

The Abstract

General Structure:

1. Introduction: Key background and study purpose
2. Methods: Cohort data and methodology relevant to collecting data for primary research questions
3. Results: Findings relevant to primary research questions
4. Conclusion: Key interpretation, should be based on data presented in abstract results section

Pitfalls:

1. Sometimes revisions in the manuscript are not concurrently changed in the abstract, leading to confusion.
2. Make sure that the abstract is coherent when read separately from the manuscript. Sometimes the abstract contains nuance that only makes sense after reading the full sections in the manuscript, which is not ideal.
3. Avoid repetition between sections, for example stating patient cohort numbers in both the methods and results, or stating that means and standard deviations were calculated in the methods when it will be obvious as one reads the results.

Tips:

1. Generally an abstract should be written after the rest of the manuscript is done, as the process of writing the manuscript may change the way the authors frame the study.
2. An abstract submission for a scientific meeting is generally longer and more detailed than a manuscript abstract, and although it can serve as a good starting point it should be appropriately trimmed.