

Vancouver style

The Vancouver style of referencing

The Vancouver style of referencing is so named because it was first published by the Vancouver Group, which expanded and evolved into the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

ICMJE produces and updates their guidelines for publication, which are known as the *Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals*. These guidelines are available on the ICMJE web site <www.icmje.org/>. For referencing formats consistent with the *Uniform requirements*, users are directed to the sample reference list in the Vancouver style, which is available on the website of the United States National Library of Medicine (NLM) <www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html>. The Vancouver style is largely based on the style NLM uses for its databases.

The examples of reference list entries provided in this resource are selected from the sample Vancouver style reference list on the NML web site, updated August 2009. Many more examples are available at the NLM web site.

You should always check your unit guide and/or with academic staff (unit chair, lecturer or tutor) to make sure that this is the recommended style for your unit. Note that some units, courses and disciplines use variations of the style described here.

Your assignments will present facts and conclusions based on those facts. It is necessary to reference the sources of your information. This establishes the authority of your work and acknowledges the researchers and writers you have drawn on in your paper.

You must reference *all* material you use from *all* sources and acknowledge your sources in the body of your paper each time you use a fact, a conclusion, an idea or a finding from someone's work.

It is necessary to cite your sources each time you:

- reproduce an author's exact words (quote), that is, copy word for word directly from a text
- use your own wording (summarise or paraphrase) to explain or discuss what someone has said.

If you copy an entire table, chart, diagram or graph or if you take only some of the data contained in such sources, you must provide a reference.

Sources such as journals, books, encyclopedias, computer programs and software, information from the internet, reports, newspapers, interviews, radio and television must be cited in the body of your paper and detailed in a reference list at the end. Information from Deakin study guides and readers must also be acknowledged.

The Vancouver style consists of the following elements:

1. citations in the body of the paper, using consecutive numbers in parentheses. Note that some journals use superscript (raised) numbers rather than numbers in parentheses.

2. a numbered reference list at the end of the paper giving the details of each source referred to.

Part 1 of this resource deals with citing sources in the body of the paper. Part 2 deals with how to present reference entries for some of the common types of sources that students are likely to use in their assignments.

Part 1: In-text citations

In-text citations are references provided in the body of a paper to each work cited—books, journal articles, reports, material from the internet and the like. Consecutive numbers (either in parentheses or superscript) are used for the sources cited.

The same number is used for a source throughout a paper. This number is determined by the first citation of the source. So, for example, if a work is the fourth source cited in a paper, it will be referred to as (4) or by the superscript number ⁴ throughout that paper.

When two or more references appear at the same point in the text, the relevant numbers are separated by commas, e.g. (4, 7) or ^{4,7} if using superscript. Three or more consecutive citations are joined by a hyphen, e.g. (4-7) or ⁴⁻⁷.

Reference numbers are usually placed outside full stops and commas, but journals vary in their practice.

The example that follows demonstrates the use of in-text citations. It is from the *Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals*, updated April 2010.

An “author” is generally considered to be someone who has made substantive intellectual contributions to a published study, and biomedical authorship continues to have important academic, social, and financial implications.(1) ... In the past, readers were rarely provided with information about contributions to studies from those listed as authors and in acknowledgments.(2) Some journals now request ...

← in-text citations →

Part 2: Reference list

An important purpose of the reference list is to identify the sources cited in the paper so that readers can locate them. The reference list should appear at the end of the paper and provide the full bibliographic information about the sources cited. The list is arranged in numerical order, so readers can go from the number in the body of the paper to the full details of the source.

- Initials follow the family names of authors and editors, with no space or full stops between the initials of an author, e.g. Halpern SD, Ubel PA, Caplan AL.
- Commas are used to separate each author’s name. Note that ‘and’ is not used to separate the last two names.
- Each entry is set flush against the left margin, and the number is followed by a full stop, as in the examples that follow.

