

Nursing Research Series

Essentials of Science: Methods, Appraisal and Utilization

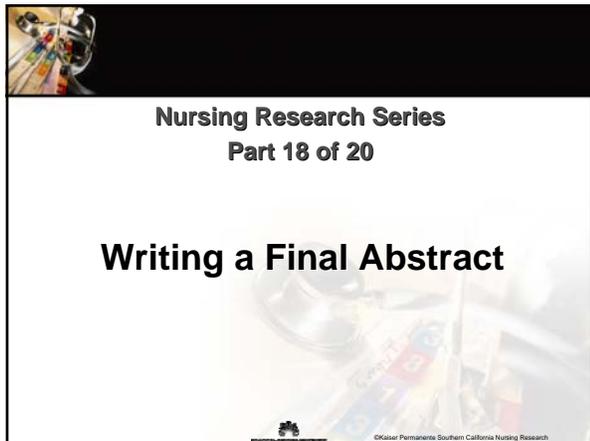


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*Essentials of Science:
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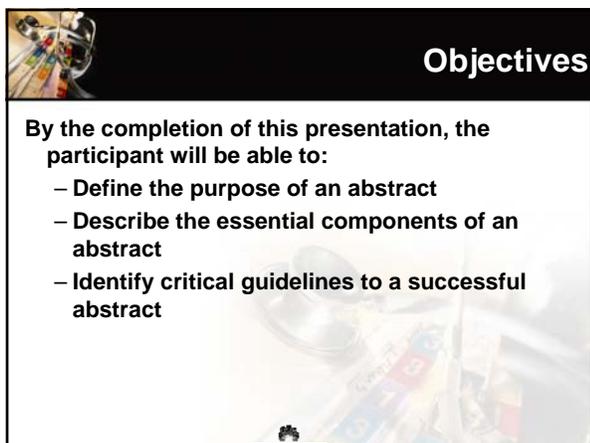


**Nursing Research Series
Part 18 of 20**

Writing a Final Abstract



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Objectives

By the completion of this presentation, the participant will be able to:

- Define the purpose of an abstract
- Describe the essential components of an abstract
- Identify critical guidelines to a successful abstract



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What is An Abstract?

- An abstract is a brief description of the study's:
 - Problem/Objectives
 - Methods
 - Findings/Conclusions
- Commonly, Abstracts may be found:
 - At the beginning of journal articles
 - In conference proceedings



Abstract Aim

- The aim of the abstract is to provide enough information so that the reader can assess whether or not they wish to read the entire article or attend the research study presentation.



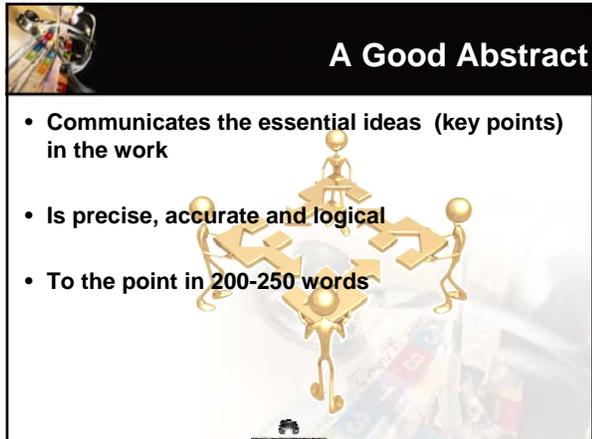


Abstract Function

- Summarize the content of an article or presentation, conveying the main points to the readers and colleagues
- Act as an advertisement for the article or presentation. It is frequently on the strength of the abstract that an article or paper is accepted

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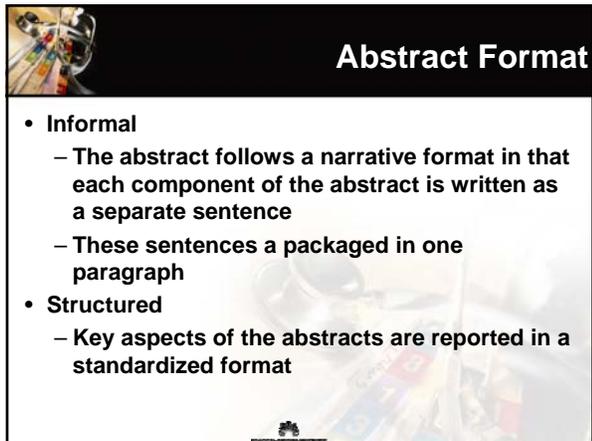
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A Good Abstract

- Communicates the essential ideas (key points) in the work
- Is precise, accurate and logical
- To the point in 200-250 words

