Abstract Development:

*How to write an abstract*

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*Slides developed with Carolyn Paul formally of the MGH Treadwell Library*
Oh No! I need to write an abstract!

How do I start?
Why is it hard to write an abstract?

• Fear / anxiety
  – about the writing process
  – others reading what you wrote

• Takes time / feel overwhelmed

• Commits you to analyzing your project and doing a poster

• Not sure what to include
remember ...

you had an idea ...

you did a project you thought important ...

you need to share it

to benefit others & yourself!

There is support:

this class, mentors, CNS, Munn Center
Today’s goals:

• Describe what a structured abstract is and relevant headings
• Review content for each part of the abstract
• Understand guidelines for writing an abstract
• Practice by critiquing some abstracts

You will be more prepared to write an abstract!
Abstract: a short, informative summary of your completed research / project

Each journal/group has its own requirements.

Structured abstract: started in the 1980’s

uses specific headings for each section

Abstract formats continue to evolve: video abstracts
Structured Abstract examples:

paragraph at the beginning of the journal article
Summary on online search engines

Ethical dilemmas among nurses as they transition to hospital case management.

Authors: O'Donnell LT
Abstract:

**PURPOSE OF STUDY:** The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of ethical concerns by clinical nurses as they transitioned into their new role in hospital case management. Through this study, an attempt was made to explore experiences of ethical concerns and identify the implications for organizational ethics. **PRIMARY PRACTICE SETTING(S):** In this study, nurse case managers practicing in the acute care setting, military, not-for-profit community, and teaching hospitals were interviewed. The majority of the nurse case manager participants were involved in hospital discharge planning and utilization review activities. **METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE:** An interpretive phenomenological approach was used to identify the themes inherent in ethical concerns and articulate them within the context of hospital nurse case management. Fifteen participants were interviewed to obtain a qualitative description of the nurse case managers' lived experiences of ethical dilemmas and how they were resolved. Ethical dilemmas among nurses as they transition to hospital case management.
Title: A Study Examining Why Students Choose Nursing

Purpose of the study: To explore why students chose nursing.

Background/Significance: Numerous studies have been carried out examining why people choose nursing for their careers. Generally four significant themes emerge from previous studies: 1) a past experience with a loved one or self being ill and/or hospitalized, 2) past work experience in the health care industry, 3) family member or friend that is a nurse, and 4) financial gain/job security.

Method/Design: A convenience sample of 129 generic Baccalaureate Nursing Students and Direct Entry Students were surveyed using a quantitative questionnaire that examined demographic data, reasons for entering the nursing profession, and previously held perceptions of nursing. Respondents included second career students and men. Using a Likert scale, students rated their top 3 choices based on a total of 12 themes described in the literature for choosing nursing. Also, open-ended questions asked students to describe the reasons behind their career choice.

Findings: The primary reason of the student respondents (n =69) who chose nursing was the desire to help others at 53.5%. The second most common reason for choosing nursing is that it was an alternative choice to medicine at 20.4% of generic students and 23.8% of direct entry students that were queried.

Implications for Nursing Practice, Research, Policy, and/or Education: Knowing student’s perceptions of the profession will guide nurse educators in developing a student focused curriculum and previously held perceptions of nursing. This allows students to adjust to the ever-increasing demands of today’s healthcare system. Additionally, our study results would be beneficial in the recruitment and retention of nurses through improved selection of nursing student candidates based on their perceptions of nursing.
What’s the Reader looking for?

- Does it look interesting?
- Do I have time to read it?
- Can I understand what was done?
- Can I do this in my unit?

All incentives for writing a great abstract!
Abstract categories: Which to use?

Original Research
Evidence-Based Practice
Quality Improvement
Abstract Categories:

Based on purpose and method:

- **Original Research**: to generate new knowledge within the broader scientific community ... generalizable beyond the study sample.

- **Evidenced-Based Practice**: to evaluate evidence along a continuum to identify the strongest or best evidence to guide nursing practice within an organizational setting and with a specific patient population.

- **Quality Improvement**: to improve internal processes and practices within a specific patient group or organization.
Standard headings help to:

- Cover key points in research process
- Organize information in a consistent format
- Make it easier to read/scan/skip to decide if the reader wants to read on
Structured Abstract Headings

**Original Research and Evidence-Based Practice**
- Background / Significance
- Purpose of Study
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusions
- Implications for Nursing Practice and/or Future Research

**Quality Improvement**
- Background / Significance
- Objectives
- Implementation
- Performance Improvement Outcome
- Implications for Nursing Practice and/or Future Research
Abstract headings are not “one size fits all” and may vary by meeting/organization/journal.

