

## How to Write a Compelling Abstract

Putting together a clear and succinct conference abstract will not only help draw attention to your research and increase your likelihood of obtaining a travel, poster, or merit award, but could also help you land a coveted abstract-selected oral presentation at the meeting! When composing your abstract, it is critical to think about your audience. While all ISSCR attendees are interested in stem cell research, it is a broad field and you cannot assume your reader is familiar with the intricacies of your specialty. Here are some tips to keep in mind when creating your abstract to captivate your audience (and reviewers) at ISSCR meetings.

*Your conference abstract should be able to answer these questions for a reader:*

- Why should the audience care?
- What was the knowledge gap?
- What was done?
- How was the knowledge gap addressed and how does the work move the field forward?

*Title: How can you make your title stand out?*

- Stick to the guidelines - keep it to 175 characters or less and enter it in all caps.
- Take a step back and ask “what is my research about and what makes it interesting? What would make me want to learn more?”
- What is your most impactful finding?
- Make it short and sweet.

*Abstract: The main event:*

- You have 2,000 characters maximum, not including spaces, to grab the reader’s attention. Use them wisely.
- **What NOT to include:**
  - author block
  - section headers (e.g. Methods, Results, etc.)
  - references or citations
  - funding sources
  - figures, tables, or graphs
  - over-statements from your data
- **What TO include:**
  - First 2-3 sentences: Briefly introduce the field, including background and rationale necessary to understand your project. Why is this field (and your work) important?
  - In the next sentence or two: Clearly state the problem you are trying to solve and how you are approaching it. What are the gaps of knowledge in the field that you are specifically addressing? Is your approach novel?
  - The meat of your results: What are your findings and main conclusions? Do not overcrowd this area with unnecessary data that can be distracting and irrelevant to the problem you are addressing. Simply and succinctly state your experimental results and what they mean.
  - In the final few sentences: This is your “mic drop” moment. How have your results moved the field forward? What are the broader implications of your work?

*Questions to ask yourself after writing your abstract:*

- Is the level of description appropriate for people in the broader stem cell field?
- Did I use clear and succinct language to tell the reader why they should care, what I did, and how I made an impact? Can someone clearly identify the research question and results?
- Is there anything that does not address those questions and can be removed?
- Did I only include results I have already obtained?
- Is it exciting? Would someone want to learn more?
- Can someone else who is not involved with the project understand both the language and the science? Only one way to find out, **ask a friend to edit it!**

Congratulations— you have now composed a compelling abstract that will help you effectively share your exciting results with the field! See you at the meeting!