

Appendix I: Examples of good reporting of the basic reporting items for the Title and Abstract

Title and Abstract

1a. Give the type of study design employed using a widely recognised term in the title or abstract.

Example: *Title* “A Nationwide Survey of the Prevalence of Multiple Sclerosis in Immigrant Populations of Sweden”¹

Identification of the study design in the title or abstract may ease indexing and identification of the article, and assist the reader in determining relevance.

1b. The abstract should give an accurate summary of how the study was conducted and the main findings.

Example: “*Objective:* To determine the incidence of multiple sclerosis (MS) in a longitudinal surveillance over 35 years and to estimate the prevalence rate in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, on January 1, 2005. *Methods:* A population-based registry was established in 1969, and identification of cases continued to 2005, from medical records, physicians, neurologists, community and provincial resources. A modified classification of Allison and Millar and the Schumacher diagnostic criteria were originally applied, and patients with definite and probable MS were included. The rates were age- and sex-adjusted to the US, European, and world 2000

populations. *Results:* From 1970 to 2004, there were 558 incidence cases identified, 402 women and 156 men, for a sex ratio of 2.6:1 The average annual incidence rate was 9.5 in 100,000 (95% CI 8.8 to 10.4) and was stable over the three decades....The crude prevalence rate for the living 587 cases on January 1, 2005, was 298.3 in 100,000 (95% CI 274.7 to 323.6). *Conclusions:* The incidence and prevalence rates”²

The abstract provides key information that allows the reader to determine whether to read the full article. Structured abstracts are often of higher quality than unstructured abstracts,³ and facilitate rapid review.⁴

Introduction

2. Details of the scientific rationale for the study should be reported.

Example: “In general, rates of MS are higher in more northerly areas than in the south, but several “clusters” of increased frequency have been described that appear not to follow this trend. In some clusters, a relationship to trace metals (e.g. zinc, cadmium, chromium), organophosphates and to organic solvents has been proposed, but many of the reported clusters have been based on small numbers of MS cases making it difficult to exclude chance variation. Animal studies suggest that lead exposure could aggravate neurological diseases like MS by enhancing the immunogenicity of nervous system proteins...”⁵

The introduction should delineate the rationale for the study, including context, knowledge gaps, and the specific question being addressed. Relevant recent studies and systematic reviews should be cited.

3. State the specific aims and objectives of the study.

Example: “The aim of this population-based study was to analyze the MS incidence trend in northern Sardinia by gender, initial clinical course, age of onset and areas of the province as identified in linguistic studies.”⁶

The authors should describe the research question being addressed, including what knowledge gaps the study aims to fill.

References

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3. Taddio A, Pain T, Fassos FF, Boon H, Ilersich AL and Einarson TR. Quality of nonstructured and structured abstracts of original research articles in the British Medical Journal, the Canadian Medical Association Journal and the Journal of the American Medical Association. *CMAJ*. 1994; 150: 1611-5.
4. Haynes RB, Mulrow CD, Huth EJ, Altman DG and Gardner MJ. More informative abstracts revisited. *Ann Intern Med*. 1990; 113: 69-76.
5. Turabelidze G, Schootman M, Zhu BP, et al. Multiple sclerosis prevalence and possible lead exposure. *J Neurol Sci*. 2008; 269: 158-62.
6. Pugliatti M, Riise T, Sotgiu MA, et al. Increasing incidence of multiple sclerosis in the province of Sassari, northern Sardinia. *Neuroepidemiology*. 2005; 25: 129-34.