

# Writing Abstracts- the “sure fire” formula!



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# Introductions

- Kathryn L Braun
  - Army brat
  - Peace Corps
  - MPH/DrPH
  - The Queen's Medical Center (10 years)
  - UH (20+ years)
    - 170+ peer reviewed publications
    - 150+ conference presentations
    - \$25 million in grant funding

# Introductions

- Affiliation within UH:
  - College of Health & Social Welfare (Med, Nurs, PH, SW)
  - Hawaiian Knowledge
  - Arts & Sciences
  - Education
  - CTAHR
  - Business
- OTHER?
- What did you bring to work on?
  - Abstract for conference presentation
  - Abstract for manuscript
  - Abstract for report
  - Abstract for a grant proposal

Writing abstracts for manuscripts,  
conference presentations,  
theses, and dissertations



# Why are they important?

- For conference presentations, they are the **ONLY** thing a reviewer reads
- For manuscripts and reports, they are the **FIRST** thing read, and may be the only thing a reviewer (or student) reads

Decisions are made (or opinions colored) based on the abstract.

# Types of Abstracts

	<b>Word limit</b>	<b>Who decides on word limits</b>
For a manuscript	100-250	Depends on journal
For a thesis	150	ProQuest
For a conference presentation	100-300	Depends on conference
For a dissertation	350	ProQuest

# Regardless of type, follow the rules!

- Read and follow abstract directions.
- Follow “structure,” even if not required.
- Get someone else to read it before submitting.



# Abstract Structure

**5 areas to address, in this order!**

- Problem →
- Purpose →
- Methods →
- Findings →
- Implications →

**Also may be called**

- Introduction, background, rationale
- Objectives
- Approach
- Results
- Conclusions or recommendations



# Sections

- **Introduction, background, problem, or rationale** must state the “issue” of concern and why it is a concern.
- **Purpose or objectives** must outline the expectations of the project, or outline the content of the presentation.
- **Methods or approach** must provide a clear description of the methods, which must be appropriate to the objectives.
- **Results or findings** must indicate clear findings, fulfilling the purpose or objectives.
- **Implications or conclusion** must follow from the results and provide direction to researchers and/or practitioners concerned about the problem.

# The Formula for Abstracts

	<b>For manuscript, conference presentation, thesis</b>	<b>For a dissertation</b>
<b>Problem</b>	1-2 sentences	1 paragraph
<b>Purpose</b>	1 sentence	1 sentence at end of problem statement
<b>Methods</b>	1-3 sentences	1 paragraph
<b>Findings</b>	1-3 sentences	1 paragraph
<b>Implications</b>	1-2 sentences	1 paragraph

# Factors Influencing Participation of Older Women in Exercise

- Introduction: Engagement in physical activity (PA) can alter the course of many chronic conditions. Data suggests that few older women engage in PA. Recognizing factors that enhance older women's participation in health promotion programs is key to improving their health.
- Purpose: To examine factors related to dropping out of an exercise program.
- Methods: Healthy Aging Initiative offered EnhanceFitness (EF), an evidence-based PA program for older adults in South Florida. EF consists of three one-hour sessions per week and focuses on improving physical activity levels among participants. Demographic and health-history surveys were completed, and attendance tracked. Determinants of program completion were identified using logistic regression.
- Results: Between 2008 and 2012, 3,829 older women ( $\geq 60$  years) attended one or more EF sessions; 924 completed 32 sessions in 16 weeks. Women who lived in Miami-Dade County (OR=2.2,  $p < 0.001$ ) and spoke English or Spanish were more likely to complete EF (OR=3.3,  $p < 0.01$ ; OR=2.8,  $p < 0.05$  respectively). When compared with whites, non-Hispanic Black women were less likely to complete EF (OR=0.528,  $p < 0.01$ ). Participants who did not report depression (self-identified) were 1.6 times more likely to complete EF (OR=1.6,  $p < 0.05$ ). Women with no self-identified poor health indicators were more likely to complete EF (OR=1.6,  $p < 0.05$ ).
- Implications: Language, race/ethnicity, county, mental health, and health index were significantly associated with completion. Understanding the role of these factors allow tailoring strategies to increase program completion and consequently program effectiveness.

