

Helpful Hints

Helpful hints for those people seeking to submit abstracts for the Paediatrics & Child Health Annual Meeting to be held in Melbourne in March 2010.

The following problems were found in abstracts submitted for the 2007 and 2008 Congresses:

Not following the abstract format

- Not keeping to the word limit.
- Not structuring the abstract in headings – introduction, aims, methods, results, conclusion.
- Not keeping to headings, e.g. including results in the conclusions section.
- Including more than 2 references.
- Not checking the spelling and correct English

Inadequate information

- Assuming that the reader has knowledge of treatment programmes which are therefore not described in the abstract.
- Where a protocol forms part of the method, this protocol should be described.
- Not being specific and detailed enough in the results to be able to support the conclusions convincingly.
- Submitting incomplete studies that do not have all the results available.

Not specifying the population or setting from which study sample is drawn

- Not specifying the population or sample undergoing a screening test identifying individuals with a condition.
- With questionnaires, not specifying the number of responders and non responders.

Inadequate description of study design

- Not giving the type of study- ie case control, prospective observational, retrospective cohort, cross-sectional survey, controlled trial etc.
- Insufficient information on the controls.
- Not describing an adequate evaluation of an intervention.

Interpretation/Conclusion

- Ensure that conclusions are supported directly by the data presented in the results.

Other problems

- Submitting more than one abstract referring to different aspects of the same study population. This tends to lead to a greater number of poorer quality submissions.
- Submitting preliminary data before full data analysis is complete, or data from a pilot study identifying a need for a larger study. If included, such studies are generally not very interesting and detract from the data once the study and analysis is complete as it appears less original. For example if similar abstracts are submitted from the same study in successive years, this appears to lack originality.
- Evaluating aspects of clinical protocols (e.g. adherence to protocols, variations in protocols across different centres) without completing the full QA cycle.

Please note that the eligibility criteria for an award, oral or poster presentation is based on the submitted abstract. Therefore, the Paediatric Scientific Program Committee strongly recommends that researchers invite a senior colleague to read through their abstract prior to submission.