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Development Resource to Support Scientific Abstract Submission Success

Background

CAMRT CPD has been working to provide resources to ensure that authors who have submitted eligible abstracts for the CAMRT National conference are also well-supported to submit those abstracts to a journal for publication.

Resources:

- This document, with hints, outlines and links
- A webinar from published MRTs and MRTs involved in JMIRS editorial work, to complement this document and offer more advice, Megan Brydon & Brian Liszewski.

Why try to publish?

One goal of this project is to provide support for authors to help encourage clear communication of scientific research, and to strengthen the scientific sessions at our CAMRT National Conference.

In addition, the step to publication is a major one in a MRT's career, and submitting a tailored abstract to the CAMRT National Conference is a great way to start. In 2026, we will be piloting an option wherein accepted scientific abstracts for the CAMRT National Conference will be submitted for consideration for publication in JMIRS.

This resource is part of a pilot project that includes a collaborative approach with the JMIRS editorial team and an updated scientific abstract submission process to the CAMRT National Conference. This follows suggestions from our CAMRT National Conference Chairs committee and our desire to provide mentorship.

Our sense that more support might be needed tends to be borne out by research on academic writing creation by health professionals, such as DiProspero and Morassaei (2022), who found that the "primary challenges among health professionals [to academic writing creation] seem to be related to the "how-to" (i.e., skills and experience) and the "when-to". Their needs assessment survey of professional leaders "highlighted the need to support our clinicians with external knowledge dissemination activities, particularly, scientific publication".

This resource is intended to give **general information on creating successful abstracts**, and the second part focuses on the **criteria for being accepted into the CAMRT National Conference**, the first step towards being reviewed for scientific abstract publication in JMIRS.

General Information on Abstracts

What is an abstract?

Though many of you might know – and you've certainly seen some! - you might still wonder, what is an abstract? As UC Irvine notes, there are as many kinds of abstracts as there are types of research papers! The classic abstract is usually an "Informative" abstract. This kind of abstract communicates compressed information and include the purpose, methods, and scope of the article. They are usually short and allow the reader to decide whether they want to read the article. The goal is to communicate: *What was done?; Why was it done?; How was it done?; What was found?; What is the significance of the findings?*

A scientific abstract for a journal like JMIRS aims to present the description of **evidence-based research**. A scientific abstract submitted for a conference like ours, for potential publication in a journal like JMIRS, is standalone summary of a research study, paper, or session presentation that provides readers with a clear understanding of the basic takeaways of your work, including context and conclusions. Though your abstract is reflective of a summary of a bigger piece of work, "an abstract of a scientific paper will be published online independently, so **it should make sense when it is read alone**" (Bahardoran et al, 2020).

An abstract has 3 main functions, described by Bahardoran et al, 2020 as (1) **providing a summary of the paper**, (2) **"selling" the paper to the editors, reviewers, and potential readers**, and (3) **helping with the indexing of the paper**, making it retrieval by various search engines.... An abstract generally answers at least three critical questions including "Why this study was carried out?", "What did the authors do and how?", and "What was the main result and what was new compared to previous works?".

Good Scientific Abstracts

Broadly, there are Descriptive; Informative; Structured; Semi-structured; Non structured abstract submissions. This article has some good information! **JMIRS** requires structured abstracts (the abstract must be written in a structured format with specific headings), which is common for scientific abstracts.

Dr Chartier, in his accessible 2024 article, outlines some general tips for success with abstracts. Let's review them!

1. Follow the Guidelines: Dr Chartier reminds us that ignoring the specific requirements for submissions "can lead to automatic rejection. Review instructions thoroughly and adhere to every detail.

2. Focus on Clarity
3. Keep it Concise: There are strict guidelines, “every word should add value—leave out unnecessary details and focus on your main points” and “highlight Your Work’s Novelty What sets your research apart? Emphasize any gaps in the literature your work addresses or innovations it introduces.
4. Align with Known Themes: He recommends that you consider tailoring the submission “to the conference’s focus areas, demonstrating its relevance to attendees”. This is similar to a resume/cover letter!

💡 Tip: Aim for a “scientific researcher” level – writing as if your audience includes MRTs or radiology-related practitioners in your area of expertise. We recommend that you include knowledge and adapt your language to the Canadian workforce. The content should showcase your research with clarity and brevity.

The Anatomy of CAMRT National Conference Scientific Abstract Submissions

You will see some changes in the submission process this year for eligible abstracts to the CAMRT National Conference, designed to help guide the MRT-author towards a successful submission.

This pilot program is designed to support MRT-authors' abstracts and strengthen candidates’ chances for publication. While the training here reinforces key concepts, it is not intended to replace a healthy knowledge of the conference and journal you are seeking publication through. Many journals will have their own standards – **review the submission guidelines**! Meeting the 2026 CAMRT National Conference guidelines that are outlined below will meet the minimum technical standards for consideration by JMIRS.

As part of the submission process, an abstract submission to the CAMRT National Conference should be submitted in either English or French.

