

How to write an abstract

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Part 1

The purpose of an abstract is to serve as a link between the title of a scientific article (research study) which may be only a few words long and the full article which may be 8-10 pages long. The abstract is a useful summary of the article (your research project) that provides justification for the research. The abstract allows the reader to conclude whether the full article (your research) is worth reading.

Contents

The abstract should outline the objectives of the research study and its rationale. The materials and methods of the study should be stated with the statistical methods used. The results of the research should be concisely stated. A brief interpretation with the supporting statistics should be provided and a conclusion briefly stated.

Other factors

To get an idea of the style and length permitted for the abstract, it is useful to look at abstracts published in the journal in which you plan to submit your article/abstract (in this case the *JACI*). When submitting an abstract for the AAAAI Annual Meeting in the Allied Health category, be sure to follow all directions in the call for abstracts. You must use the format that is published and get your abstract in on time, or it will not be reviewed.

If you have any questions about how to prepare your abstract, e-mail me at eellis4729@aol.com. I will be happy to do a formative review for you or assist you in your efforts.

References

DeAngelis, C An Introduction to Clinical Research New York: Oxford University Press 1990.

Huss, K, Ainsley, S, Huss, RW Writing a Research Abstract, Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing.

Huth, EJ, How to Write and Publish Papers in Medical Sciences Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1989

Iverson, C et al American Medical Association Manual of Style Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1989

Plaut, SM Preparation of Abstracts, Slides and Presentations for Scientific Meetings Clinical Research 30 (2)18-24 1982

Part 2 - Checklist for conducting research/writing scientific abstracts

I. Conduct research project

- Formulate the research question
 1. Is it important?
 2. State it as a testable hypothesis
 3. Search literature to see if your question has already been answered
 4. Revise if necessary
- Determine tools, materials, personnel and time to collect data, do analysis. Change plans according to resources available.
- Choose appropriate subjects and controls if necessary You may need to revise plans according to the kind of patients involved in your practice.

- Devise methods to collect data from subjects (e.g. questionnaires)
- Discuss your plan with a biostatistician
- Collect data - you may do a small pilot study first
- Analyze the data with the help of a biostatistician
- Write up results for publication
- **WRITE YOUR ABSTRACT LAST**

II. Writing an abstract of your research process

- Study Objective
- Design
- Setting
- Population
- Materials, Methods and Interventions
- Results
- Conclusions

III. How to evaluate a good abstract

- Originality
- Scientific Merit
- Clinical relevance or significance
- Suitability for audience/meeting

Part 3 - A Sample Abstract

Survey of Asthma Control in Primary Care Practices

By Kathleen C Ellis, PhD, ARNP, AE-C; and B. Gwen Carlton, MS, FNP, AE-C

Introduction: Epidemiologic data show that poorly controlled asthma is a serious public health problem. The degree of implementation of the NAEPP Guidelines in primary care practice remains to be defined. The objective of this survey was to determine if introduction of an assessment tool into primary care practices along with a specially designed program to implement the Guidelines would improve diagnosis and therapy.

Methods: The Asthma Care Network (ACN), a program designed to assist healthcare providers in the assessment and management of their patients with asthma, employs a team of specially trained Respiratory Care Associates (RCAs), 100 RNs and RTs, who visit primary care offices to inform staff about various components of the NAEPP Guidelines and assist in their implementation. A total of 4901 primary care providers in 2876 sites were recruited as part of the ACN program. Data from more than 60,000 patient visits were collected and analyzed between March 2002 and January 2004. The program assessment tool surveyed asthma control and medication prescribing patterns. Outcome measures included degree of symptom control, limitation of activity, sleep disruption, use of rescue medication and utilization of urgent care services. These data were collected on an Office Visit Assessment Form (OVA) completed by both patient and physician. The RCAs provided information, education, device training in the use of inhalers and spacers, and a CE course for the staff discussing pathophysiology, assessment and management of asthma.

Results: A total of 60,248 OVA forms were completed. Among all patient including adults (older than 18 years of age) and children (<4-17 years of age), 74% (range 69% to 81%) reported symptoms consistent with lack of asthma control. Approximately 70% of the survey group had more than 2 markers of uncontrolled asthma. As a result of this assessment, controller medication use increased by over 30%, 52% of which was an ICS- containing medication.

Conclusion: The information provided to the primary care health care providers resulted in a considerable increase in prescription of controller therapy, and in particular, increased use of ICS controller medication consistent with NAEPP guidelines.