

Writing Good Abstracts

More than 2,000 abstracts are submitted to the International Stroke Conference each year. The following suggestions may improve the chances of your work being selected for presentation at the annual conference.

Suggestions for writing a better abstract:

Title: To the extent the data permits, make the title dynamic and conclusive, rather than descriptive. For example, "Hypoxia inhibits Kv1.5 channels in rat carotid artery smooth muscle cells" is preferable to "Effects of hypoxia on Kv1.5 channels." Explicit titles denoting the findings should be used (not "Investigations of...", "Studies of...", etc.)

Structure:

Abstracts *may* have the following identifiable sections, but they are *not* mandatory: Introduction, Hypothesis, Methods, Results and Conclusions.

You *may* include a hypothesis, but only **if** it is appropriate to do so.

You **must** include a Methods/Methodology section in your abstract.

Category: You can increase the odds of success by making sure you have selected the appropriate category. The category determines which team grades the abstract. If you select the appropriate category, you are more likely to be graded by peers with similar interests and who are familiar with your work. A complete list of the abstract categories and their definitions is available on the submission site.

Abbreviations: Abbreviations may be used after they are spelled out or defined. Use generic, not commercial, names for all therapeutic agents.

Proofread your work: Be sure to proofread your work carefully including the author block. If accepted, your abstract will be printed as submitted. **No changes will be allowed to the abstract or the author block after the deadline of November 4, 2020, 11:59 pm CT.**

Common mistakes

1. Failure to state the hypothesis. It is advisable to formally state: "We assessed the hypothesis that..."
2. Failure to state a conclusion. Use a final sentence that reads: "In conclusion..."
3. Failure to state sample size. The reviewer wants to assess the quality of the data - they need a mean SEM and a sample size.
4. Excessive use of abbreviations. All but the most standard abbreviations should be defined and most abstracts should have < 3 abbreviations.

Traps to avoid

1. Typographical errors
2. References cited in the abstract
3. Not providing content/statement of relevance that states the rationale for your study
4. Using complex graphics. Simple line or bar graphs work best. Make sure the font is adequate on each axis to be seen. Check a printed version of the abstract before submission.
5. Leaving abstract writing until the 11th hour - this increases stress and leads to errors.
6. Duplicated work

How to avoid rejection

Make sure your abstract is clear, concise and follows all rules. Show your abstract to a colleague prior to submission and modify accordingly.