💡 Tip: Use professional, scientifically supported language that is clear and accessible to ensure broad understanding.

The basic technical requirements are:

- Character limit of 3000 characters (including spaces):
    - Use plain language with no unexplained acronyms or jargon.
    - There are tight word and character limits to abstracts, so remember to be concise! The word count equivalent is approximately 500 words. This limit applies to the entire abstract content, not individual sections.
    - Write in past tense for methods/results and the present tense for conclusions.
- Tables or Figures: Tables and figures are not permitted.
- Avoid mentioning specific names, published studies, or institutions in the abstract (use phrases like “our institution” instead).
- Abstracts should not include works cited/reference lists.
- Headings should include the following:
    - Purpose or Aim: What problem are you solving/why is it important, for eg: *“This study aimed to…*
    - Methods or Purpose: Who/what you studied (sample size, population, dataset); What approach you used (survey, experiment, review, etc.). For eg: *“We conducted a 6-month randomized trial with 120 patients using the app vs. standard education materials.”*
    - Results or Benefits/Challenges: Include key data or trends; Be specific (numbers, percentages, significance if available). For eg: *“App users had 25% fewer ER visits than the control group ($p < 0.05$).”* If results are pending, say what you expect to show.

- Conclusion or Impact/Outcomes: Why your findings matter. For e.g.: *"This could improve clinical protocols, save time, or guide best practices."*

💡 Tip: Revise, Revise, Revise - Consider having a colleague read through your submission, as "clear eyes" will often notice a gap you might miss!

Scoring of abstract submissions to the CAMRT National Conference

The rubric that a journal or pre-screener would use will vary, but the scoring for the conference submissions may act as an example:

Scoring Scale

1 = poor | 2 = fair | 3 = good | 4 = Very Good | 5 = Excellent

A reviewer in the area will review this abstract "blind" and will complete a session review form. They will only evaluate submissions within their discipline or area of expertise.

Score	Descriptor	Meaning
1 – Poor	Serious concerns	Unclear, incomplete, not relevant, or weak overall
2 – Fair	Limited quality	Some relevance but lacks clarity, originality or rigour
3 – Good	Adequate	Meets expectations; relevant and clear but limited impact
4 – Very Good	Strong	Well-written, relevant, impactful; only minor weaknesses
5 – Excellent	Outstanding	Exceptional clarity, originality, and potential impact; highly relevant and valuable

Reviewers will be carefully reading your abstract and scoring against rating categories. For a conference such as the CAMRT National Conference, this might look like the following:

Relevance

Reviewers will consider:

- Does this topic directly relate to MRT practice?
- Does this contribute valuable perspective for advancing the profession?
    - For Research Studies, the reviewer will ask: does this submission clearly report prospective or retrospective studies, using formal scientific approaches? Does it describe a systematic investigation designed to answer a question or test a hypothesis? Are valid conclusions supported by the results present?
    - For Practice Innovation/ Initiatives, the reviewer will ask: Is this submission describing a novel innovation or process/quality improvement project? Does the described initiative improve workflow, education, professional practice, or patient care? Is its impact sustained?

Originality

Reviewers will think about:

- How this offers a new or unique lens on the topic.
- Does this ask an important or intriguing question?
- Does this represent contributing novel perspectives, methods, or insights to the MRT body of knowledge?

Impact

Reviewers are interested to see how your abstract shows:

- The potential to positively influence MRTs, patients, or systems.

- Demonstrates meaningful implications for daily practice, professional development, or education
- Is scalable or transferable beyond a single setting.
- Aligns with professional priorities and may stimulate further innovation or scholarship.

Research Criteria (Research Studies Only)

In your abstract for research studies, make it clear that you have the following "proofs" - don't make reviewers interpret for themselves, state these things overtly!

- Purpose: Show that your work builds on past research, questions a policy or practice, fills a gap in the literature, or contributes to ongoing debates.
- Methods: Demonstrate appropriateness, rigour, and clarity of research design and your methodology.
- Data & Conclusions: Include clear indications of the quality and adequacy of results, show sound interpretation, and logical conclusions.

Practice Innovation / Initiative Criteria (Practice Innovation Only)

In your abstract for practice innovation streams, make it clear that you have clearly listed the following elements:

- Approach/Process: Clearly show how your project is systematic, appropriate.
- Outcomes: Ensure that both benefits and challenges are clearly described, with evidence of impact on practice, patients, or systems. The evidence should be of measurable impact – not vague or supposed.
- Transferability: Indicate the potential for others to adopt/adapt the innovation in different contexts.

Common pitfalls in abstracts

1. The study design is not indicated clearly.
2. You've added Results in the Methods section (or Discussion in Results)!
3. You're including too much background: It's a missed opportunity to spend half the abstract telling the history of the topic, or list every data point or method step. You only have a short amount of text!

💡 Tip: Be mindful if leveraging AI tools when revising abstracts, do not include sensitive or private information into those tools as a general rule (i.e. remove institutional material and redact or add dummy data).

For more information, please check out our webinar sessions that accompany this resource or reach out to cpd@camrt.ca!