

Title of project (not more than 15 words)

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Department of ...,
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Abstract (300 - 350 words only)

Background:

Objective:

Methods/Methodology:

Results/Findings:

Conclusions:

Sample Abstract

Analysis of Test-Ordering Patterns by Rural Primary Care Physicians specific to the Periodic Health Examination (PHE): An Action Research Project

xxx yyyy (student); xxx yyyy (student); xxx yyyy, (Supervisor); xxx yyyy, (Supervisor);
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Background: The Periodic Health Examination (PHE) is a common clinical event that seeks to monitor current illness, screen for potential illness, and advice on lifestyle to optimize health. There is a tendency for over-investigating as current guidelines/evidence may not support some of the tests requested during a PHE. This research seeks to explore the PHE practice pattern of family physicians in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

Research Questions:

1. What laboratory tests are routinely ordered following a PHE; are they consistent with the patient's age, sex, and medical history?
2. Do physicians order tests the same way each time or are there differences?

Methods/Methodology: This was a mixed methods, action research study, involving four family physicians practicing at two clinics. Retrospective data about PHEs conducted between January 1 and December 31, 2014 were gathered from the EMR. Analysis involved descriptive statistics, chi-square and t-tests. Results were returned to the physicians for discussion during a Focus Group.

Results/Findings: A total of 366 patients were included in the analysis, with average age as 53 (± 16) years. One thousand and thirty-nine tests were ordered with an average of five tests per patient. Only 63.3% of patients aged >35 years had a lipid profile done. Significant differences existed in the pattern of glucose studies for patients aged >45 years ($p < 0.01$). *"There may be an element of automatic testing, as a common practice is to have patients use the same labs as what was done a year prior"*.

Discussion: Results showed a significant variation in the test ordering pattern amongst the physicians involved, which could be due to differences in guidelines. One limitation of this study is that data was collected using four physicians practicing at two clinics in a city of approximately 50, 000 residents. Participants expressed a willingness to improve their practice related to PHEs.

Conclusions: As evidence continues to evolve, it is important for clinicians to improve their practice in order to reduce the number of unnecessary tests ordered. PHE patterns appeared to be related to habit and a desire to avoid missed diagnoses.

HOW TO WRITE AN ABSTRACT

The Purpose of an Abstract

An abstract is a condensed version of a full research study. The abstract describes the study and its results, and is a means of conveying to peers the highlights of the study. The most important strategy for preparing an abstract is to focus on four main points: (1) why the work was done; (2) how the work was carried out; (3) what was found; and, (4) what the potential implications are.

An abstract needs to contain concise but coherent answers to those questions, and nothing more. Writing a good, professional-looking abstract takes time; thus, it should not be put off until the day before the final deadline for submission. This is especially important for first-time authors, who will benefit from discussing the project and from going over preliminary drafts with someone who has more experience. Enough time should be allowed for each author listed to have input into the abstract, and for each of them to sign off on the final version.

What to Include in the Abstract

Title

The title should convey as much as possible about the context and aims of the study. It should be easy for readers to understand and should not include jargon or unfamiliar acronyms. It is generally preferable to make the title a description of what was investigated, rather than to state the results or conclusions. Suggested length is 10-12 words.

Authors and Affiliations

The list of authors should be restricted to those individuals who actually conducted the study, i.e., conception, design, data collection, statistical analyses, abstract writing. The first author listed is usually the person who conceived the study and did most of the creative work on the project. With few exceptions, this should be the person who will present the poster if the abstract is accepted. Full names and formal credentials of each author should be used, and only affiliations relevant to the study should be included – generally the department and/or institution at which the work was conducted. For example, Nkechi Asuquo, Department of Community Health, Marjorie Bash College of Health Sciences and Technology.

Background

This section answers the question “why did you conduct the research?” and should provide a context or explanation for doing the study. This section should also state the aim of the study, and ideally should include a concise statement of the study’s hypothesis. A few sentences should suffice.

Research Objectives/Research Questions:

What is the main purpose of the study? What are the questions that you want to answer with this study? This should be one or two sentences (or one to three questions).

Methods/Methodology

This section answers the question “how was the research carried out?” The design of the study, the context in which it was conducted, and the types of subjects or measurements that were included should be listed in this section.

Results

This section answers the question “what was found?” Phrases such as “the findings will be presented” are unsatisfactory. It is important to provide the main results not just in subjective terms, but also in the form of real data. The results pertaining to the study’s hypothesis or objective described in the methods must be included, even if no statistically significant differences were found. Data from which the conclusions will

be drawn should be reported in as much detail as spaces allows. If the study is not yet complete, but results will be obtained by the time of the poster presentation, list the anticipated results.

Conclusions

This section answers the question “what are the potential implications?” This should be a brief statement of why the study’s findings are important and what the author(s) believe they mean. Conclusions should be reasonable and supportable by the findings of the study.

Some Writing Tips

- Use simple declarative statements.
- All but the most commonplace abbreviations or acronyms should be spelled out the first time they appear. Also, do not use too many abbreviations or acronyms in the abstract.
- Avoid local expressions and jargon.
- Use generic names for drugs and devices, unless the specific brand used is a key aspect of the study.

Summary

Clear, direct communication, strict adherence to published specifications and format requirements, and careful proofreading will increase the likelihood of producing a high-quality abstract and of having it accepted for presentation.