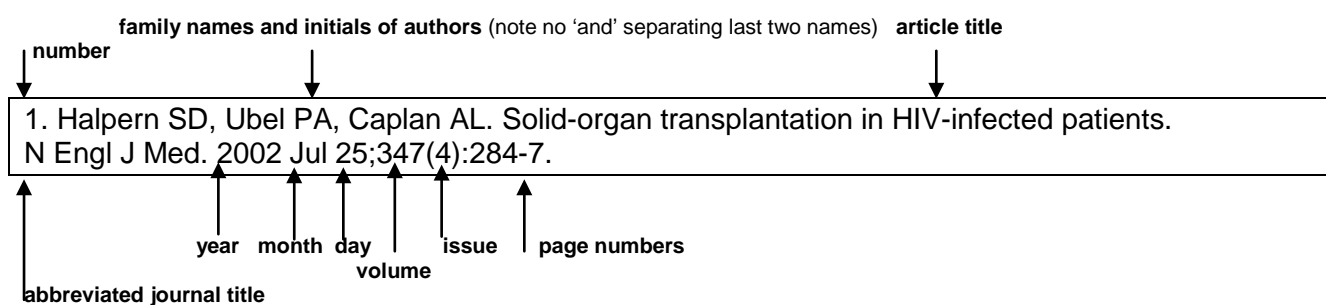
Journal article

The following information is included for journal articles: author(s), article title, abbreviated journal title, year, month (if applicable), day (if applicable), volume number, issue number (if applicable), page numbers.

- Minimal capitalisation is used for the article title, i.e. only the first word and words that normally would begin with a capital letter are capitalised.
- Full stops are used after the last author's initials, after the article title, after the abbreviated journal title and at the end of the entry.
- The date is followed by a semicolon (with no space after it) and the volume number or issue number is followed by a colon (with no space after it).
- Journal titles should be abbreviated. For the accepted abbreviations, go to the NML web site <www.nlm.nih.gov/tsd/serials/lji.html>.
- No punctuation is used in journal abbreviations, except a full stop at the end.
- Months are abbreviated to the first three letters.
- The page range is provided, i.e. the first and last page numbers of articles. The number of digits in the second part of the page range is limited to those needed for clarity, without repeating digits unnecessarily, e.g. 284-7 not 284-287.

One to six authors

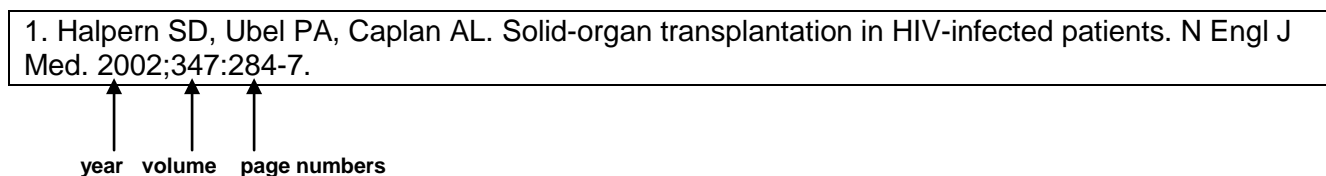
For a journal article written by six or fewer authors, provide the names of all the authors.



Continuous pagination

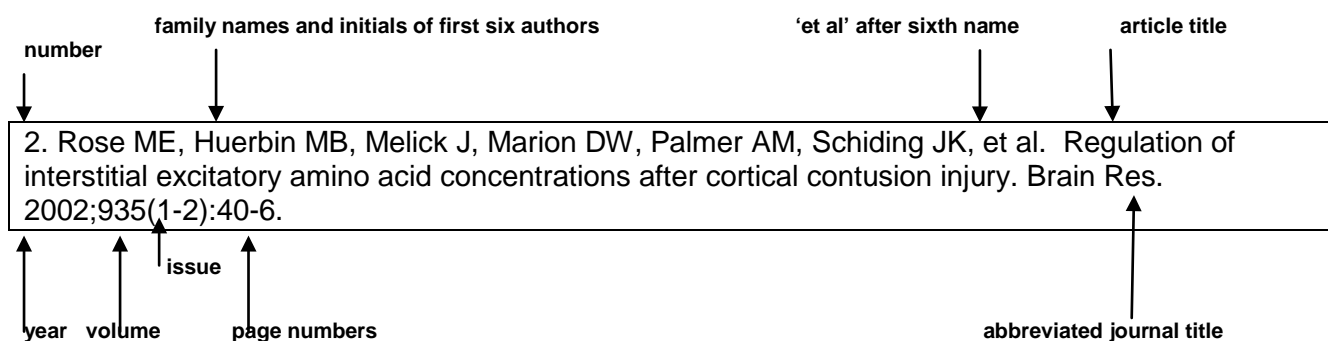
Many medical journals use continuous pagination, i.e. each issue does not begin at page 1, but the sequence of page numbers continues through all the issues that make up a volume. In journals that use continuous pagination, page numbers are sufficient to indicate the location of articles in volumes.