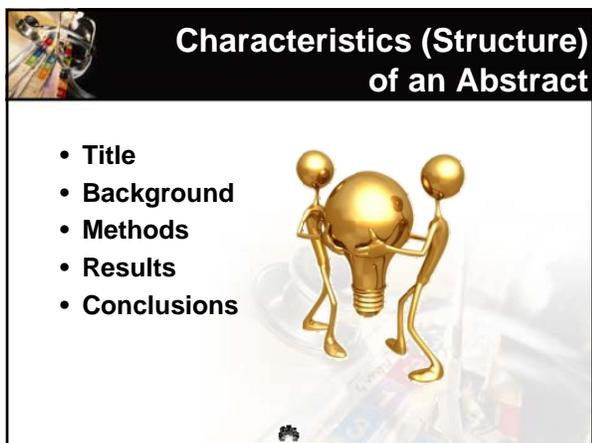
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Abstract Format

- Informal
 - The abstract follows a narrative format in that each component of the abstract is written as a separate sentence
 - These sentences are packaged in one paragraph
- Structured
 - Key aspects of the abstracts are reported in a standardized format

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Characteristics (Structure) of an Abstract

- Title
- Background
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusions

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Title

- More people will read the title than will read the abstract
- The title needs to:
 - Use fewer and simpler words that are more likely to convey the meaning of the paper
 - Main points should be included
- Any statement made in the title must be supported by the data in the text



Sample Titles

- Actual and Desired Care Behaviors of Providers Who Care for Persons with HIV/AIDS
- Gender Differences in the Quality of Life of HMO Members Who Have HIV/AIDS



Background

- Introduction
 - Statement about the importance or the relevance of the work
- Specific Aims/Objectives
 - States either:
 - The aims of the study
 - Hypotheses being tested
- Could include a synthesis of evidence or literature review

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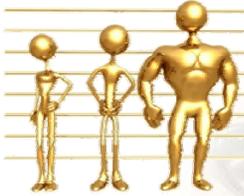


Background Example

- Introduction
 - As persons with HIV/AIDS begin to live longer after diagnosis, the emphasis of both patients and providers shifts from quantity to quality of life.
- Specific Aims/Objectives
 - The purpose of this study was to describe the gender differences in the quality of life of persons with HIV/AIDS who receive their care from a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO).



Methods



- Design
- Setting
- Subjects
- Methods
 - Data Collection
 - Data Analysis



Methods Example

- In this descriptive, Correlational study, 608 persons with HIV/AIDS from one HMO returned a mailed survey questionnaire that measured actual and desired caring behaviors of their HIV provider as well as their satisfaction with their HIV and Medical Care. Data were analyzed using regression analysis.

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Results

- Likely to be the longest section
- Summarize the key findings, including details of any statistical test results
- If necessary, prune the methods and expand the results





Results Example

- There were no statistically significant differences between females and males in their Physical Well Being/Physical Functioning, in Psychological Well Being, in Spiritual Well Being, in Symptom Distress, or Global Assessment of Quality of Life. There were statistically significant differences in Social Well being.





Results Example

- There were no statistically significant gender differences in the need for Social Support. There were, however, differences between males and females in seeking support ($p=.002$), total support received ($p=.003$), support received from parents ($p=.005$), support received from friends ($p=.011$), and satisfaction with support ($p=0.03$). In all cases, females scored higher on these subscales than did males.



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Conclusions

- May be expendable if the space is very short
- Should be brief
- Highlight the importance of the work or whether the hypotheses were supported (including a statement of how well the theoretical framework was supported)
- Should have a generalization from the specifics results to the wider world
- Must follow from the results presented



Conclusions Example

- On the majority of quality of life dimensions there are no gender differences in persons with HIV/AIDS who receive their care in an HMO setting. It seems that there are no differences between the genders on their need for social support, but there are differences in their seeking, receiving support, and satisfaction with support. The implications of this for those who provide care may be in the outreach to male patients to insure that social well being is being achieved.



Pitfalls, Problems, and Rules

- The most important rule is to FOLLOW THE RULES
 - Word limitations
 - Structure Requested
 - Formatting (Font size, Margins)
 - Due Dates
- Most common problem is imprecision



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Pitfalls, Problems, and Rules

- Review of the abstract for sentences that make clear the overall importance of the study
- Ask a colleague to critique your abstract using the guidelines that you used to write the abstract
- The final step in the research process is to share what you have done with others!



References to Consider

- Burns, N. & Grove, S.K (2007). *Understanding Nursing Research, building an Evidence-Based Practice 4th Edition*. St. Louis, Missouri: Saunders.
- Harris, M. & Taylor, G. (2008). *Medical Statistics Made Easy, 2nd Edition*. Oxfordshire: Scion Publishing
- Polit, D. & Beck, C. (2004). *Nursing Research: Principles and Methods, 7th edition*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins



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