How to prepare your WCHRI abstract:

A step-by-step blueprint for creating a compelling abstract submission

Lunch and Learn
August 1, 2019

women & children's health research institute
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Alberta Health Services
STOLLERY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL FOUNDATION
LOIS HOLE HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN

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- Dr. Sandy Thompson-Hodgetts
  - Associate Professor, OT, Faculty of Rehab Medicine
  - Primarily Pillar 3: Health Services
- Dr. Eytan Wine
  - Associate Professor, Pediatrics
  - Clinician-scientist
  - Primarily Pillar 1: Biomedical (and a bit of Pillar 2 – clinical)

S.K.I.P Lab
Supporting Kids Inclusion & Participation

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
QUAECUMQUE VERA

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CCHCSP
PCCCSE
Programme canadien de cliniciens-chercheurs en santé de l'enfant

Edmonton
Pediatric
IBD
Clinic

Objectives

- Review the purpose of an abstract
- Discuss how to prepare a research abstract
- Practice first steps to writing your abstract
- Address specific abstract requirements for WCHRI Research Day – Nov 6, 2019

What is the purpose of your abstract?

- ✓ To present a large amount of information in a concise manner
- ✓ To engage the reader

- *Think of it as a written elevator speech*

When are abstracts required?

1. Submitting a manuscript for publication
2. As part of grant applications
3. Seeking consideration for a conference presentation …**today's focus**

Why is an abstract important?

- Entry point to decide whether your work is accepted, presented, and in what format
- Some readers will not read beyond the abstract (or you have to pay to read the full paper…)
- Demonstrates collaborations & experience in a field
- A well written abstract can catapult your work into the view of others; a poorly written abstract can be ignored, discarded, and potentially remembered by others (sully your reputation to some extent)

A Note on Structure

Structured: specific headings/ sections required

OR

Unstructured: simple paragraph

- Both types contain the same things, i.e., the **why**, **who**, **what**, **where**, **how** and **so what**?

Intro

Methods

Results

Conclusions

Element	Research study	EBP (IMRAD)	QI/QA	Case study
Why	Background/significance (all about existing evidence, relevance to particular arena, or group)	Introduction: Why did you do what you did/or why do you want to do what you are proposing?	Introduction, Background, Problem	Introduction: Importance/significance of the particular case in terms of context, epidemiology, etc.
What	Purpose (and/or objective)	Purpose included in Intro [what did you intend to do? *The purpose (or objective) for this project was . . .*]	Purpose (or objective) included in Intro	Succinctly written case scenario context
Who	Setting and sample (or population) [what venue, with whom]	[include in methods]	With whom (setting, population, group) did you do/will do?	Details included in overall scenario
How and When	Methods Research design	Methods Identify as EBP, unless clear design can be identified (e.g., pre/posttest, correlation or comparison, etc.). EBP can use traditional design format, but for clarity need to confirm is EBP context	What did you do? How did you set up procedures? Is there a name for the manner in which done? QA/QI can use traditional design format, but clarify that is QA/QI context	Document details/steps Identify as case study (clinical case or systems case in the scenario of a single system case)
	Procedures	Steps in process	Steps in process	Steps in process
	Measurement tools for key variables	Measurement tools and processes	How done; with what tools and processes	
	Analysis	Analysis of outcome; how was outcome evaluated	How assessed outcome	Synthesis of clinical data typically
Outcome	Results—typically statistical results for quantitative research, narrative findings for qualitative research. Synthesized/interpreted	Results: Details regarding outcome	Results	Outcome of case
Discussion and Next Steps	Discussion of findings/results/outcomes, with implications for practice, scholarship, research, service, teaching, policy . . . next steps recommendations, lessons learned			Implications for case and others

