Getting it Right: Tips for Writing a Scientific Meeting Abstract
Why is the American Society for Nutrition conducting this webinar?
Learning Objectives

At the end of this program, participants will be able to:

1. Define the components of an abstract
2. Describe what makes an abstract effective
3. Recognize common “do’s” and “don’ts” of abstract preparation
Questions & Answers

Please email your questions at any time during the program using the “Chat” feature on the WebEx screen. We will have a moderated Q&A at the end of the program.

We’ll do our best to get to as many questions as possible!
Faculty

Presenters

• Shirley Gerrior, PhD, RD, Contributing Faculty, College of Health Sciences, Walden University
• Lars Bode, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Division of Neonatology and the Division of Gastroenterology and Nutrition, Department of Pediatrics, University of California, San Diego

Mentor and Moderator

• Doug Burrin, PhD, Professor of Pediatrics, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX
Today’s Program

Part 1
• Background

Part 2
• Abstract Components

Part 3
• What are Abstract Reviewers Looking For?
Part 1: An Abstract Defined

• **An abstract is:** a concise summary of a completed research project or paper.

• A well-written abstract will make the reader want to:
  – Learn more about your research;
  – Read your paper; or
  – Attend your presentation and provide feedback for new research
An Effective Abstract:

• Presents complex information in a clear, concise manner;
• Serves as a mini report on research completed;
• Provides condensed summary for database searches; and
• Communicates your research to others.
Abstract Review Pilot  
Conducted Fall 2011

Goal:
• Support the new Strategic Plan

Objectives:
• Collect data on the quality of abstracts submitted to ASN’s Scientific Sessions
• Establish rating criteria and review process
• Improve consistency of ratings among reviewers
• Provide relevant feedback to submitters
Process

• Established rating criteria
• Reviewed with RIS Chairs
  – Shared with mini-symposium chairs
• Criteria used and tested to review mini-symposia abstracts
• Data submitted by reviewers to ASN for evaluation
## Results: Overall Abstract Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number of Abstracts</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤ 20</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 – 40</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>41+</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>146</td>
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## Areas for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of Abstracts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Results incomplete/no results</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions not valid</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not novel</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives unclear</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited appeal</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not relevant to nutrition</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to comprehend</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical/spelling errors</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly designed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relationship of Total Score of Abstract to Abstract Conclusion

Average of Conclusion Scores

Total Score

- 41+
- 31 - 40
- 21 - 30
- ≤ 20

Unacceptable Marginal Acceptable Good Exceptional

American Society for Nutrition, Inc.
Outcomes of Pilot Review Process

• Rating criteria and scoring documented quality
• Well-received by reviewers
• Time consuming indicating need for electronic in-house system
• Gave direction for educational webinars on this topic
Part 2: Abstract Components

1. Objective/Statement of Problem, Aim or Hypothesis
2. Methods/Design or Approach
3. Results
4. Implications
5. Conclusions
#1: Objective/Statement of Problem

The objective must outline the content or expectations of the work being presented:

- Why do we care about the problem?
- What practical, theoretical, scientific or gap is your research filling?

**Example:**
Multilevel determinants of child and adolescent fruit and vegetable intake

**Objective:**
Studies of dietary intake in children usually focus on one or two realms of determinants, such as individual characteristics or parental factors, and multiple domains are generally not examined simultaneously. Our objective was to examine determinants of and the amount of variance in child and adolescent fruit and vegetable intake at the individual, household, and Census tract levels.
#2: Methods, Design or Approach

- A clear, concise description of the methods used - *What did you actually do to get your results?*
- Include research design and appropriate statistical terms/statistical analysis
- Must relate to the objectives and rationale of the presentation or project.

**Example:**
Multilevel determinants of child and adolescent fruit and vegetable intake

**Methods:**
We used a confidential National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data set (2003-2006) that included matched family members and Census tract identification. A 3-level hierarchical linear model was used to identify important predictors of fruit and vegetable intake and to determine the amount of variance at the individual, family, and Census tract level.
#3: Results

- Clearly state what you learned – *What did the study find?*
- Must be aligned with the methodology and objectives.
- Must include data:
  
  Indicating "*Results will be presented at EB,*" is *not* acceptable.

