

# How to write an abstract for a conference?

Abstracts are important parts of academic assignments, reports and papers. They are often read first but are mostly written as last.

## What kind of abstract can you submit?

Depending on the conference, there may be different abstract types with different entry requirements.

1/ **original research abstracts** - summarizing original, not yet presented research findings, for ESCP events mainly in the field of clinical pharmacy, therapeutics, pharmacoepidemiology, pharmacokinetics or pharmacoconomics (in vitro and animal research is considered only if there is a relevance to clinical pharmacy practice).

2/ **original descriptive abstracts** - describing new or adapted methodologies, development of innovative clinical pharmacy practices/services/software/educational programs etc.

3/ **encore presentations** that has already been presented elsewhere, but are of real importance to the clinical pharmacy community (for ESCP events can be submitted only as posters).

**Original research abstracts** are always evaluated regarding their originality, innovation, hypothesis, clarity of objectives and outcomes, study design, interpretation of results and relevance of conclusions.

**Descriptive abstracts** must describe original, new or adapted methodologies/practices/software/tools etc. in academic or practice setting.

## How does a well-written abstract look like?

- the abstract conveys the most important information presented in the full presentation/poster/paper
- the title is in line with the main research content and all parts are clearly described
- it consists of all important sections, namely (for ESCP original abstracts): "background, aim(s) and objective(s)", "setting and methods", "main outcomes measures" (parameters used to judge results) and "main results and conclusions" (in total 350 words). Please

© European Society of Clinical Pharmacy

Dr Ankie Hazen and Assoc. Prof. Daniela Fialová on behalf of the ESCP Research Committee

Last updated Aug 2020

refer to 'how to write a paper' on the ESCP website for more information about each section.

- methodology is clearly defined (design, number of patients, setting, study period etc.)
- conclusions follow from the aim, objectives and results
- the abstract is written in good standard with respect to the English language, is understandable to wider professional audience (in our professional field), is intelligible and written with precision, clarity and rigour (the language usually uses passive structures)
- the text mostly does not include any referencing, figures and tables.

#### **Tips for writing descriptive abstracts**

- The aim states clearly why this abstract is presented (for example "We describe the implementation of ...\*" is not appropriate)
- The design section describes the new or adapted methodology/practice/software/tool including the setting where it will or has been applied (it should be clear what is new or has been adapted)
- The results illustrate how the tool/intervention has been implemented, problems encountered, facilitators, barriers, feedback from users, etc.
- The conclusions can include recommendations for implementation, improvement or further research, but should not mention any unmeasured outcomes.

#### **Tips for writing case reports**

- Before submitting the abstract, permission and (written) consent should be obtained from the patient or parents, if the patient is a child
- All material used to describe the case is mentioned like electronic patient records, laboratory values, interview with the patient, etc. Regarding adverse drug events, the method or scoring system used to assess causality is stated.
- The results of a case report summarize all important information (e.g. symptoms, treatments, follow-up, final outcome) in a chronological order
- The conclusions explain what the case report adds to the medical literature and highlight any lessons learned

#### **What do reviewers mainly check?**

For the ESCP Symposia and spring workshops, two independent reviewers (experts in clinical pharmacy) assigned by the Chair of the ESCP Research Committee review your abstract. At first, 5 key questions must be answered positively, otherwise your abstract is rejected:

- 1. Is the topic of the work within the field of clinical pharmacy?*
- 2. Is the abstract understandable?*
- 3. Is there a clear aim?*
- 4. Are results clearly described?*
- 5. Are all fields for the required headers filled and properly completed?*

If all answers are positive, reviewers evaluate your abstract by points using

a set of questions. These are:

*Is the described project/study:*

1. *original?*
2. *relevant for an international audience?*
3. *likely to improve patient care, directly or indirectly?*
4. *likely to generate debate or further study?*

### **Common mistakes/flaws/gaps in abstracts**

The following items provide common reasons why abstracts are referred as being of a low quality or rejected by the reviewers:

- the work is not relevant to clinical pharmacy
- inappropriate title, not in line with the aims, objectives, results and conclusions of the study
- abstract is lacking rigorous study design and/or methodology
- the aim, hypothesis, objectives or conclusions are not clearly described
- conclusions do not follow study aims/objectives/results
- statistical analysis is questionable
- inadequate data or inadequate information that doesn't permit the abstract to be understood/evaluated
- the abstract is lacking novelty and originality, have predictable results
- requirements for the layout and presentation of abstracts are not followed
- English language is not appropriate or leads to misunderstandings

### **Literature**

1. Research committee. Abstract review process- Standard Operating Procedure. ESCP - European Society of Clinical Pharmacy. Available online at: [www.escpweb.org](http://www.escpweb.org) (Last accessed: June 30th, 2020)
2. Writing an Abstract. Writing Centre Learning Guide. The University of Adelaide, USA. Available online at: [www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/) (Last accessed: July 2nd, 2020)
3. How to write a good abstract for a conference paper. The academic association for contemporary European Studies. Available online at: <https://www.uaces.org/resources/how-to-write-a-good-abstract-for-a-conference-paper> (Last accessed: July 4th, 2020)
4. Writing a case report in 10 steps. BMJ 2015;350:h2693  
<https://www.bmj.com/content/350/bmj.h2693>