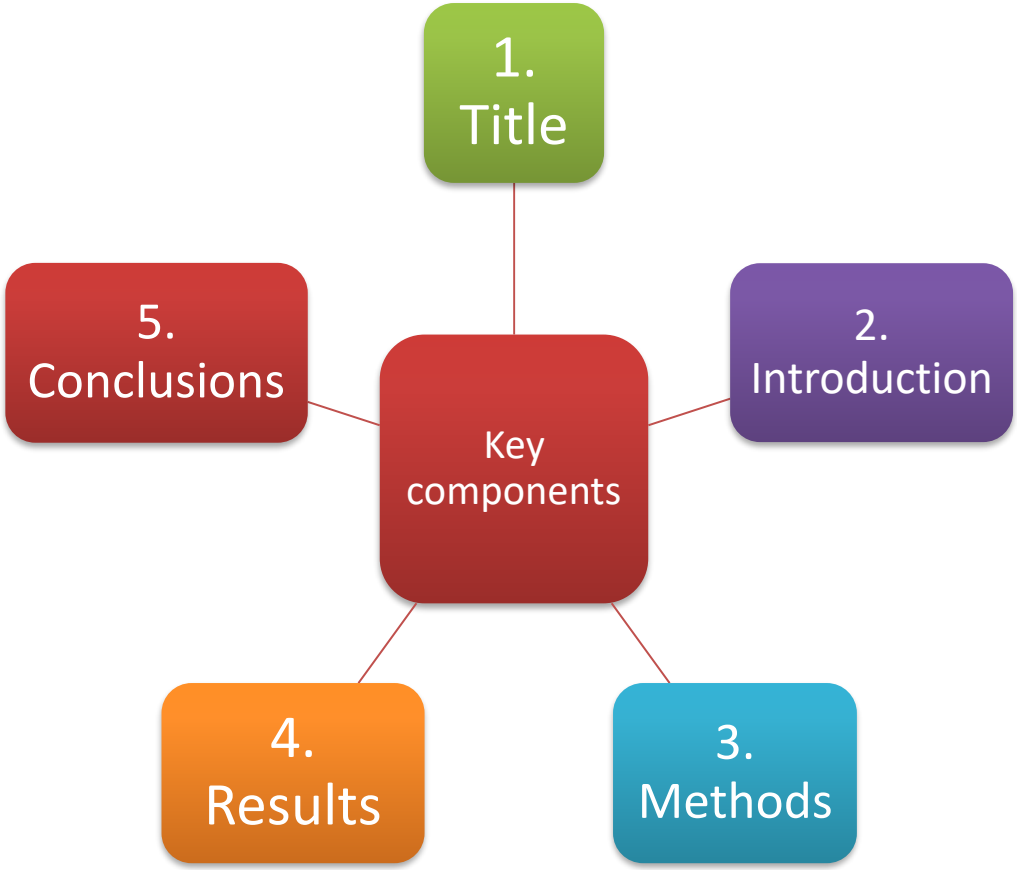
Note. EBP, evidence-based practice; IMRAD, introduction, methods, results, and discussion; QI/QA, quality improvement/quality assessment.

