

## **How to write an abstract for the ANZICS/ACCCN ASM**

### **Tips for Success from ACCCN's Research Advisory Panel**

An abstract is a brief but accurate summary of a research project. The abstract is not only used in determining which research should be presented at a conference, but it also serves as a 'taster' for what your presentation will cover/include. It helps the reader determine if your presentation is worth their viewing. Abstracts for the ASM must follow a specific format:-

#### Title

- Make the title dynamic, directive and conclusive. Ideally it should follow PICO (participants, intervention, comparison, outcome) format. It can be beneficial to state the method, for example, 'ICU nurses can accurately estimate patient height and weight: an observational study'.

#### Abstract content

First and foremost, be guided by the submission instructions. Headings are NOT allowed, so instead, use paragraphs and present your content in this order:

- Introduction/Problem – rationale for study including importance of your study. Aim for 2-4 short sentences.
- Aim(s) should be clearly stated. Hypothesis can be included (if applicable). Aim for 1-2 short sentences.
- Methods – study design, who and number studied; context of study (e.g. ICU or Trauma ICU); what data/outcomes; how data was collected and analysed.
- Results – You must present results here. If quantitative, start with demographics and then findings. Use as many words as you can in this section.
- Conclusion/s – must relate to the aim/hypothesis and be supported by the results. Clinical implications/relevance should be included. No more than 2-3 short sentences.

#### Other formatting hints

- An abstract must be written in the past tense, stating what was done, tested or measured.
- It must contain sufficient detail to be a complete report in the published conference proceedings.
- All terms should be written in full, except terms such as ICU, which is considered common language.
- Do not exceed word/character length. This will likely result in immediate rejection of your abstract.
- Do not make statements alluding to results or conclusions not presented in the abstract. For example, abstracts stating "*results will be discussed*", "*will be described*" or "*will be presented*", will be rejected by the reviewers. Definitive data and outcomes must be included in your abstract.

*Originally authored by Professor Sharon McKinley, Professor Judy Currey and Professor Andrea Marshall 2012*

*Updated by Dr Melissa Bloomer 2016*

### Common mistakes

- The abstract does not adhere to the instructions, e.g. word count, headings, abbreviations etc.
- Abstract does not describe actual research. You must present findings.
- Abstract is written about work to be done in the future. The abstract must be about completed research.
- The aims or hypothesis are unclear.
- The method is not clearly described.
- No results are reported and/or the sample size is not reported, if applicable.
- *Insufficient data to support the conclusion* is the most common reason that abstracts submitted for the ASM receive low scores and are not accepted.

### BEFORE you submit

- Read the instructions to ensure your abstract complies.
- Proof read your work. Sometimes spelling, punctuation and format errors are easier to spot in hardcopy, so print it out to proof read it.
- Seek agreement and consent for all co-authors in relation to the content and order of authors before submitting.

**Members of the ACCCN Research Advisory Panel are available to proof read your abstract if desired. Members' names and contact details are available on the ACCCN website. Please contact members directly or via the Chair.**