

Tips for quality abstracts: What reviewers want to see

As you work on your abstract, keep in mind the criteria reviewers will use to evaluate your work.

Originality

- Were novel concepts or approaches used?
- Does the abstract challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?
- If the abstract presents an extension or a replication of previous work, is the new study better than previous ones, and therefore adds genuinely new information to present knowledge, or provide clear information that was in doubt due to small sample sizes or other design issues?

Scientific merit; importance

- Does the abstract address an important problem?
- How was scientific knowledge advanced?
- What will be the effect of the results on the concepts or methods that drive the field?
- Are the results and conclusions strong enough to influence how clinicians/teachers/researchers “act,” understand the basic mechanisms of health/disease, or provide health services or trainee education, conduct future research, or impact public policy?

Quality of research design and data analysis

- Is the study design clearly described?
- Are sampling procedures adequately described, including inclusion and exclusion criteria?
- Is there potential selection bias in the sampling procedure and is there enough information for the reviewer to be able to evaluate this problem?
- Are possible confounding factors discussed and/or controlled for?
- Are issues of reliability and validity of the measures addressed?
- Are the statistical analyses appropriate for the study design?
- Are the statistical analyses the best that could have been used?
- Is there an adequate discussion of the statistical power of the study?

Conclusions

- Are conclusions clearly stated?
- How well are the conclusions justified by the data?
- Are conclusions correct but overstated for the strength of the study?

Quality of presentation

- Is the abstract clearly written and understandable?
- Has the researcher followed the directions for submission, e.g., are unique abbreviations spelled out clearly the first time they are used?

Other tips for submitting your best abstract

Title:

- The title will be published as submitted—no edits are possible after the submission deadline. Make each word count—don't use too many words.
- **Do:** use either title case (first letter of all words capitalized) or sentence case (only first word capitalized).
- **Don't:** DO NOT USE ALL CAPS for your title.

Co-authors and typos

- Check your abstract carefully before submitting to make sure you have included all co-authors in the proper order and have indicated yourself as the presenting author. PAS cannot add authors after the submission deadline.
- Check for typos—PAS is not able to correct typos after submission.
- **Don't:** DO NOT USE ALL CAPS for your name or your colleagues' names.
- **Don't:** Write names in all lower case. The system does not auto-correct for capitalization; it will display names as they are entered.

People-First Language

- Please use People-First Language to respectfully refer to individuals with chronic conditions and disabilities. This language refers to the person first, not the condition or disability. It serves to eliminate bias, labels, stigma, and discrimination.

Some examples: "children with obesity" instead of "obese children," or a "child with a developmental delay" instead of a "developmentally delayed child."