Always make sure to review the abstract headings required by the conference or meeting you are submitting your abstract too.

Always make sure the content of your abstract reflects what is requested in the structured abstract heading.
Parts of the Abstract:
What goes where?
Today:

- Describe what is included
- Identify questions to ask
- Review examples
- At the end, discuss ways to say it better
Abstract Title is Key

• Describes your research
  – Topic
  – Type of study
  – Population or Study subjects
  – Results

• Sometimes writing it afterwards is best
  • Does it attract attention and encourage reader to read more?
    – When listed in the table of contents or when walking by at a poster session?

  • Does it reflect the content?
    – Is it too broad i.e. “Diabetes Treatment”
Fall Prevention in Hospitals: Impact of Fall TIPS Toolkit on Documentation Quality
Background / Significance

2-4 sentences

• Describes key issues/problems

• Briefly reviews what has been written
  – Library will help you do this search

• Why is it an important / interesting issue?

• What gap in knowledge are you filling?

• What are you doing that is different?
Sleep disturbance has been correlated with a decrease in the immune function, changes in mental status, and increased stress levels. Negative effects on the immune system, functional status and stress levels may aggravate the healing process for adults requiring acute care in a hospital setting. Further research is required to understand better how environmental modifications and nursing interventions may effectively support sleep for patients in acute care settings.
Purpose of Study / Objectives

1-2 sentences

- Research question or hypothesis
- Brief statement of goal(s)
  
  - What did you hope to find/solve?
  
  - Why did you start?
The purpose of this pilot study is to determine if clinical research subjects who receive additional education regarding potential side effects of medication will be more likely to report these side effects.
Methods / Implementation

2-4 sentences

• Describes design of the study
  – Design, RCT, focus group, case study, questionnaire
  – Population, subject, sample, setting
  – Interventions, procedures, or protocols
  – Statistics used

• What important variables did you control, ignore, or measure?

• How did you do it?  **RECIPE!**
This qualitative study used open-ended questions related to sleep and sleep disturbance. A convenience sample of patients who had spent three consecutive nights on a general medical unit, a surgical unit or a cardiac access unit were interviewed. Structured interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Members of the research team analyzed the transcripts using content analysis to identify critical themes. These findings were shared with unit-based nursing staff for content validity.
Results / Outcome

2-5 sentences

• Main focus of your abstract
• Relate back to the purpose of the study
• Findings:
  – Qualitative/quantitative data and analysis
  – Statistics
  – “10% of the Nurses were satisfied” How many is 10%? Include the study “n”
• What did you find?
• What is the significance of results?
Following initiation of keratin gel dressings during post-op week three, wound surface area (WSA) decreased 23-25% during each of the next four weeks of treatment. When the solid keratin dressing was added to the regimen, the weekly decrease in WSA accelerated from 35% to 56% with final closure in two weeks or a total of nine weeks after starting keratin therapy. A scheduled skin graft with donor site was averted, saving substantial cost for surgery and hospitalization. Patient satisfaction was exceptionally high.
Conclusions
1-2 sentences

• Summary statement of research
• Interpret findings
• Emphasizes significance of the study

• What did your project show?
• What do you want readers to remember?
Conclusions Example

The use of a fall prevention tool kit in hospital units compared with usual care significantly reduced the rate of falls.
Implications for nursing practice and/or future research

1-2 sentences

• Impacts nursing, research, policy
  – Patient outcome, efficiency, morale, etc.

• How will the results be used in practice?

• Are the results general or specific to a particular case?
Implications for nursing practice and/or future research Example

Implications for nursing practice include reductions in patient wait time, enhancement of patient flow through the MGH system, improved patient safety, and empowerment of the nurse.
What are helpful guidelines for abstract writing?
Starting early helps you find missing information and gives you time to find the answer.
Writing Guidelines

• Use section headings to organize ideas

• Pick your words
  – detailed yet concise (300 word limit)
  – enthusiastic, powerful, strong words

• Gear your abstract to your audience
  – scholarly yet easily understood

• Re-read and revise – grammar & spelling count!
# Grammar Do’s and Don’ts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Do not use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Use active voice</td>
<td>x Passive voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Use third person</td>
<td>x ‘We’ or ‘I’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Be specific</td>
<td>x Acronyms or abbreviations -- unless well-known or explained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Be clear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Smooth flow of sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Full sentences not always required</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Length Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Word Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title / subtitle</td>
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**Total:** 300 words
Abstract Summary Tips

- Reduce / Refine
  - Remove redundancy and unnecessary detail
  - Use meaningful, powerful, dynamic words
  - Stay within the 300 word limit

- Review
  - Emphasize major ideas and key messages
  - Use the section headings

- Re-read
  - Leave enough time to proofread
  - Get all authors to read and edit
  - Re-write - clear, concise, easy to understand
Team Effort!