Pearce et al. J Am Assoc Nurse Pract. 2017 Jun 29. doi: 10.1002/2327-6924.12486

Key Features

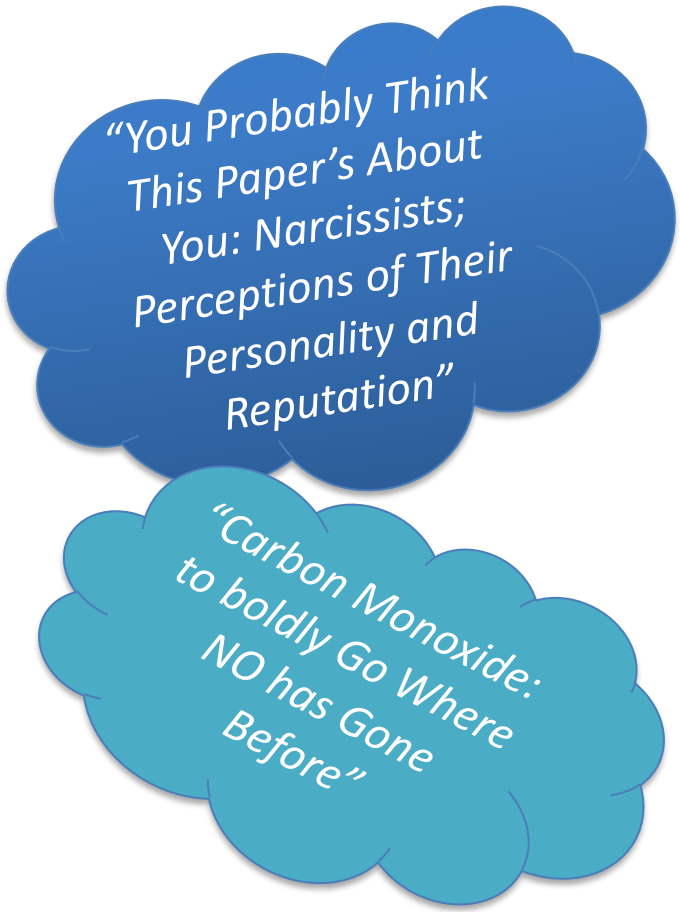
1. **Synthesized**: tells the story
2. **Focused**: short - just the highlights
   WCHRI ~ 400 words (details below)
3. **Succinct:** brevity is a virtue!

Standard Abstract Components



The Title

- Your title might be the only thing that people read—use this as an opportunity to “hook” the reader’s interest. OK to be ‘catchy’
- Avoid making your title too broad, vague, or dense...try to limit to 10-15 words max (WCHRI limits to 150 characters)
- Convey *concepts* involved, the *sample* or population, and *methods* (if possible)
- Focus more on what you found than on what you did*
- Avoid ‘question’ titles (unless the point is that we do not know)
- Include a verb if possible – easier for the reader to process.



Did this attention grabber grab your attention?

Take 5 min and write the title and key words for your abstract.

Bounce it off your neighbour

Is it catchy?

Do they want to move on and read the abstract/look at the poster/attend your presentation?

Introduction

- Introduces your topic of study to readers:
  1. **Context**: Why did you do this work? Clearly articulate the purpose – build a rationale
  2. **Aim and objective**: Try to include a declarative statement

- Be **succinct – space is at a premium!**
- Remember**: *(positivist) scientific studies are not done to prove that something is true, but to find out whether it is true***

Methods - General

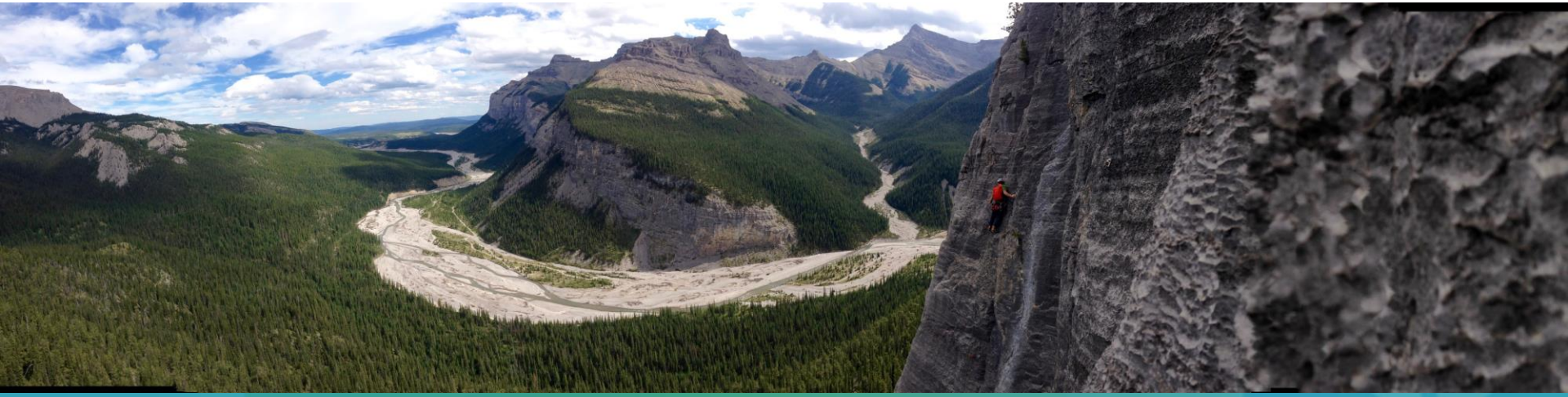
- Goal: explain what you did! Keep it simple
- Variable: depends on type of research - Qualitative vs Clinical vs Population Health vs Fundamental Research
- Always (usually) need to include:
  - Study design, setting, sample, tools, stats/analysis
- Sometimes can include:
  - Ethical Considerations
  - Secondary outcomes
  - Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Methods - Study Design

