Abstract writing

What is an abstract?
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A conference abstract includes all the important details and data from your study so that it can serve as a stand-alone summary of the work.
Structure for option 1

- **Title**
- **Background:** Indicate the purpose and objective of the research, the hypothesis that was tested or a description of the problem being analyzed or evaluated.
- **Methods:** describe the study period / setting / location, study design, study population, data collection and methods of analysis used.
- **Results:** Present as clearly and detailed as possible the findings/outcome of the study. Please summarize any specific results.
- **Conclusions:** Explain the significance of your findings / outcomes of the study for HIV prevention, treatment, care and / or support, and future implications of the results.
- **Optional: Figures and Tables**
Title

• Summarize your study in 30 words.

• Your title should be
  – Short - Specific - Representative - Informative

• Your title should answer

• You do not need to give away your lessons learned or recommendations in the title. And avoid abbreviations.

• The title is your mini-advertisement in the conference programme.
Learn to lead: training opinion leaders increases HIV knowledge
• Learn to lead: training opinion leaders increases HIV knowledge
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• Evaluation of an HIV knowledge training programme aimed at African American opinion leaders piloted in the District of Columbia, USA
Main abstract text

- 350 words
- Balance between four sections
- Stand-alone
- English language
- Abbreviations: only if commonly used and mentioned at least three times
Background

• The background is the introduction to your study.

• Your background should answer
  – What is the topic of the abstract?
  – Why was the study done?
  – What was the aim of the study?

• Based on these questions your introduction will contain three main statements
  – General topic
  – Motivation, gap of knowledge or problem
  – Specific aim and objective

• Tailor your background to the level of prior knowledge of your audience.
Background - example

Topic? Motivation? Aim?

- As many as 34 million people are infected with HIV and, for every person put on treatment, two more are infected with the virus. In the United States, African Americans are also affected by the HIV epidemic. Late presentation of HIV-infected individuals is a global problem. A training programme was implemented to educate leaders on HIV.
Background - example

Topic? Motivation? Aim?

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As many as 34 million people are infected with HIV, and for every person put on treatment, two more are infected with the virus. In the United States, African Americans are also affected by the HIV epidemic. Late presentation of HIV-infected individuals is a global problem. A training programme was implemented to educate leaders on HIV.

In the United States, African Americans are disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic. High rates of late presentation of HIV-infected individuals remains an urgent health concern for this population. The Black HIV Society has developed a training programme to increase HIV awareness and knowledge among opinion leaders of African-American communities. Opinion leaders can change attitudes and behaviours in their community as they can influence norms and values. The aim of the study was to evaluate the educational component of the programme.
Methods

• The details of your methodology depend on your type of study
  – Basic/Biomedical/Clinical sciences: experiments, interventions
  – Social and political sciences/Humanities: interviews, discussions
  – Programme sciences: implementation, evaluations

• Your methods section should answer

• Sufficient information for readers on
  – Population, context and timeframe
  – Content and execution
  – Data collection and analysis

• Remember that your methods section is important for reviewers to judge the quality, rigour and validity of your work.
Methods - example


- The training programme was designed to educate people on HIV. Popular opinion leaders, who would benefit from the programme, were recruited by the research team. Written, informed consent was sought from all participants, but they were not asked about their HIV status. The participants worked in faith-based institutions, politics or media. A test with 120 knowledge questions on HIV was given to the participants before and after the training.
Methods - example


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- The training programme consists of five educational modules of two hours each, covering various topics, including biology of HIV and prevention measures. The programme was piloted between October 2010 and May 2011 in the District of Columbia, USA. Popular opinion leaders were purposively selected from African-American faith-based institutions, political groups and media outlets. Participants’ HIV status was not ascertained. A pre- and post-test design with close-ended questions was used to evaluate the transfer of specific HIV knowledge covered by the training programme. Results are described using summary statistics.
Results

• The results section covers your data, findings, lessons learned and the outcomes of your analyses.

• Your results section should answer
  – What was the knowledge gained?

• Use the past tense.

• Be specific when describing your findings and avoid vague terms such as ‘many’, ‘a few’ or ‘some’.

• The results needs to relate back to the aim of study mentioned in the background section.

• If applicable present data disaggregated by sex and a gender analysis.
Results - example

- 79.31% of participants consented to taking part and 42 participants were finally included in the study with complete data sets; 62% of these participants were male and 38% were female. Most participants were older than 50 years. In total, 17 participants were from faith-based institutions, 19 from political groups and only six from media. Comparing the number of correct answers before and after the training, a significant increase in knowledge was noted. This was also previously reported by a study in Uganda.
Results - example

Data?  Tense?  Specific?  Aim?  Disaggregated?

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Data?  Tense?  Specific?  Aim?  Disaggregated?

- In all, 46 out of 58 popular opinion leaders consented to participate. Of the 46 participants, 42 completed the training, as well as both questionnaires, within the study period. The demographic data of the 42 participants is shown in Table 1. Overall, correct average responses increased from 38% (41/120, SD±3) before the programme to 72% (86/120, SD±5) after the completion of the programme. Among the female participants, the increase was from 32% to 78% and, for males, from 36% to 66%. The largest increase (from 25% to 69%) in knowledge was seen among faith-based leaders.
Tables and graphs

- Can the data be more clearly and concisely presented in a graph or table?
  - Do not repeat data
  - Tables for datasets
  - Graphs for trends

- Is the table or graph easily readable and interpretable?
  - Label axes, columns and rows
  - Provide header and legends
# Tables and graphs - example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>61.905%</th>
<th>38.095%</th>
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<td>&lt;35 Units</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-50 Units</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 50</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Demographic data of participants, who completed the programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>&lt;35 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

• Summarize main conclusions
  – Interpretation of results and key take-home message(s)
  – Wider context and implications of findings
  – Recommendations and future research (Limitations)

• Think of the questions
  – What is the important information from my abstract?
  – What do my results mean for the field?
  – What are the next steps to be taken?

• The conclusions need to be based on your data!

• You should avoid
  – Obvious statements
  – Repetition of results
  – Over-generalizations
Conclusions - example

Message?  Implication?  Recommendation?

- Knowledge increased from 38% to 72% among the opinion leaders trained. This is an important achievement and needs to be implemented worldwide. Further training programmes should be developed to target other at-risk groups.
Conclusions - example

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Conclusions - example

Message?  Implication?  Recommendation?

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Message?  Implication?  Recommendation?

- The evaluation suggests that the training programme increased participants’ knowledge of HIV. Education of key opinion leaders is feasible and could contribute through informed leadership to increased HIV awareness in communities. Further evaluation of the impact of the programme on indicators, such as HIV testing rates or earlier presentation at clinics, is needed to support wider implementation.