papers and position statements are to be submitted to the BOD within the timeline included in the Intent Form. Otherwise, a letter of justification for the delay, a new Intent Form, or a request to withdraw the Intent Form must be submitted accordingly. If an opinion paper/position statement has not been submitted within the timelines and there is no letter of justification for the delay, a new Intent Form, or a request to withdraw the Intent Form, then the Intent is considered null and void.

Opinion papers should be limited to 2,500 words and position statements should be limited to 1,000 words.

Position statements should include most of the following elements:

- Title: must reflect the intent/purpose of the position clearly and concisely
- Executive summary or abstract: includes reason/purpose and a summary of the position
- Summary of IUGA Position: Each position statement should summarize IUGA's position at the beginning of the paper. New positions must be consistent (non-conflicting) with established positions, unless an explanation is provided discussing the change.
- Background information with statement of the problem: Key points needed to support reason for the statement
- Method(s) including the search strategy (i.e. systematic review of literature, expert consensus)
- Statement of problem
- Information including grading of evidence where possible
- Summary/conclusion
- Authors, affiliations and disclosures
- References: The references serve as the scientific justification and should be peer-reviewed research articles, public policy documents or state-of-the-art articles or books from the literature. There should be no more than 25 references. References should be formatted according to the current requirements of the *International Urogynecological Journal*.

Opinion papers should include most of the following elements:

- Title: must reflect the intent/purpose of the opinion clearly and concisely

- Executive summary or abstract: includes reason/purpose and a summary of the opinion
- Summary of IUGA Opinions and Positions: Each opinion paper should summarize IUGA’s opinions/positions at the beginning of the paper. New opinions must be consistent (non-conflicting) with established opinions and positions, unless an explanation is provided discussing the change.
- Background information
- Method(s) including the search strategy (i.e. systematic review of literature, expert consensus)
- Statement of problem
- New information including grades of evidence
- Summary/conclusion
- Authors, affiliations and disclosures
- References: The references serve as the scientific justification and should be peer-reviewed research articles, public policy documents or state-of-the-art articles or books from the literature. There should be no more than 25 references. References should be formatted according to the current requirements of the *International Urogynecology Journal*.

Review Process for Opinion Papers and Position Statements

Following review and approval by the committee, opinion papers and position statements are submitted to the BOD for review. All opinion papers and position statements submitted for review must be of a quality similar to that of a manuscript that would be submitted for publication in the *International Urogynecological Journal*. As such, all papers and statements must be carefully proofread for grammar, punctuation and readability or they will be returned to the author group.

Following review, the BOD may take one of the following actions:

- Approve the completed paper or statement as presented
- Approve the completed paper or statement with minor edits
- Reject the completed paper or statement

The BOD Liaison or Staff Liaison to the committee will relay the Board’s decision to the authors. If edits are requested, the authors will have four (4) weeks to provide a revised draft back to the BOD. Once the completed paper or statement is approved by the Board of Directors, the lead author will submit it to the *International Urogynecology Journal* for consideration of publication, including peer review.

Publication of IUGA Opinion Papers/Position Statements

Opinion papers/position statements will be published in the *International Urogynecology Journal* and posted on the IUGA website.

The review process for papers/statements may need to be expedited if there are recommendations of an urgent nature that have a significant and direct impact on the practice of PFD. The Executive Director will work directly with the Editor-in-Chief(s) to coordinate and expedite the process so that the information is disseminated to the membership and readership in a timely fashion.

Because of copyright and reprint concerns, papers/statements will not be published in other organizations’ journals before publication in the *International Urogynecology Journal*. Exceptions are

made if it is previously determined and approved by the BOD that a joint paper or statement will be published simultaneously in the *International Urogynecology Journal* and an official journal of a collaborating and/or co-authoring entity.

Duration of IUGA Opinion Papers/Position Statements

IUGA opinion papers and position statements undergo a periodic review every five years or more often as needed. This review can be by the authoring committee (see Development Process), another appropriate committee, or by the BOD. This review will recommend if the position should be reaffirmed, retired or revised. The review shall be reported to the BOD.

Revision Process

All leading authors and their respective authoring groups will be expected to conduct a review of their opinion paper/position statement when older than 5 years. In addition, the BOD may request a review of a paper or statement prior to the 5 year-mandatory review if there have been significant/important changes to the content of the current paper/statement under consideration.

If the BOD recommends revising the paper/statement, then they will contact the most recent lead author. The lead author will contact his/her authoring group and notify them of the BOD's request to revise. If the lead author can no longer take on this responsibility, he/she will recommend an IUGA member who can, which will be reviewed by the BOD. If the lead author is approved by the BOD, this member will be asked if he/she would take on the role and responsibility of the lead author in the revision of the paper/statement. If the lead author agrees, he/she will confirm that the most recent group of authors or authoring committee/group is interested in participating in the revision. If this is not the case, the lead author can identify other group members. The authoring group will have 12 months to submit the revised position paper or statement to the BOD.