

National Occupational Therapy Conference (NOTC) Singapore: Tips for writing an abstract

Congratulations on your decision to submit an abstract to the Scientific Program Committee! Participation in the NOTC Scientific Program at the conference is an opportunity to disseminate research results, share knowledge that will advance practice, or simply share knowledge about an issue or topic that you are passionate about.

Preparing an abstract is an important step that can be daunting for the first-time presenter. Here is a simple guide to help you through the process.

1. Preparing for the abstract

Here are some questions to think of as you prepare for the abstract:

- Why would your idea be of interest to an occupational therapy audience? Is it novel, or related to a current topic? Is it controversial? Will it change practice?
- How does your idea relate to the conference theme?
- What factors do the scientific committee consider when rating the abstracts submitted for the conference?

2. Writing the abstract

Review the Abstract Submission Guidelines. Stay within the word limit, use the headings as outlined, start early and submit by the indicated deadline.

Below is some information that are recommended to be included in the abstract:

Headings	Requirements	Recommended content
Objective	State the objective(s), context and importance of the study/ project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A short background to the study, often reinforced in the conclusion• Importance of the study, may identify a gap in knowledge or research• General content/expectations of the study
Method	Describe the method(s), study design, setting, population and analysis process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear description of methodology used, including what was done, by whom, who participated and where (including the sample size)• Methodology must be appropriate to the objectives and rationale of the study• How data has been managed and analyzed

Results	Describe the results in sufficient detail to support the conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly indicate findings of the study Describe magnitude of findings Findings must be consistent with the objectives and methodology For research presentations, results can include projected or preliminary data, if data are not yet complete. It is not acceptable to say that 'Results will be presented' or 'Data have not yet been collected/analyzed and will be presented'. You need to give an indication of the type and range of data to be presented. For example, 'Findings will inform occupational therapists about the most frequently used approach...'
Conclusion	State the implications of the findings for clinical practice, education, research, service or policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implications of the findings must be discussed in relevance with the profession or health system New information from the study must be highlighted Conclusion should be consistent with the objectives so that the information is complete

Below are examples of two abstracts - one was well written and one needs to be further improved. These examples might be helpful for you when writing the abstract.

Example of a well-written abstract:

<p>Title: Use of a Global Positioning System (GPS) device versus a diary to measure community outings after stroke</p> <p>Objective: Self-report methods such as diary are often used to measure outings but may produce unreliable data. Direct observation may be more reliable, but is time-consuming and costly. The objective of this study was to investigate the feasibility and advantages of using a global positioning system (GPS) device to measure outings compared to a diary and direct observation.</p> <p>Methods: A descriptive cohort study design was used. Twenty people with stroke who could walk outdoors alone with and without an aid/supervision were recruited. Participants kept a diary and carried a GPS device for 7 days during their waking hours, and were observed for half a day. Data from each device were downloaded from Google maps and imported into Excel for comparison with diary and observational data.</p> <p>Results:</p>

The mean age of people with stroke was 67 years (SD=12). Mean time post-stroke was 42 months (SD=20). The GPS device showed that the participants travelled a mean of 140km in a week (SD=120) on foot, by car, bus, taxi or train (range 13-351km). Preliminary data from the GPS devices show that a substantial number of outings were not recorded in diaries.

Conclusion:

This GPS device has the potential to replace self-report diaries and has implications on future research involving measurement of community outings. The main advantages of the GPS device are real time-data and a less burdensome experience of participants. Demonstration of the device will be included in this presentation.

Example of an abstract that needs to be further improved:

Title:

Development of an in-home falls program to reduce falls amongst well elderly

Objective:

With the increasing number of older adults “aging in place”, older adults are at risk for falls in their home. Person and environment factors can contribute to a situation that may result in injury. The result of falling can be detrimental to one’s health and quality of life as it may result in prolonged hospitalization. The objective of this study is to develop an in-home falls program to reduce the incidence of falls in the well elderly.

Methods:

Participants met with an occupational therapist to learn about home safety techniques over a three-month period. They used the Falls-Reduction Inventory to educate seniors on possible home hazards.

Results:

Participants completed an initial evaluation of hazards in their home and then worked with the OT to develop solutions to reduce the risk of falls. The participants identified a total of 88 home hazards. Interviews with the older adults participants suggested that they felt more capable of identifying risks in their home environment.

Conclusion:

The results of this project support the involvement of occupational therapists in working with seniors on falls prevention in their home.

3. After writing the abstract

- Once you have written your first draft, re-read the draft several times, correct the grammar, ensure that the ideas are clear and make further corrections
- Make sure that the title of your abstract accurately reflects its content
- Once you are confident of your draft, it is strongly recommended that you share it with a colleague and get some feedback
- Do a final spelling and grammar check using your computer tools before submission

If you would like to engage the help of a research mentor, SAOT offers research mentorship for our members. Please email us at saot@live.com for more information.

All the best and enjoy the process of abstract writing!

References

1. Occupational Therapy Australia (2013). *Preparing a conference abstract*. 25th National Conference and Exhibition.
2. Ripat, J. (2016). Consider submitting an abstract to the 2006 CAOT Conference. *Occupational Therapy Now*, 7(4), 31.
3. WFOT (2014). *Abstract Review Guide*. World Federation Occupational Therapy Congress 2014