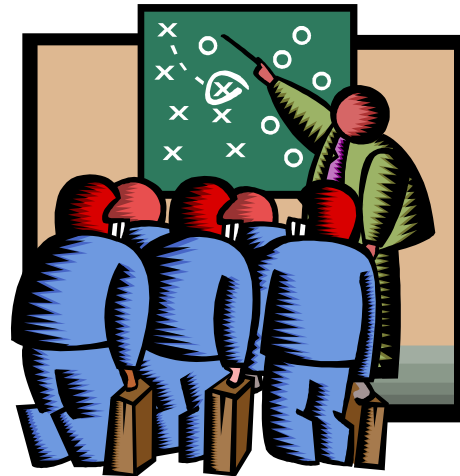


Writing an Abstract for Presentation at a Meeting



Prepared by Noni MacDonald,
Dalhousie University

Objectives

Following this exercise and lecture, the participants will be able to

1. List the advantages of writing and presenting an abstract
2. Describe the IMRaD Principle of scientific writing
3. Discuss effective ways to present data in an abstract
4. Outline the common pitfalls to abstract writing

Exercise

Form into groups of 3 or 4

Read through this first draft abstract

In the group, seek to identify errors of omission and commission in each section
hint: > 20 !

Be ready in 15 minutes to all come together to discuss your findings

Why submit a Meeting Abstract?

- Develop your national reputation
- Associate your name with a topic
- Obtain funding to attend the meeting
- Help with manuscript preparation
- Forces organization of your thoughts
- Gives you a deadline
- Gives feedback before manuscript submission to shape analyses, interpretation, future research directions
- Network and collaborate
- Job promotion
- Find new jobs

*See.. Wood and Morrison,
J Pall Med 2011; 14:353-359*

Meeting(s) Selected



Choose meeting fits your work

- **1 abstract per topic per meeting**
- May submit even if paper submitted but NOT accepted

Follow abstract guidelines

- **beware date** of submission
- verify **format, word count, manner of submission** (fax, email, online etc)
- note if must **pay to submit**; how much?
- note author, affiliation, COI specifics:

eg. **Sponsorship of a “member”?**

Abstract Title



Choose with **great care**

Accurate promise of abstracts contents

10 to 12 words -see how fits in space

Dynamic, conclusive - not descriptive

Avoid jargon, acronyms unless well known

Know what audience you are **targeting** with title

Authors and Affiliations

Restricted to those who actually did study*
conceived, designed, gathered data, analyzed,
wrote grant / abstract

Order by relative contributions- most first=
person to present if accepted, senior last

Names, credentials , one relevant affiliation for
each- usually where work done- follow
instructions

COI-state who sponsored- gov' t, industry etc

IMRaD Format: Abstract

***Authors require “organizational skills”
not “literary skills”***

Introduction Why did we do this work?

Methods What did we do?

Results What did we find?

and

Discussion What do the results mean?
+/-What needs to be done now?

Intro: Why Did We Do This Work?

1 or 2 sentences
sum up
what known
what is your
hypothesis,
rationale or
question
=/-why important



Methods: What Did We Do?



Read abstract instructions carefully
methods requirements vary

Be very concise BUT note design, context,
patients and measurements-i.e RCT, cohort..

State analysis methods as succinctly as possible

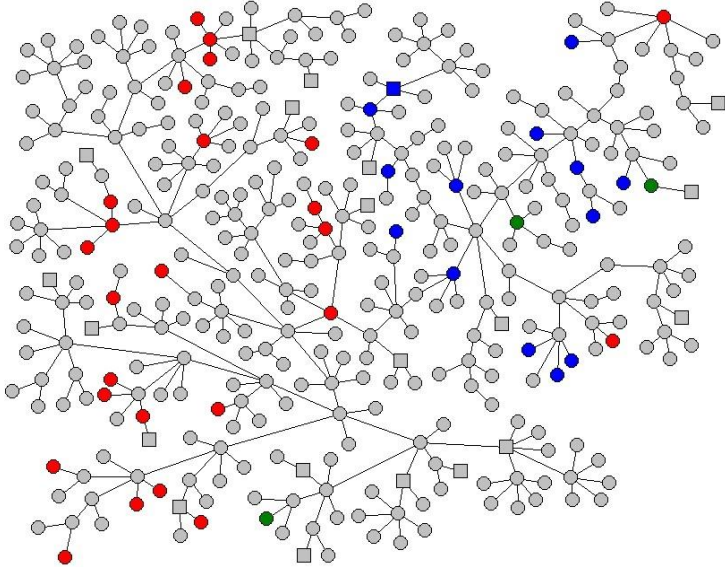
Note IRB approval and funding sources

Look at previous abstracts accepted to that meeting

***Method issues most common reason
for rejection of an abstract !!!***

Results: What Did We Find?

