How to Use Tables and Figures

When to Use a Table:	When to Use a Figure:	When to Use Text:
To show many and precise **numerical values** and other specific data.	To show **trends, patterns, and relationships** across data sets. Use graphs and data plots.	When you don't have extensive or complicated data to present.
To **compare and contrast** data values or characteristics among related items.	To **summarize** research results. Use graphs, data plots, maps, and pie charts.	When you have **fewer than 2** columns or rows.
To show the presence or absence of **specific characteristics**.	To present a visual explanation of a **sequence** of events, procedures. Use schematic diagrams, images, photographs, and maps.	When the **data is peripheral** to the study or irrelevant to your findings.

General Checklist:
- [ ] Are all figures/tables self-explanatory and self-contained so they can be understood without the paper?
- [ ] Are all figures/tables mentioned in the text?
- [ ] Are all figures/tables numbered in the order in which they are mentioned?
- [ ] Are you consistent between values or details in a table and those in the text?
- [ ] Are your titles clear and informative to concisely describe the purpose or contents of the table/figure?
- [ ] Is patient confidentiality protected (refer to journal guidelines)?
- [ ] Did you obtain permission for adapted or reprinted tables and/or figures, and cite these figures/tables appropriately (e.g., "Adapted from…", "Reprinted from…")?
- [ ] Is the formatting of your "List of Tables and/or Figures" page consistent with the manuscript?
- [ ] Did you adhere to journal guidelines: Total number of tables and figures? Style of numbering and titles? Image resolution and file format?

Tables Checklist:
- [ ] Did you combine repetitive tables if they talk about the similar thing?
- [ ] Did you divide large amounts of data into clear and appropriate categories?
- [ ] If your data is extensive, can you make the tables a part of the appendix or supplemental material?
- [ ] Does every table column, including the stub column, has a heading?
- [ ] Does your table have sufficient spacing between columns and rows?

Figures Checklist:
- [ ] Have all images been prepared at a resolution sufficient to produce a high-quality image sharp image?
- [ ] Is your image still clear after the figure has been reduced to the width of a journal column or page?
- [ ] Are your axis labels, figure labels, etc., clearly and appropriately labelled?
- [ ] Are all labels legible against the figure background?
- [ ] Did you give specifics including scale bars and units?
- [ ] Did you use legends to explain the key message?

Questions? Contact Holly Zink, Director, Research & Programs, at holly.zink@curesearch.org.