



APIC Education Committee

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# All About Abstracts!

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Chair, Education Committee, 2024-2025

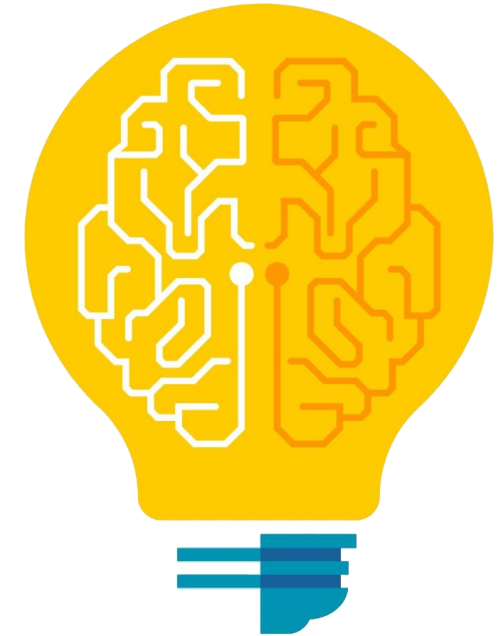
Member, Annual Conference Abstract Subcommittee, 2023-2024

# Objectives

Define the 5  
elements of a  
scientific  
abstract

Describe the  
two most  
common  
reasons  
abstracts are  
rejected

Describe the  
APIC abstract  
review process



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# What is an Abstract?

- Condensed but informative summary of the project
- Importance
  - First impression to the audience: abstract reviewer, journal editor, others
  - Quick review for others in the field
  - Avoid duplicity



# Components of an Abstract



Title



Background



Methods



Results



Conclusions



## Title

- Clear and concise
- Interesting
- Simple wording but informative
- Use keywords
- Use full scientific names

**Example:** Analysis of blood type for SARS-CoV-2 and correlation for disease acquisition in various sociodemographic groups including women of childbearing age.

*Am J Infect Control.* 2022;50(6):598-601.  
doi:10.1016/j.ajic.2022.03.012

## Background

- Brief and covers all the relevant details of the study or project
- Why are you conducting this research?
  - What is the issue?
  - Why is it important?
  - What was discovered in the past?
  - What are the gaps in research?
- Share the aim/objective of the study

**Example:** Multiple studies have occurred to determine if a patient's blood type, Rhesus factor (Rh), and sociodemographic attributes contribute to contracting SARS-CoV-2. True association remains unknown.

## Methods

- Study design-  
qualitative/quantitative
  - Statistical method/software used
- Study population/sample
  - Sample size
  - Inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Define the independent and dependent variables
- When: Time period
- Where: Country/State/County

**Example:** Inclusion criteria included in-patients who were tested for SARS-CoV-2 with blood type assessed. Study endpoints combined ABO, Rh and all-cause inpatient mortality (ACIM) with testing positivity. Pregnancy status was one of several secondary endpoints evaluated. A logistic regression analysis was used to estimate association.



## Results

- This section is the results of the methods
- Usually the longest section, also written in past tense
- What did you find (Described as percentages, p-values, ratios, rates, etc.)
- Focus on both the statistically significant and non-significant findings
- Add visuals such as tables and graphs, if allowed

## Example:

**Results:** Of the 27,662 patients who met inclusion criteria, Type A blood was associated with increased positivity [1.01 (1.0-1.21),  $P = .03$ ]. Type B [1.10 (0.99-1.23),  $P = .08$ ] and AB [0.98 (0.81-1.19),  $P = .84$ ] showed no association. When evaluating ACIM, type A [1.18 (0.91-1.52),  $P = .22$ ], B [1.13 (0.82- 1.56),  $P = .480$ ], and AB [1.06 (0.62-1.81),  $P = .839$ ] were not associated with increased mortality. The female subgroup was less likely to test positive [0.88 (0.82-0.986),  $P = .002$ ]. Black patients demonstrated a higher likelihood of positivity when compared to White [1.96 (1.79-2.14),  $P < .001$ ]. Non-pregnant women exhibited a 2.5 times greater likelihood of testing positive [2.49 (2.04-3.04),  $P < .001$ ].