- Observational vs. interventional
- Pilot, case control, cohort study, randomized controlled trial
- Qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods
- The framework could be briefly mentioned here

Methods – Setting

- For any research involving a sample population it is important to note the setting
- Try to include where overall; i.e., Alberta, Canada
- Then specific place i.e., hospital vs outpatient vs community
- Try to be as specific as possible, without breaching confidentiality



Methods: Sample

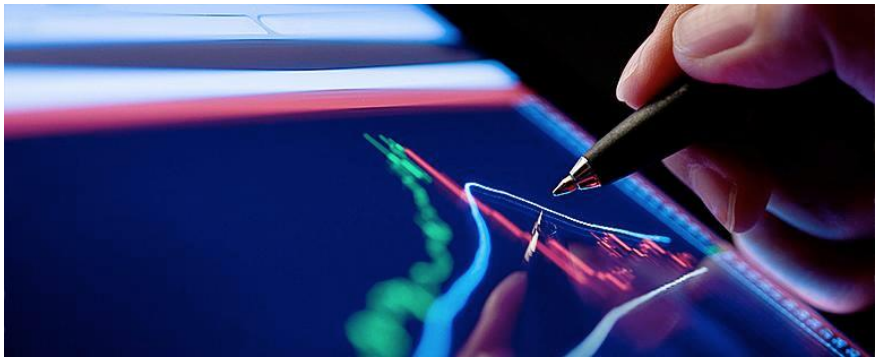
- Detail the specific sample or population
- Consider including details about age, gender, ethnic background, species, genotype, drug and controls
- Try to include the most significant inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Power calculation details are not necessary

Methods - Measurement Tools/Instruments

- List the names of the most significant tools, instruments or surveys used (especially for the primary outcome)
- No need for detailed information on reliability or validity

Methods: Analysis

- A general statement about how the analysis was done *i.e.*, cox proportional regression, or compared to wild-type animals
- More important for abstracts proposing work to be done



Results

- Qualitative: 1-2 descriptive statements (*e.g.*, summary of key themes)
- Quantitative: results for the primary aim (even if not significant), including assessment of variation and p values
- Can provide results for important secondary aims if space allows
- Try and connect your results – tell a story
- Do not comment on trends
- **Cannot detail ALL results!**

Conclusions

What is the main point you want your audience to take home? Usually a single sentence referring back to the purpose.