As an option, if a journal carries continuous pagination throughout a volume, the month and issue number may be omitted, as follows.



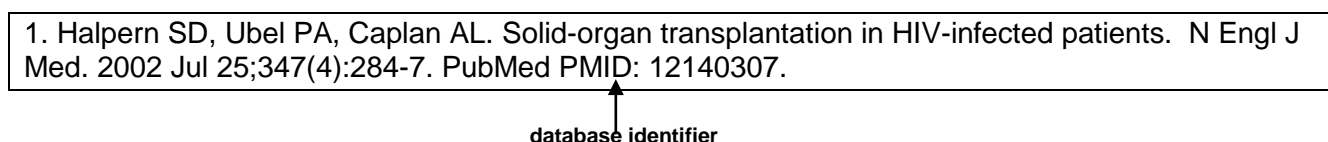
More than six authors

For a journal article written by more than six authors, list the first six authors followed by the phrase 'et al' meaning 'and others'.



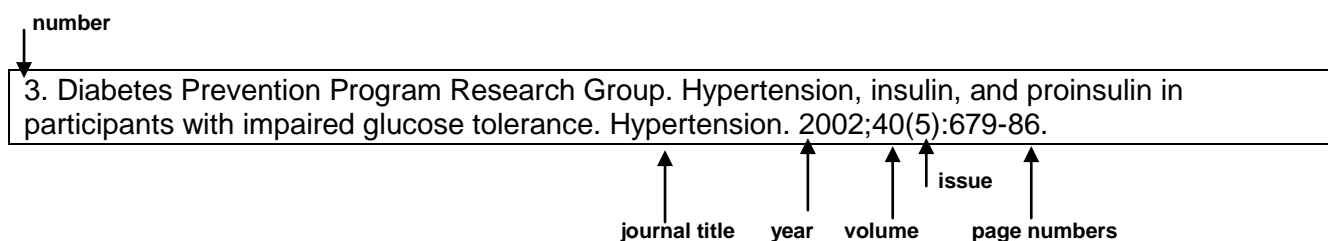
Optional addition of a database's unique identifier

If a database's unique identifier is provided, it can be added at the end of the reference list entry.



Organisation as author

For a journal article that lists an organisation (rather than an individual) as the author, provide the name of the organisation in the author position.



Book

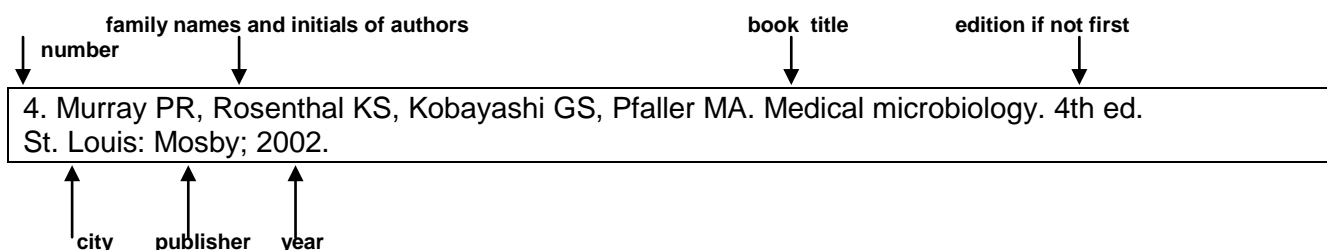
When listing a book in a reference list, note the following points:

- As for a journal article, for a book written by more than six authors, the names of the first six are provided, followed by the phrase 'et al'.
- If the author is an organisation, the organisation name is provided in the author position, as for a journal article.
- Book titles, like journal article titles, use minimal capitalisation.
- Edition number is provided only for second (or later) editions.
- Full stops are used after the last author's initials, after the book title, after the edition number (if provided) and at the end of the entry.

- The city of publication is followed by a colon (with a space after it) and the publisher is followed by a semicolon (with a space after it).
- A relatively unknown city/place of publication is followed by state or country abbreviation in parentheses, e.g. White Plains (NY).

Personal author(s)

The following information is included, in the following order: author(s), book title, edition number (if not the first), city, publisher, year.

