Numbers and Numeric Ranges

Roman numerals versus Arabic numbers

Use the most common representation found in literature for the fully specified name. Use the alternative representation as a synonym, if it is also represented in the literature. If neither representation is common, use the Arabic representation.

For example, in the *AMA Manual of Style*, cancer stages are expressed with the use of capital Roman numerals: stage I, stage II, stage III, stage IV. The term, "stage 0", usually indicates carcinoma in situ. Histologic grades are expressed with Arabic numerals, e.g., grade 2.

Numeric ranges

In general, content that depends on numeric ranges should not be used for precoordination.

For example,

- There may be too many possibilities
  - A finding of number of lesions might have ranges of 1, 2 to 5, and greater than 5; 1 to 2, 3 to 10, and greater than 10, etc.
  - There may be possible changes to reference ranges or systems of units
    - The normal serum sodium concentration is usually defined as 135 to 145 mEq/L. Low serum sodium should not use the phrase *serum sodium less than 135 mEq/L*; it should use a phrase such as *serum sodium concentration below reference range*.
    - A body mass index (BMI) score as an indicator of obesity

Exception: acceptable numeric range

A standard definition with a fixed numeric range may be acceptable, i.e., the range is an explanation or definition of the score.

For example,

- A histologic scoring system with a score of 1 when there are 0 to 5 mitoses per high power field, and a score of 2 when there are 6 to 10, etc.
- The Tumor, Node, Metastases (TNM) Classification of Malignant Tumor