Extensive social sexual network
among young people in Denver,
USA



*Al-Tayyib AA, Rietmeijer CA 19th Biennial
Conference of the International Society for
Sexually Transmitted Diseases Research.
Sex Transm Infect 2011;87 :Suppl 1, : A
17-18.*

Critical component

Concisely present
findings

-results pertain to the
hypothesis, 1^o end pts
-enough to show why
conclusion

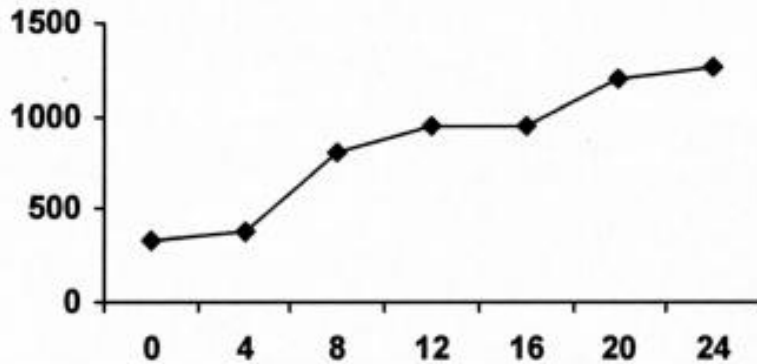
Use table or figure if
conveys info more
clearly

Rules for Tables & Figures Abstracts

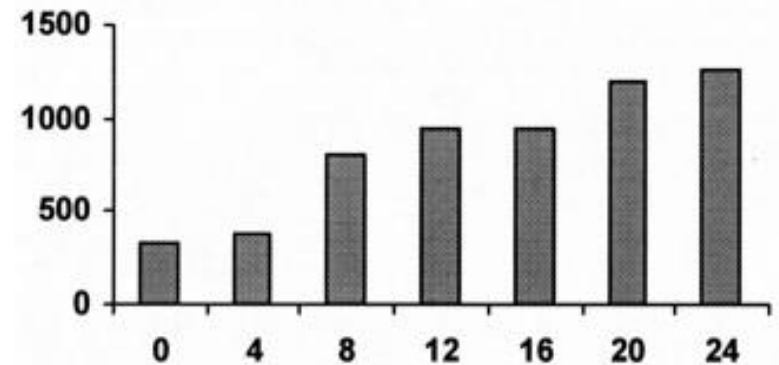
1. Use table or figure only if **helps convey** more clearly or less space
2. Present only **most important data**
3. Table or figure should take up **less than 1/3** of abstract
4. Include table only if **font same size-** not squish
5. Do not use text, table or figure to say same thing i.e. **redundancy**
6. Check if lines in table increase **readability** or not- lines take space

Durbin CG Jr. Respiratory Care 2004;49:1233-37

Which is Correct Display of Discrete Data Points ?



