

How to Develop an Abstract for a Clinical Study

Section	Info to Include
Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly identifies the topic
Background (Introduction)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains what your research is about • Why did you start the project? • Provides context for your study (results/conclusions of previous research) • Identifies a problem or question • What did you hope to learn/discover?
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who/what was involved? • How did you conduct the project? • When and where did you do it? • What statistical tests/equipment did you use?
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents findings without interpretation • What did you learn/discover?
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interprets results, relating them to the info and hypothesis in the Background section • Identifies the clinical/scientific relevance

Tricks of the Trade

1. Include the same information as that required for a full manuscript, but present it as a summary—in a condensed form. Focus on the most important points and do not include extra nice-to-know/interesting information and discussion. Limit your abstract to 250-300 words.

2. A good strategy is to write the outline headings—Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion/Conclusion—on a piece of paper and then fill in the sections with bullet statements that answer the questions in the table above.
 - a. Rank the bullet statements under each heading in order of importance.
 - b. Eliminate all but the top three bullet statements.
 - c. Develop the bullet statements into complete sentences.
 - d. Check your word count and edit/delete sentences as necessary.

3. Use short sentences with action verbs.

4. Do not include tables, figures, or references in abstracts.