



# Abstract

Hamid Sharifi

Research Center for Modeling in Health,  
Institute of Futures Studies in Health,  
Kerman University of Medical Sciences

# What is an Abstract?

- Abstract (Ab: Out, trahere=pull; to pull out)
- First impressions are very important
- Abstracts are like advertisements for your paper
- An abstract can be only a “bare bones” version of all the information pertaining to the study; but it should taste “meat” especially in the method and results sections!
- Overview of the main story
- Used, with title, for electronic search engines
- Most often the only part people read
- Experienced writers always write the Abstract last

# Abstract format

- **Unstructured abstract**
- **Structured abstract**

# How Long Should it Be?

- **Extended abstract**
- **Conference abstract**
- **Executive abstract**
- Refer to the “instructions for authors”
- Avoid long abstracts; Pubmed cuts the long abstracts short



# Abstract

Versus

# Summary

# Basic IMRaD structure

- Introduction
- **Methods**
  - Objective
  - **Design**
  - **Setting**
  - **Subjects (incl./excl.)**
  - **Interventions**
  - **Main outcomes**
  - **Statistics**
  - *Important findings*
  - **Conclusion**
- Results
- **Discussion**

# How Should I Begin my Abstract?

- You want your abstract to stand out
- If you begin your abstract with commonly used phrases such as *This paper deals with ... The aim of this paper ... This article explores ... We report ...* you are not differentiating yourself from the others.

# What Should I Not Mention in my Abstract?

- Background information that is too generalist for your readers
- Claims that are not supported in the paper
- Terms that are too technical or too generic - this will depend on your audience
- Definitions of key terms
- Mathematical equations and software
- Unnecessary details that would be better located in the body of paper, such as the name of your institute, place names that readers will not have heard of

# What Should I Not Mention in my Abstract? (cont.)

- Generic quantifications (e.g. *many, several, few, a wide variety*) and the overuse or unjustified use of subjective adjectives (e.g. *innovative, interesting, fundamental*).
- References to other papers. However, if your whole paper is based on an extending or refuting a finding given by one specific author, then you will need to mention this author's name.
- Limitations of your study; Abstract is designed to 'sell' your research, you might decide not to mention the limitations until the Discussion.

# Check list for Abstract

- Objectives, methods, results, conclusion?
- Key features mentioned?
- Anything that does not appear in full text?
- Results in words?
- Conclusion: justified? objective?
- Meaningful interpretation
- Follows the guidelines

# Keywords

- Select terms that you would look up to find your own paper and that would attract the readers you hope to reach.
- Select current, specific terms, preferably medical subject headings (MeSH), that name important topics in your paper .
- Use phrases as well as single words.
- If the journal asks you to supply only terms that are not in the title of the paper, do so
- If necessary, include a term as an indexing term even if the term does not appear in your paper .



10 minute talk, I can give it next week  
30 minute talk, I can give it tomorrow  
1 hour talk, I can give it now

Thomas L Petty



# Referencing

# Referencing – why is it so important?

- Established academic practice
- Shows where you got your information – well-founded research
- Allows other researchers to trace your sources of information quickly and easily
- Acknowledges the work of other researchers
- Protects you against accusations of plagiarism

# What to cite?

- Fact
- Quotation
- Your Idea
  
- If you are quoting a method, a sentence, an idea, or some results published by another researcher, then you must cite the original source

# Useful tips

- All citations must be accurate
- Include only the most important, most valid, and most recent literature
- Try not to reference to abstracts, textbooks, thesis and dissertations
- Cite 20–35 references
- 1-2 reference for any comment or sentence.
- Use recent review articles
- quote the science and not the scientist.

# Useful tips cont.

- Limit your paper to facts not opinions esp. in review articles.
- “second hand” references

# Which style should I use?

- Various different styles are in use.
- If you are writing a paper for an academic journal, use the style that they specify.
- If no advice, choose one of the University's recommended schemes:
  1. Author-Date Style  
(Harvard Style)
  2. Numeric Style  
(Vancouver Style)

# Reference management's software

These kinds of software enable you to:

- Download and store references
- Include abstracts, keywords and notes with the references & also full texts.
- Produce lists of references for yourself or others
- Help you to put references to paper and change its style

**EndNote**<sup>®</sup>

**EndNote**<sup>Web</sup>

Reference  
Manager.



Ref**Works**

ProCite

**WriteNote**<sup>™</sup>

**RefViz**

Reference  
Web Poster<sup>®</sup>

# EndNote and Reference Manager

- The two most popular packages from ISI Research Soft
- Introduce a high level of flexibility and functionality to the bibliographic management process

# Pros and cons



- easy to use - Windows type interface
- convenient - automatic downloading
- flexible - many reference types and output styles
- accurate - you can keep track of publications used in your research



- requires time to learn
- some output styles may not be available or suitable
- not all online resources allow automatic downloading