## Conclusion

- Results-driven
- Answer to your objective
- What's next?

**Example:** This study confirms results of previous research which showed SARS-CoV-2 positivity related to blood type. It also confirms more recent research demonstrating inequities related to acquisition of SARS-CoV-2 for certain sociodemographic groups. Larger studies are warranted to confirm and further explore novel pregnancy findings.



# Abstract Writing

## What To Do



- **Follow abstract submission instructions**
- Grammar and spelling correct
- Anonymous
- Define abbreviations at first use
- Not published before
- Concise, clear, easy to read

## What Not To Do

- Not paying attention to detail
- Tables, figures, lists if not allowed in abstract instructions
- Language
- Miss the deadline

## Two Categories for Rejection:

1. Failed to follow submission requirements
2. Reasons of quality



# Top Reasons for Abstract Rejection

## Failed to follow submission requirements

Acronyms and/or abbreviations are not spelled out or defined at first use

Typographical and grammatical errors

Abstract included identifiable information

Abstract contained brand names or other commercial influence

Abstract has been presented at a national or international meeting

Abstract has been submitted in more than 1 subject category

Incomplete sentences and/or bulleted lists

Data presented are based on incomplete data and are awaiting future data collection

# Top Reasons for Abstract Rejection

## Reasons of quality

All conflicts of interest not disclosed as appropriate

Abstract has been published in another copyrighted journal or abstract book

Conclusions are not supported by the results

Submissions without scientific rigor or other scientific concerns

# Abstract Review Process

1. Call for Abstracts website opens
2. Call for Abstracts website closes
3. Each abstract is reviewed and rated by at least 4 subcommittee members
4. Subcommittee leadership analyzes the data and presents to subcommittee members for final determinations
5. Abstracts with scores above the cutoff are accepted, those below are rejected, and those borderline or with discordant ratings (i.e., 2 reviewers “rejected” and 2 “accepted”) are discussed and voted on
6. Subcommittee votes on which accepted abstracts will be oral vs. poster
7. Subcommittee votes on abstract awards
  - Blue Ribbon - \$1,000 stipend
  - Implementation Science, \$1,000 stipend
  - New Investigator, \$1,000 stipend
  - Best International, \$1,500 travel
  - Rutala Research, \$1,000 stipend

# Abstract Reviewer Comments



**“CNO should be defined”**

**“No need to abbreviate RRR – not used again”**

**“What is Vizient?”**

**“Refer to *S. aureus* in first sentence. Never defined”**

**“This was good, but CDC not defined”**

**“Did not define CMS”**

**“SIR not spelled out”**

**“Undefined abbreviation (ED)”**



# Abstract Reviewer Comments

**“The abstract content is good, but the authors should proofread their submission to correct typos, punctuation, and sentence structure.”**

**“The background provides a clear review of the problem and solid statement of the objective. The methods outlined the process at a high-level with limited details of the frequency of most of the action items. The results poorly detailed the results of the action steps and minimal information regarding the targeted outcome. The conclusion weakly summarized and supported the total body of work.”**

**“Numerous grammatical and spelling issues. Missing period at the end of the last sentence. Little data provided.”**

**“Results were presented in the Methods section. "Infection Prevention" appears three times in the title. "IP" referring to an Infection Preventionist is not defined. Background section is poorly phrased. MDRO not defined and scabies does not require capitalization.”**

**“Average abstract. Rejected due to rules violation: the facility was named.”**

**“Poor writing noted. No data provided. I have no idea what they actually did.”**

# What if my Abstract is not Accepted?

Congratulations!

Don't take it personally

Repurpose data into a journal article

Edit and resubmit next year or to another conference



- [How to Write an Abstract \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dlqs/abstracts/abstracts.html)
- Scaletta *et. al.* Reasons for rejection of abstracts submitted to the Annual Conference of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology: Ensuring transparency and encouraging quality. AJIC 47 (2019), 471-473
- <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/abstracts/>
- <https://www.biomedcentral.com/getpublished/writing-resources/writing-titles-and-abstracts>
- <https://www.springer.com/gp/authors-editors/authorandreviewertutorials/writing-a-journal-manuscript/title-abstract-and-keywords/10285522>