

## Guidelines for Abstract Preparation

**General:** An abstract is a concise but comprehensive summary of a scientific investigation that is prepared for publication and/or presentation at a scientific meeting. An abstract should NOT be a complete summary of a project but should rather highlight the most important points of the research.

**Importance of writing a good abstract:** The quality of an abstract is a key factor in the acceptance process for presentation at a scientific meeting. Abstracts have been shown to influence clinical practice and are often the only portion of an article that is read in scientific journals.

**Getting started:** It is encouraged to use a structured abstract format to organize the content. This allows the reader to find information quickly and to assist the writer in making the content more informative. Abstracts often contain the following subject headings: introduction /objective; methods/design; results; and conclusions.

**Introduction /objective (~ 10-20% of abstract):** a brief statement (1 sentence) of the research objective or purpose. Be clear and precise. Could also include a brief background (1-2 sentences) about why the research is important.

**Methods/design (~ 30-40% of abstract):** describe the study design, research setting, study population, description of the intervention (drug, dose, duration of therapy, etc.), primary (+/- secondary) outcome measures, other data collected (if listed in results section), and statistical methods used.

**Results (~ 30-40% of abstract):** list the most important findings. They should flow logically from the methods. Include statistical data (p values, confidence intervals). Include important safety information (when appropriate). Present important positive and negative findings to avoid bias.

**Conclusions (~10% of abstract):** list the most important points and pertinent recommendations. They should relate to the study objective(s) and should not just rephrase the results. The conclusion must be supported by the data presented.

**What makes a good abstract?** The abstract should reflect the study purpose. Be concise and follow the organization's specifications completely (word count, format, inclusion of tables, etc.) Write clearly using short sentences and use the active voice. Use a checklist of "do's and don'ts" when possible.

**Other tips:** Ask a colleague to review the abstract and provide feedback on readability and comprehension. Set timelines for writing and adhere to them; avoid waiting until the deadline to submit the abstract. Reading and rereading an abstract on different days allows the author to make changes that improve the quality of the abstract.

## Abstract Do's and Don'ts:

### **Do:**

- Create a concise title that is interesting and descriptive of the research.
- Limit use of abbreviations. Define them on their first use.
- State the research objective clearly in the introduction/background.
- Make sure every result relates to a stated method.
- Relate the conclusion to the study objective(s).
- Base conclusion(s) on the study results.
- Use generic names for drugs.
- Include scientific units, when appropriate.
- Read and follow all abstract specifications.
- Use clear and concise wording.
- Use the active voice rather than the passive voice.
- Have a colleague proofread your abstract.

### **Don't:**

- Repeat the title (or paraphrase the title) in the abstract's objective.
- Include abbreviations in the abstract title.
- Use personal pronouns (I, we, our, etc.)
- Overuse terms, acronyms, or medical "lingo".
- Over-report or under-report negative findings.
- Have a conclusion that is unsubstantiated by the data presented.
- Include reference citations.
- Include authors who have not contributed significantly to the study.
- Include figures or tables.
- Exceed the allotted word count.