- If the study is well designed and executed it hopefully supports or refutes the original hypothesis (for quantitative work)

Conclusions

Implications

- Not necessary, but nice
- Potential clinical impact
- Practice change or support current practice

Limitations

- Not typically in an abstract
- No study is perfect – demonstrates your awareness of this to reviewers

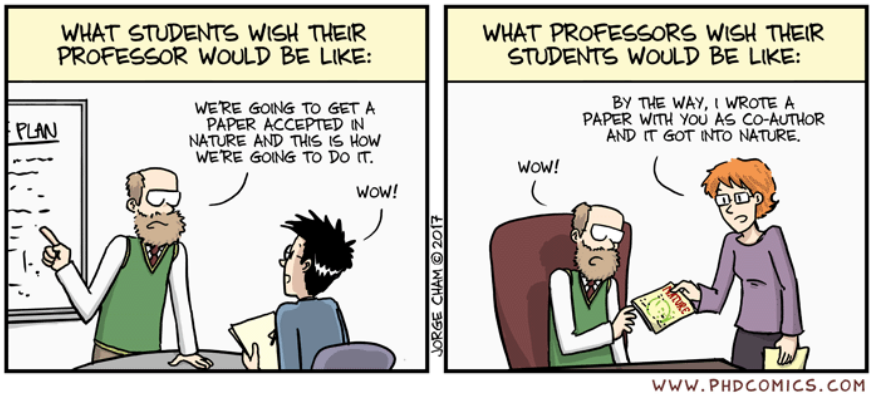
Future Directions

- Shows readers you are thinking of next steps
- Reasonable at WCHRI; would not do at National/International meetings
- Don’t do for incomplete projects

Authorship

- Should only include people who did the study: conception, design, data gathering, number crunching and writing
- Generally in order of contribution, with senior author last (author order can vary by field)
- Disclose industry relationships! It's ok, but be upfront.

Refer to: "Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journal": http://www.icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf



Citations

- Typically not included
- Consider space is at a premium

Abbreviations

- Minimize/avoid!
- Consider space is at a premium
- If use, NEED to write in full for first use

Linguistics style tip 307. No linguistics abstract (henceforth LA) should contain more than two totally novel abbreviations (henceforth TTNA). Abstracts that violate TTNA impose an unreasonable burden on the poor tired and cranky abstract reviewer (henceforth PTACAR), causing PTACAR to lose track of the TTNAs, and rendering it far more likely than otherwise that LA will be given a lower score than it deserves (henceforth LSTID). LAs that violate TTNA and are consequently LSTIDed by PTACAR deserve the score that they get.

Corollary: Don't introduce a new abbreviation unless you immediately use it, and frequently. Otherwise PTACAR gets really p.o.'ed (henceforth POed) trying to find what the stupid abbreviation (henceforth SA) means on page 2 that was introduced in a parenthesis somewhere on page 1 and never reused. And of course don't introduce any abbreviation that you're never going to use.

Key Words

- This is how reviewers will be determined – think carefully
- Should be different than words in the title
- Typically 3-5

Consider Your Audience!

- General or subspecialist population?
- Expert or lay public?
- WCHRI will be broad, including trainees and researchers from a variety of research fields

- Safe target: intelligent non-experts in your field

Timing: When to start?

The sooner the better!

- It will be an iterative process
- Need to have co-authors' input
- Consider asking a non-author to review for clarity

Follow the Directions!

READ the DIRECTIONS,

BELIEVE the DIRECTIONS,

and FOLLOW the DIRECTIONS!!!!

- There is actually significant research in this area and the most common reason for an abstract not being accepted for presentation at a meeting is not following the directions!!!

Methods Practice

Take 5 minutes to Pair and Share these essential components of your research methods:

- Study design
- Setting
- Sample
- Tools
- Stats/analysis

WCHRI Research Day

- November 6th, Westin Hotel, 7 am - 5 pm
- Access the registration & abstract submission site at: http://www.wchri.org/research-day-registration
- Submission deadline: Sept 18 @ 7 am

WCHRI Abstract Requirements

- Four required sections: **Introduction, Methods, Results and Conclusions**
- You must use the provided template! (a Word document is not acceptable)
- You can use symbols and special formatting (except sub/superscript)
- Copy and paste from a source document
- Maximum ~400 words (**space based**)