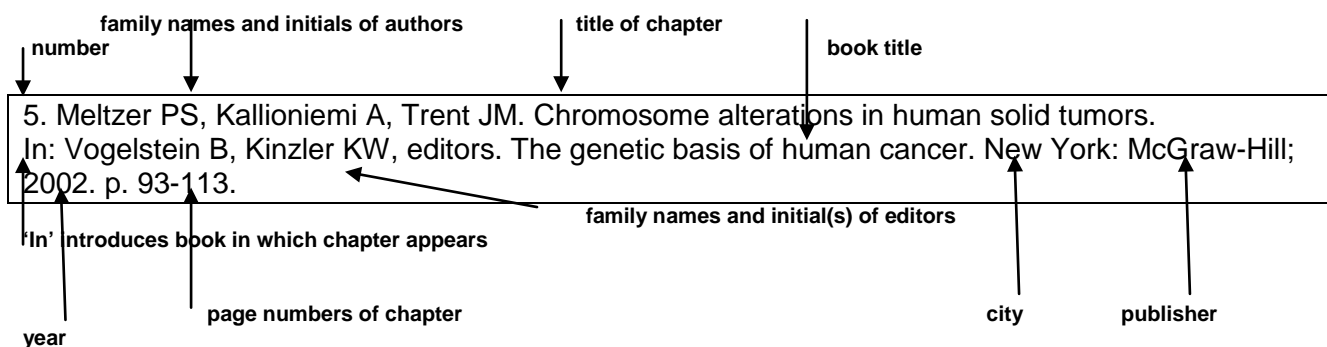


Chapter in a book

In your assignments you may want to refer to an article, report or chapter in an edited book containing contributions by a number of writers. In this instance, you need to acknowledge the author(s) whose work you are citing with a number in parentheses (or a superscript number) at the relevant point in your paper, as you would for journal articles, books and other sources.

In the reference list entry you need to give the name of the author(s) you cited plus the chapter title and information about the publication in which the work appears. The following information is included: author(s) cited, chapter title, editor(s), title of the book in which the work appears, city, publisher, year, volume number (if applicable) and page numbers.

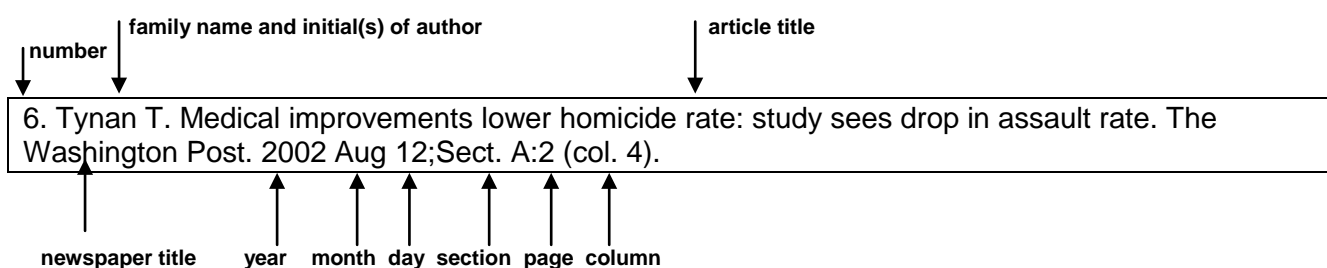
- Follow the standard format for a book when presenting author, title, city and publisher of the book in which the chapter appears.
- Minimal capitalisation is used for the chapter title, as for the book title.
- The word 'In' is used to introduce the book in which the chapter appears.
- The page range is provided, i.e. the first and last page numbers of the article, limited to those needed for clarity, without repeating digits unnecessarily.
- Note that the letter p. (for 'page' or 'pages') is used for chapters in books. The letter p. is not used for page numbers of journal articles.



