PREPARING ABSTRACTS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

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1

Introduction and Objectives

- Describe the components of an abstract for a professional presentation
- Apply strategies for writing an abstract for professional presentations

2

Calls for Abstracts

- International Society of Paediatric Oncology annual congress
  - Abstracts typically due in April
  - Notification of acceptance in June
  - Congress typically held in October
  - https://siop-congress.org/submission/
- Other professional societies and organizations
  - Watch for posted schedules

3

Writing a Successful Abstract

Read the directions

Believe the directions

Follow the directions

Source: Lenz, M. Writing a WINing Abstract. University of Washington School of Nursing https://win.confex.com/win/2018/cfp.cgi

4

Reviewing the Call for Abstracts …

- Word limit
  - Typically ranges from 250 – 500 words
  - Word limit for SIOP is 300 words
- Types of projects that can be considered
  - Research
  - Education
  - Evidence-based practice
- Status of the project
  - Completed or in progress
- Format for the proposed presentation
  - Podium presentation
  - Poster presentation

Note: SIOP will allow an abstract that has been presented at another conference in the same calendar year to be presented at the annual congress

5

Parts of the Abstract

- Background and aims
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusions

6

Parts of an Abstract

- Title
  - "abstract of the abstract"
  - Should include:
    - Important variables
    - Target population
    - Context
- Note: Titles for SIOP abstracts are limited to 25 words

Unfocused: Pain in children with cancer

Better: Prevalence of post-operative pain among young children with brain tumors

Unfocused: Improving parent education

Better: Improving education for parents of children with leukemia at the time of diagnosis

7

Parts of a Scientific Abstract

- Background
  - Nature and importance of the problem prompting the study or project
  - Rationale/conceptual basis for the study or project
- Aims
  - Overarching purpose of the project or study
  - Goals of the program
  - Research questions or hypotheses driving the study

8

Project Example: Background/Purpose

AYAs with cancer have unique needs/concerns that are often overlooked during the initial cancer diagnosis. The introduction of a navigator dedicated to AYAs with cancer in the adult oncology setting successfully facilitates early contact and assessment of AYA specific concerns in the new diagnosis period.

This project examines the impact of introducing the AYA navigator role in a Canadian Health Institution on early contact and assessment of AYA specific concerns in the new diagnosis period.

Complete abstract accessible at: http://conference.aphon.org/UPLOADS/Files/Sample_paper-posterabstract.pdf

9

Research Example: Background/Purpose

Children receiving cancer treatment suffer multiple symptoms, yet often struggle to describe these symptoms. mHealth resources, including apps, offer developmentally meaningful, multi-sensory approaches to support symptom reporting.

This study investigated the acceptability of an investigator-developed symptom-reporting app from perspectives of children receiving chemotherapy and their parents.

Complete abstract accessible in 2019 SIOP Conference proceedings: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15455017/2019/66/S4

10

Parts of a Scientific Abstract

- Methods: Research
  - Design
  - Study sample and setting
  - Study variables
  - Data collection methods
  - Analytic plan
- Methods: Project
  - Approach
  - Project setting
  - Target population
  - Outcome variables of interest
  - Processes used
  - Evaluation plan

11

Study Example: Methods

Twenty-three AYAs (median 19 years; range 15-29 years) receiving at least one prescribed, scheduled oral medication related to their cancer treatment participated in this 12-week longitudinal single group interrupted time series study. Baseline oral medication adherence was monitored using electronic monitoring caps for four weeks. Participants then used a medication reminder app and had their oral medication adherence monitored for 8 weeks. Paired t-tests compared adherence before and during the intervention. Multilevel unconditional growth curve models assessed adherence trajectories, accounting for individual variation. Visual graphic analysis techniques were applied to individual profile plots of weekly adherence to evaluate trends and identify adherence phenotypes (patient subgroups with similar adherence patterns).

Complete abstract accessible in 2018 SIOP Conference Proceedings: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15455017/2018/65/S2

12

Project Example: Methods

The Plan, Do, Study, Act Cycle was used to conduct this QI project. Simulated case studies were first developed and used to train ward nurses on the Pediatric Advanced Warning Signs (PAWS). Chart review forms were developed, and the PAWS expert team independently scored the PAWS on the same patients within one hour of the ward nurse who completed their PAWS assessment. Chart reviews were completed by the members of the PAWS expert team.

