



## RESEARCH ABSTRACT GUIDELINES

# *What information should be included in a research abstract?*

Based on: *WRITING TIPS SERIES - Effective writing and publishing scientific papers, part II: title and abstract - Journal of Clinical Epidemiology 66 (2013) 585*

### **What information are we expecting to find in an abstract?**

#### **Background:**

The abstract should start with 3-4 sentences explaining the importance of the research question and a succinct review of what is already known about the problem. It should finish with a clear statement of the study main aim and the research question or major tested hypothesis.

#### **Methods:**

This section should describe the *design* of the study and include at least one specific sentence about the study type (cohort, cross-sectional, case-control, survey, case series, randomised controlled trial, systematic review etc.)

State the study *dates*, duration and follow-up period. Describe the *study setting* to allow readers to assess the generalisability of your results (one rural centre vs multi centre university hospitals).

Describe the *participants* enrolled in the study, important eligibility criteria and their key features. The selection process should be reported, and the following terms used when necessary: random sample (i.e. all individuals have an equal chance of selection), convenience-sample, volunteer sample, consecutive patients sample. In case of matching (any type) to compare groups, characteristics used for the matching process should be specified.

A clear description of the *intervention (for clinical trials) or exposure (for observational studies)* should be reported. They should be names with the most common clinical name and if drugs/devices are used the non-proprietary names should be used.

A listing of the *outcomes variables* including the primary study outcome as planned before the data collection, and how they were measured, should be provided. Finally, the *statistical methods* used to analyse the data should be described.

#### **Results:**

These should be strongly related to the original question and the outcome measures. Give equal importance to positive **and** negative results of equal importance. Summarise demographic information. The study main outcomes should be reported and the final number of included and analysed population should also be reported. Use the appropriate indicators of uncertainty (confidence intervals, SDs, IQRs etc.). Using “number needed to treat” or “number needed to harm” tools should be considered when relevant. Diagnostic studies should include sensitivity, specificity, and likelihood ratio. If positive/negative predictive value are reported, prevalence should be given.

#### **Discussion & Conclusions:**

The results should be briefly reviewed in the context of the question; the background; and some existing literature. The last sentence should be a concise conclusion based on all that is above. Provide only conclusions of the study that are directly supported by the results. Also, if relevant, provide a statement indicating possible implications for clinical practice

#### **Other relevant information:**

**Trial Registration:** Whenever a study has been registered, please provide: the name of the registry and the registration number. If the study was not registered please specifically state why (no appropriate register, non-clinical work, no patients involved etc...).

**Funding:** Whenever a study received a specific funding, please provide: the name of the funder(s). If the study did not receive any specific funding, please state is as such “This study did not receive any specific funding.”

**Ethical approval and informed consent:** Whenever a study report data that involved human or animal participants or animals, review and approval/waiver, by an institutional review board or ethics committee should be stated. If the ethical approval is not needed due to the type of study and local legislation it should be stated as such: « Not needed. »

# Research abstract scoring criteria

We are happy to share our scoring criteria for research abstracts, don't hesitate to use them to assess our abstracts and help you in the writing process.

Check if the abstract covers the 4 Ws:

- a. Background: What is known and why is this study needed?
- b. Methods: What did you do?
- c. Results: What did you find?
- d. Discussion & Conclusions: What does it mean?

| Item                            | Description   |      |
|---------------------------------|---|------|
| Title (0-1)                     | Clear title including identification of the study design  | 1    |
|                                 | Clear title, not including identification of the study design   | 0,5  |
|                                 | Unclear title   | 0    |
| <b>Introduction (0-3)</b>       |   |      |
| Background                      | Clarity and appropriateness of the background information   | 0-1  |
| Research question               | Research question (if none or not clear objective: 0)   | 0-2  |
| <b>Methods (0-6)</b>            |   |      |
| Study design                    | Description of the study design (e.g. RCT; observational...)  | 0-1  |
| Participants                    | Eligibility criteria for participants and the settings where the data were collected                            | 0-1  |
| Interventions                   | Interventions/exposure intended for each group (if relevant)  | 0-1  |
| Outcome                         | Clearly defined primary outcome for this report   | 0-1  |
| Sample size                     | Sample size justification or large number of included subjects  | 0-1  |
| Bias limitation measures        | Randomization, masking, bias and possible confounders described   | 0-1  |
| <b>Results (0-4)</b>            |   |      |
| Results                         | General results / general characteristics   | 0-1  |
| Outcome                         | For the primary outcome, a result for each group and the estimated effect size and its precision                | 0-2  |
| Harms                           | Important adverse events or side effects are described, if any  | 0-1  |
| Discussion and Conclusion (0-6) | General interpretation of the results, consistent with the reported results, while avoiding over-generalisation | 0-6  |
| <b>Others (0-10)</b>            |   |      |
|                                 | Importance of the topic and relevance for emergency medicine practitioners and researchers                      | 0-3  |
|                                 | Originality of the reported research  | 0-3  |
|                                 | External validity: how are these results applicable to other emergency medicine settings?                       | 0-2  |
|                                 | You can add an optional mark to reflect exceptional effort as an example  | 0-2  |
| Total                           |   | x/30 |