A

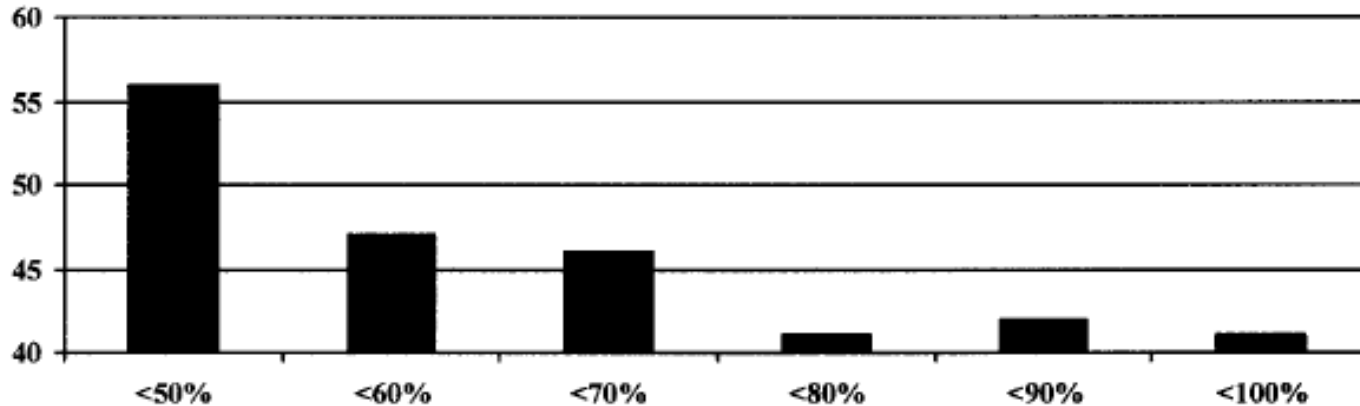


B

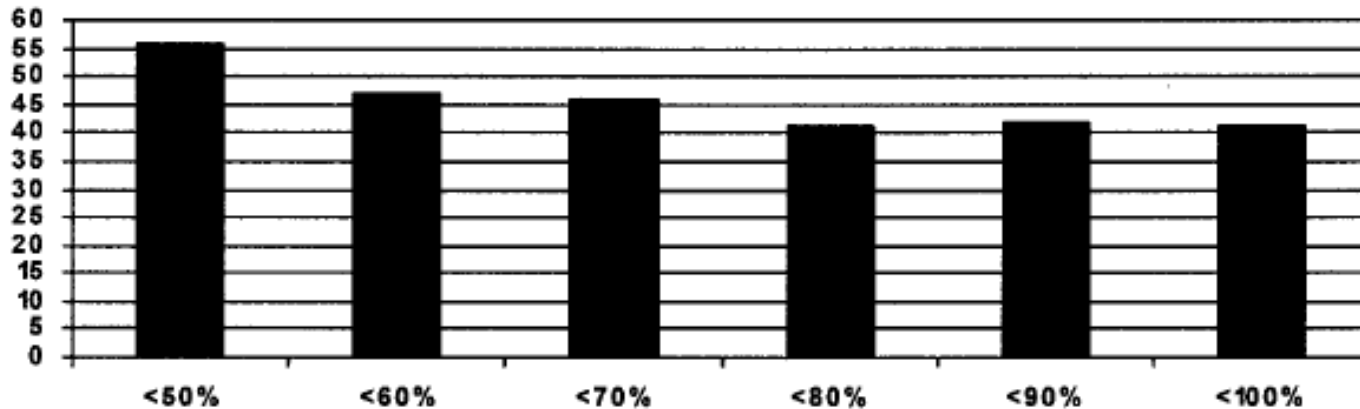
Durbin CG Jr. Respiratory Care 2004;49:1233-37

What is the Error Here?

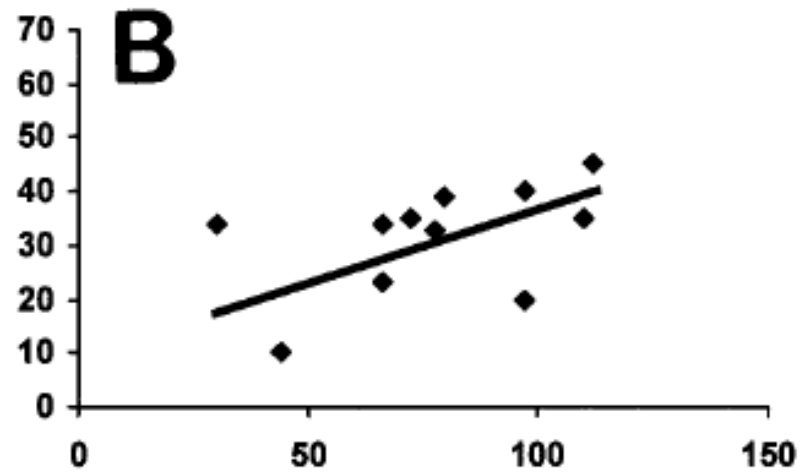
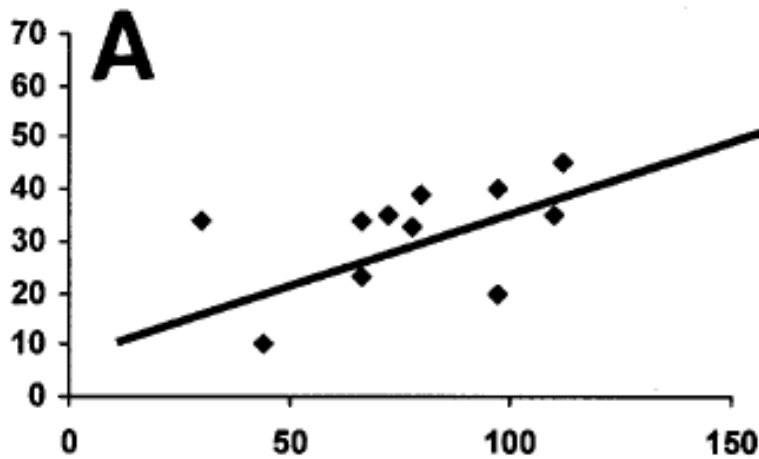
A