All contributing authors should contribute, read/edit the abstract.
Abstract vs. Poster

Similarities
• Basic message is same
• Structured headings

Differences
• Abstract = compact
• Poster = visual & more detailed includes charts, graphs, pictures, references
Abstract = Poster

- Make sure your abstract content is in concert with your poster content:
  - Language
  - Results
  - Conclusions
Any questions before we go on to the practice exercise?
Practice exercise

Learn to write by evaluating existing abstracts in journals, online, abstract books from meetings

Critique and revision is ok - expected
– even the experts do it
– professional development

Disclaimer: Suggested edits are subjective and fictitious 😊
Title: Changing 1 word gives more info / power

Fall Prevention in Hospitals: Impact of Fall TIPS Toolkit on Documentation Quality

Fall Prevention in Hospitals: Fall TIPS Toolkit Improves Documentation Quality
Sleep disturbance has been correlated with a decrease in immune function, changes in mental status, and increased stress levels. Negative effects on the immune system, functional status and stress levels may aggravate the healing process for adults requiring acute care in a hospital setting. Further research is required to understand better how environmental modifications and nursing interventions may effectively support sleep for patients in acute care settings.
Purpose: The purpose of this pilot study is to test the hypothesis that clinical research subjects who receive additional education regarding potential side effects of medication will be more likely to report these side effects.

Purpose: This pilot study tested the hypothesis that clinical research subjects who receive additional education on potential side effects of medication will be more likely to report these side effects.
This qualitative study used open-ended questions related to sleep and sleep disturbance. A convenience sample of patients who had spent three consecutive nights on a general medical unit, a surgical unit or a cardiac access unit were interviewed. Structured interviews were audio-taped and transcribed.

Members of the research team analyzed the transcripts using content analysis to identify critical themes. These findings were shared with unit-based nursing staff for content validity.

This qualitative study used 9 open-ended questions related to sleep and sleep disturbance. A convenience sample of 55 adult patients (29 male, 26 female) who had spent three consecutive nights on a general medical, surgical, or cardiac access unit were interviewed over 3 month time period. Structured interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Using content analysis, the research team identified critical themes that were shared with nursing staff for content validity.
Results: Percentages & Statistics

Following initiation of keratin gel dressings during post-op week three, wound surface area (WSA) decreased 23-25% during each of the next four weeks of treatment. When the solid keratin dressing was added to the regimen, the weekly decrease in WSA accelerated from 35% to 56% with final closure in two weeks or a total of nine weeks after starting keratin therapy. A scheduled skin graft with donor site was averted, saving substantial cost for surgery and hospitalization. Patient satisfaction was exceptionally high.

Would be nice to add statistical significance of percentage changes.

Also nice to compare LOS without keratin therapy – but this may require different kind of study or collection of data that is hard to get.


Munn Center Website

http://www.mghpcs.org/MunnCenter/

• Overview of Nursing Research Day
• Information for Authors
  – Abstract requirements
  – Categories
  – IRB approval
• Abstract Development
• How to submit your abstract
The Yvonne L. Munn Center for Nursing Research at the Massachusetts General Hospital provides an infrastructure that promotes innovation and mobilization of resources to support research initiatives that advance clinical practice and optimize quality patient-centered outcomes. The Munn Center, housed within the Institute for Patient Care, was inspired by the vision and dedication of Yvonne L. Munn, RN, MSN, a nurse leader at MGH from 1964-1993, and her desire to advance nursing research at MGH. The official dedication of the Munn Center in May 2008 acknowledged the hospital’s commitment to nursing and interdisciplinary research collaborations that foster high-quality, cost-effective, patient-family centered care.

**Goals of the Center**

- Accelerate research in core areas of focus: care of the elderly, ethics, symptom management, workforce evaluation, and nursing leadership to enhance healing and recovery.
- Foster the development, use, and translation of evidence into practice.
- Promote the establishment, implementation, and evaluation of interventions that promote changes in care practice.
- Establish an agenda for priorities that will guide the research agenda of nurses in Patient Care Services (PCS).
- Enhance visibility of research conducted by nurses at MGH through dissemination in high-impact journals and presentation at internal and external scientific meetings.

**Research Areas of Interest**

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<td>Innovation Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality and Safety of Care Delivery</td>
<td>Symptom Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Care</td>
<td>Workforce Evaluation</td>
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**Methods**

- Electronic Medical Record Evaluation
- Instrument Development and Evaluation
- Qualitative Methodology
- Quantitative Methodology
- Systematic Reviews
THANK YOU!