Complete abstract accessible in 2020 SIOP Conference Proceedings: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/pbc.28742

13

Parts of a Scientific Abstract

- Results/Outcomes
  - If in progress …
    - Status of the project – e.g., participants accrued, duration of project implementation
    - Any preliminary analyses or the plan for analyzing data
  - If completed …
    - Summary of completed analyses
    - Emphasize major results – even negative results

14

Study Example: Results

Participants were 86 AYAs (median 19 years; range 15-29 years; 52% males; 71% White) receiving chemotherapy at 5 sites in the United States. Participants reported a median of 4 symptoms at each of two timepoints (T1, T2) immediately prior to courses of chemotherapy with a range of 0-15 symptoms at T1 and 0-18 symptoms at T2. The number of symptoms reported did not differ based on age (adolescent vs. young adult) or gender. Severity ($t=-3.22$; $p < .01$) and distress ($t=-3.92$; $p<.01$) were greater among priority symptoms versus those not identified as priority. The most prevalent priority symptoms were: lack of energy (n=19); nausea (n=18); difficulty sleeping (n=15); and pain (n=13). For these symptoms, severity and distress did not differ based on priority designation. Regardless of priority designation, mean severity and distress ratings for these four symptoms, were greater than those for other symptoms across the study sample.

Complete abstract accessible in 2018 SIOP Conference Proceedings: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15455017/2018/65/S2

15

Project Example: Results

Observation and report from nurses reveal that Chemo spillage at bottle was found to be 21% of all medication errors during chemotherapy. Chemotherapy spillage on patient bedside, data was recorded to 42.9% of the spillage. Occurs after chemo has administered, was also equal to the spillage from the syringes with chemo prepared for administration. Leakage of IV giving sets was 14% of the chemo error found. IV giving set was leaking due to the default with the clamping affecting dosage on chemotherapy. This indicates the safety of the patient and staffs are at risk of contamination with chemo. Spillage at patient found to be 29% of chemo errors. Dose incorrect was found to be 7%, includes wrong preparation and admixture, common drug found these errors was dactinomycin because colour of drug after admixture

Complete abstract accessible in 2020 SIOP Conference Proceedings: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/pbc.28742

16

Parts of a Scientific Abstract

- Conclusions
  - Regardless of project/study status …
    - Overall summary of the significance of the study or the project
    - Implications for practice/directions for future research

17

Study Example: Conclusion

Fatigue, nausea, difficulty sleeping, and pain are among the most severe and distressing symptoms regardless of whether identified as priority symptoms. Identification of priority symptoms can provide clinicians with a starting point to develop patient-centered plans for symptom management interventions.

Complete abstract accessible in 2018 SIOP Conference Proceedings: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15455017/2018/65/S2

18

General Principles for Writing an Abstract

- Things to do …
  - Keep the focus on the study or project
  - Address required areas
  - Emphasize the methods and results/outcomes
  - Ask a mentor for feedback
- Things to avoid …
  - Too many words in the background/aims section
  - Limited description of the methods and results/outcomes
  - Not allowing time for feedback

19

Other considerations when writing an abstract …

- Language requirements
- Stylistic issues
  - Numbers, especially use of commas and decimal points
    - e.g., 2,250 and p=0.03
  - Abbreviations
    - e.g., Acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), Wilms Tumor (WT)
  - Generic names for medications
  - Measurement in metric units
- Disclosure of conflicts of interest
- Expectations of authors if the abstract is accepted

20

What happens if my abstract is accepted?

- Poster presentation
  - SIOP: Poster available to attendees at designated times
  - Most conferences specify times for authors to be present in person
- Paper/podium session
  - 10-15 minute slide presentation
  - Grouped with other similar presentations
- Oral poster presentation
  - 3-5 minutes

21

Additional Resources

- SIOP Call for Abstracts: https://siop-congress.org/submission/
- Linder, L. A. (2012). Disseminating research and scholarly projects: Developing a successful abstract. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing, 29*, 362-366. doi: 10.1177/1043454212456087

22

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

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23