B

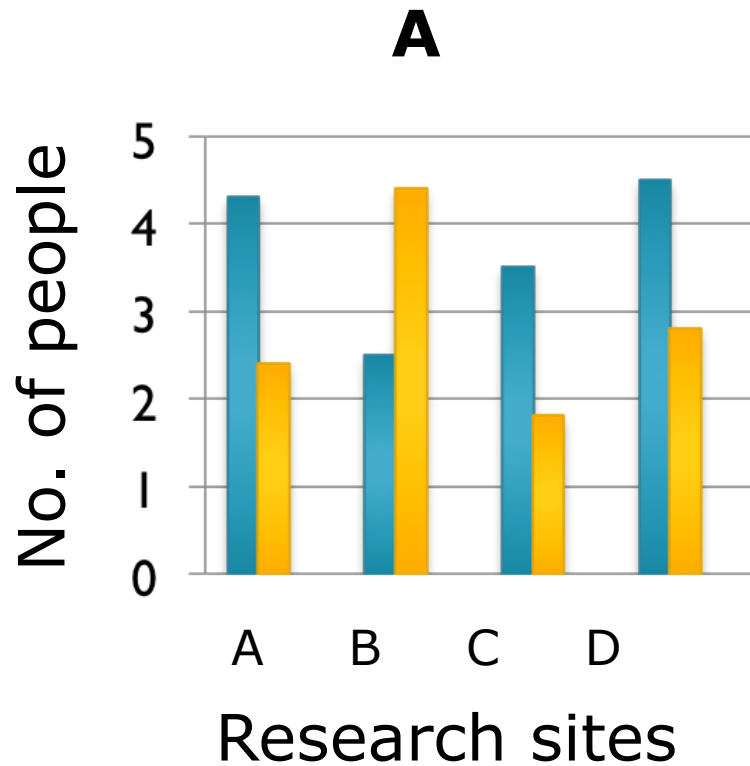


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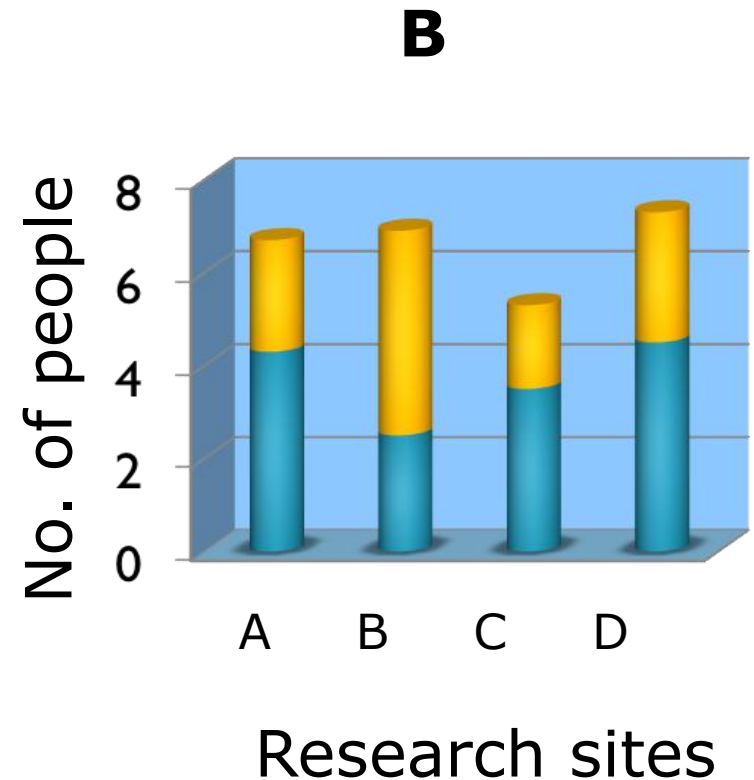


Durbin et al Respiratory Care 2004;49:1233-37

What is Correct ?



VS



Discussion (Conclusion): What Do the Results Mean?



Be straightforward and brief

1 to 2 sentences

- summarizes main finding

- interprets/gives clinical implications

Do NOT over value your results

Abstract Pitfalls

1. Abstract topic not “fit” the meeting-
2. Title unrelated to content -work
3. Intro lacks hypothesis, rationale or question
4. Methods lacking, unclear, not related to results* **Most common flaw**
5. Results- never say “results will be presented”
 - data –unclear, too compact
 - focused on statistic not clinical significance
6. Conclusion- not follow from data
 - not related to hypothesis
 - too sweeping given results
7. Not following instructions
8. Spelling, grammar, font size, unreadable because too many abbreviations etc

**“If you want a 10 minute summary, I can have it for you a week from today;
If you want it to be 30 minutes, I can do it by tomorrow;
If you have a whole hour, I’m ready now”**

Thomas L Petty Professor of Medicine

University of Colorado, USA

Remember

Reviewer

read >100 abstracts; choose only 30

Yours must be memorable

for being good

i.e make it best it can be