Other WCHRI Requirements

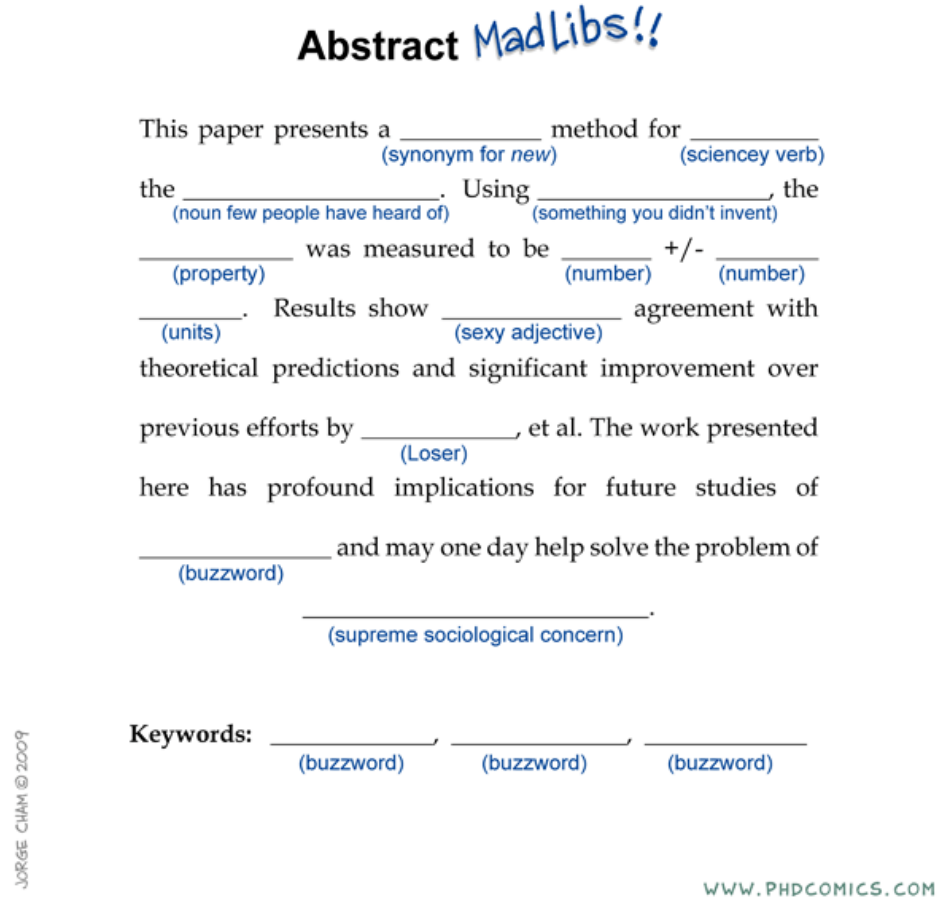
- The presenter *does not need to be* the first author.
- You may include up to 15 authors.
- You may only submit 1 abstract per registrant.
- Please make sure you (and your supervisor) proofread your abstract before submission to avoid typos—your submission is final!

What if I Don’t Have Data Yet?

- WCHRI encourages students in early stages to submit an abstract in any case!
- It is all about you getting experience and feedback
- Present your research question, planned methodology, and potential knowledge gained
- Posters are always judged with consideration of the level and stage of training

Thank You!

- Thank you for your attendance at this Lunch and Learn.
- We look forward to seeing you at WCHRI Research Day!



Abstract MadLibs!!

This paper presents a _____ method for _____
(synonym for *new*) (sciencey verb)
the _____. Using _____, the
(noun few people have heard of) (something you didn't invent)
_____ was measured to be _____ +/- _____
(property) (number) (number)
_____. Results show _____ agreement with
(units) (sexy adjective)
theoretical predictions and significant improvement over previous efforts by _____, et al. The work presented
(Loser)
here has profound implications for future studies of _____ and may one day help solve the problem of
(buzzword)
_____.
(supreme sociological concern)

Keywords: _____, _____, _____
(buzzword) (buzzword) (buzzword)

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