Newspaper article

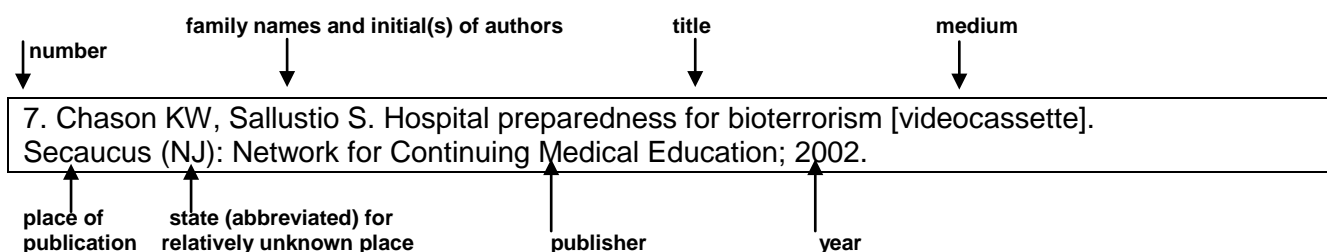
For a newspaper article, the following information is provided: author(s) if given, title of article, title of newspaper, year, month, day, section (if applicable), page or pages, column number.

- Minimal capitalisation is used for the article title.
- Maximal capitalisation is used for the newspaper title, i.e. all major words are capitalised.
- Note the abbreviations: Sect. for section; col. for column; months are abbreviated to the first three letters.
- The date is followed by a semicolon (with no space after it) and the section is followed by a colon (with no space after it).
- Section may not always be applicable.



Audiovisual material

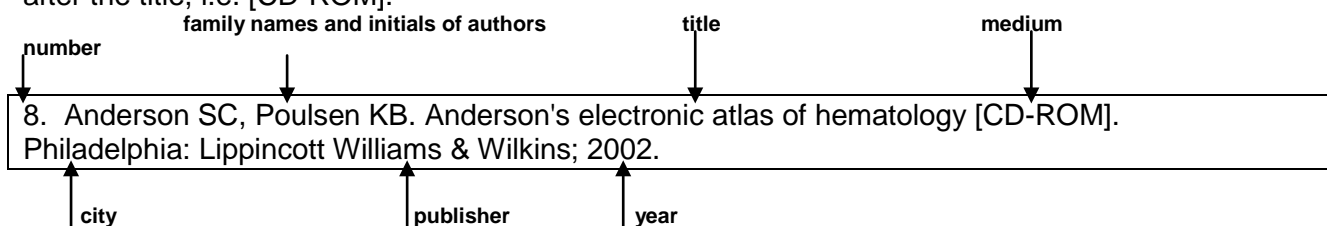
For referencing audiovisual material such as audiotapes, videocassettes, slides and films, follow the format for a book and indicate the medium, i.e. the type of material, in square brackets after the title.



Electronic material

CD-ROM

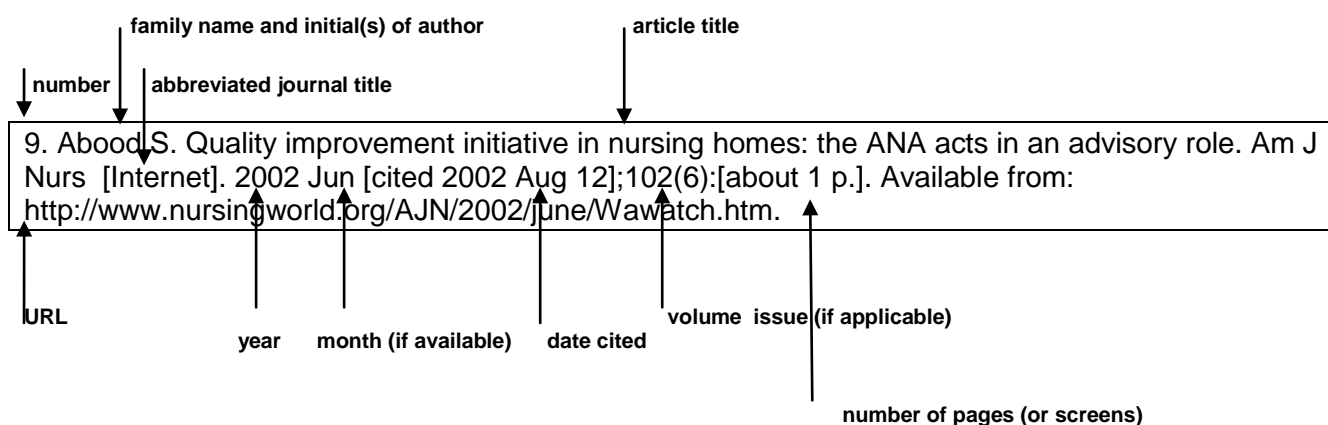
For referencing a CD-ROM, follow the format for a book and indicate the medium in square brackets after the title, i.e. [CD-ROM].