**Example:**

Multilevel determinants of child and adolescent fruit and vegetable intake

**Results:**

Child (=.074) and adult dietary supplement use (=0.74), child age (=\(-0.001\)), and adult smoking (=\(-0.134\)) were significantly associated with increased fruit and vegetable intake. Census tract socioeconomic status was not associated with intake. Only 2% of variation in intake occurred at the Census tract level, whereas 29% and 69% occurred at the household and individual level, respectively.
#4: Conclusions

- Reflective of real data
- Supported by appropriate statistical analysis
- Aligned with study objectives
- Practical research implication

Example:
Multilevel determinants of child and adolescent fruit and vegetable intake

Conclusions:
These results show a moderate amount of variance in fruit and vegetable intake is attributable to household level factors and highlight the importance of the family behavior, relative to neighborhood context, on child and adolescent intake.
ASN Abstract Submission Instructions

- Uses one or more well-developed paragraphs, which are unified, coherent, concise, and able to stand alone
  - Your abstract body must have a minimum of 100 characters and maximum of 1220 characters
  - The abstract title, authors, affiliations and body of the abstract should not exceed 1620 characters excluding spaces.

- Uses an introduction-body-conclusion structure in which the parts of the report are discussed in order:
  - Purpose
  - Research questions
  - Methods
  - Results
  - Conclusions
Abstract Review Process

Abstracts submitted to respective Research Interest Section Chairs for review

RIS Chairs form mini-symposia based on abstracts reviews and topic priorities

Abstracts are assigned to either oral or poster presentation

Presentation assigned a timeslot in the program
What are Reviewers Looking for?

• Abstract Format
  – Objective/Aim/Hypothesis
  – Design/Approach/Methods
  – Results
  – Conclusions
What are Reviewers Looking for?

• Significance
  – Novel or innovative topic or methods
  – Relevance to nutrition research/practice/policy
  – Interest/appeal to audience

• Writing Quality
  – Grammatical errors
  – Coherent and readable
Most Common Errors?

- Most common areas for improvement:
  - Objective unclear
  - Poorly designed
  - Results incomplete
  - Conclusions not valid
  - Not novel
  - Not relevant to nutrition field
  - Very limited appeal
  - Grammatical/spelling errors
  - Difficult to comprehend
Abstract Deadline for ASN’s Scientific Sessions at EB 2012

- Abstract Submission Deadline: **11:59 PM EST, Thursday, November 8, 2012**
- To submit, go to experimentalbiology.org
- The topic that you select from the topic category list determines which society receives and programs your abstract.
- It is important that you review the society topic categories and the abstracts instructions before submitting your abstract.

Visit www.experimentalbiology.org
Questions?

Thank you to Drs. Amy Branum and Laura Caulfield for allowing us to highlight their abstract, *Multilevel determinants of child and adolescent fruit and vegetable intake*. 
Thank You for Joining Us!

Related resources are available at:

www.nutrition.org/education-and-professional-development/abstract-development/

We will be posting the recorded version of today’s webinar on this page by the end of this week!
Studies of dietary intake in children usually focus on one or two realms of determinants, such as individual characteristics or parental factors, and multiple domains are generally not examined simultaneously. Our objective was to examine determinants of and the amount of variance in child and adolescent fruit and vegetable intake at the individual, household, and Census tract levels. We used a confidential National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data set (2003-2006) that included matched family members and Census tract identification. A 3-level hierarchical linear model was used to identify important predictors of fruit and vegetable intake and to determine the amount of variance at the individual, family, and Census tract level. Child (=0.074) and adult dietary supplement use (=0.74), child age (=-0.001), and adult smoking (=-0.134) were significantly associated with increased fruit and vegetable intake. Census tract socioeconomic status was not associated with intake. Only 2% of variation in intake occurred at the Census tract level, whereas 29% and 69% occurred at the household and individual level, respectively. These results show a moderate amount of variance in fruit and vegetable intake is attributable to household level factors and highlight the importance of the family behavior, relative to neighborhood context, on child and adolescent intake.