Journal article on the internet

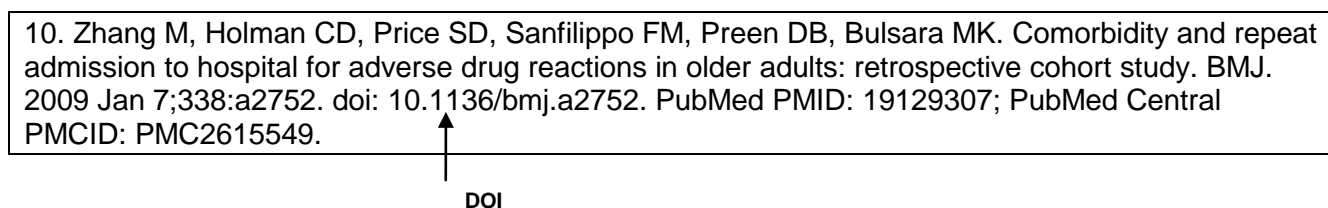
To reference a journal article published on the internet, provide the bibliographic details as for a print journal, with the following additions:

- After the abbreviated journal title, add the word 'Internet' in square brackets.
- Add the date you cited the material, providing year, month (abbreviated) and day in square brackets, with no punctuation marks, followed by a semicolon, e.g. [cited 2002 Aug 12];
- After the volume and issue number, provide an indication of the number of pages or the number of screens in square brackets, e.g. [about 1 p.].
- Use the phrase 'Available from:' followed by the URL (web address).



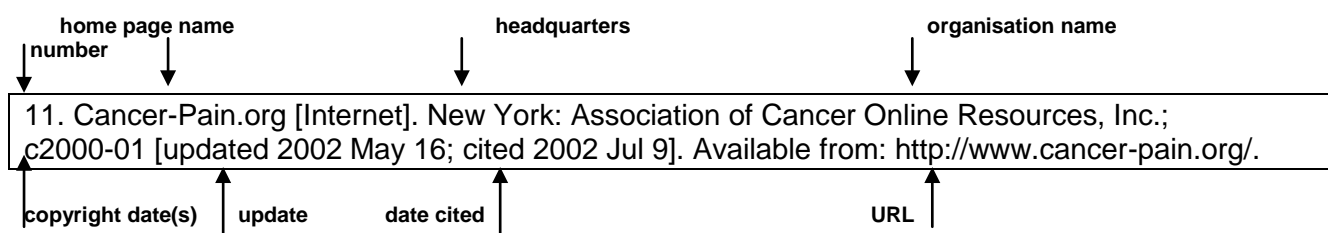
Article with a Digital Object Identifier (DOI)

If an article has a DOI, this should be provided after the page number details. The number is added after the letters 'doi'.



Home page/web site

For referencing a home page/web site it is necessary to provide the title of the home page/web site followed by the word 'Internet' in square brackets. Headquarters (city) of the organisation and the name of the organisation should be provided, together with the copyright date or span of dates. The date of update and the date the material was cited should be given in square brackets. The URL is provided after the phrase 'Available from:'



Note that standards for referencing material from the internet are still being developed. You will see certain variations in the referencing of online materials among journals that use the Vancouver style, just as there are slight differences in their referencing of print sources.

It is important to be consistent in referencing sources within a paper, and to maintain as much style consistency as possible between the referencing of print and online sources.

Sample reference list in Vancouver style

References

1. Halpern SD, Ubel PA, Caplan AL. Solid-organ transplantation in HIV-infected patients. *N Engl J Med.* 2002;347:284-7.
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8. Anderson SC, Poulsen KB. *Anderson's electronic atlas of hematology [CD-ROM].* Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2002.
9. Abood S. Quality improvement initiative in nursing homes: the ANA acts in an advisory role. *Am J Nurs [Internet].* 2002 Jun [cited 2002 Aug 12];102(6):[about 1 p.]. Available from: <http://www.nursingworld.org/AJN/2002/june/Wawatch.htm>.
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11. Cancer-Pain.org [Internet]. New York: Association of Cancer Online Resources, Inc.; c2000-01 [updated 2002 May 16; cited 2002 Jul 9]. Available from: <http://www.cancer-pain.org/>.

Further reading

For more examples of how to reference according to the Vancouver style, refer to the NLM web site <www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html>.