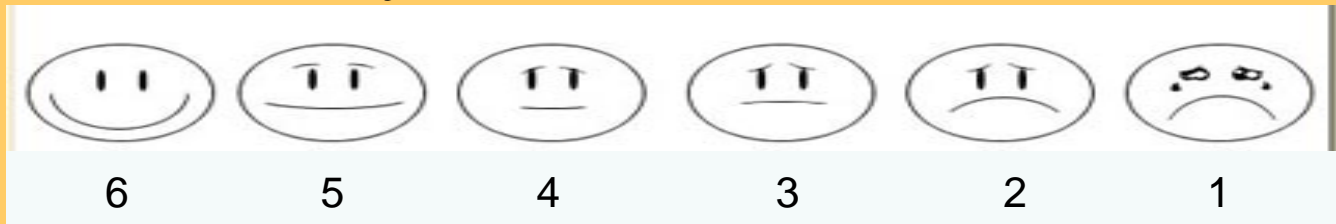
229  
words

# 1<sup>st</sup> Activity

- You are reviewers
- Rules - 250 words
- Review questions

Formula	
Problem	1-2 sentences
Purpose	1 sentence
Methods	1-3 sentences
Findings	1-3 sentences
Implications	1-2 sentences

- Does it follow the formula?
- How would you rate it as an abstract?

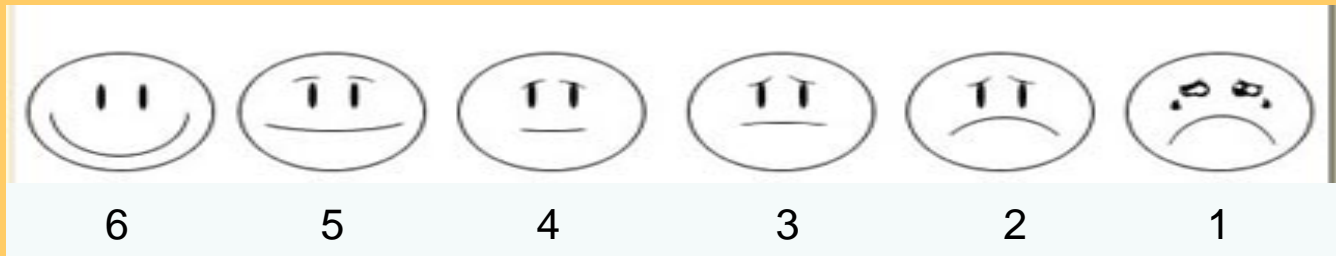


- How can the abstract be improved?

# 1<sup>st</sup> Activity

Formula	
Problem	1-2 sentences
Purpose	1 sentence
Methods	1-3 sentences
Findings	1-3 sentences
Implications	1-2 sentences

- Formula?
- Rating?
- Improvements?



# Sharing

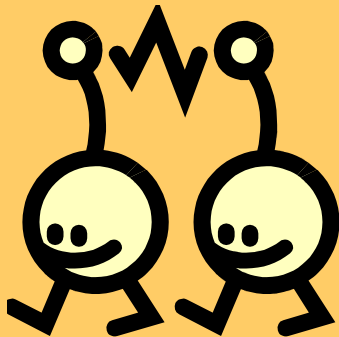
- Who reviewed an excellent abstract?
  - What was good about it?
- Who reviewed an abstract that could be improved?
  - How would you improve it?
- Did structured abstracts rank higher than unstructured abstracts?

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Activity

## Formula for Abstract

Problem	1-2 sen
Purpose	1 sen
Methods	1-3 sen
Findings	1-3 sen
Implications	1-2 sen

- Together, let's write an abstract around this title and table



# Testing a diabetes self-management program among older adults at a community clinic

**Table 2 – Summary of participants' health outcome and clinical measure results (total: n = 82).**

Item	Mean (standard deviation)			t	df	P value
	Baseline	6-month	Change			
Health care utilization in the past 6 months						
Physician visit	2.38 (1.18)	0.98 (0.61)	1.40 (1.23)	10.36	81	0.001
ER visit	0.23 (0.50)	0.01 (0.11)	0.22 (0.52)	3.81	81	0.001
Hospitalization	0.05 (0.27)	0.01 (0.11)	0.04 (0.29)	1.14	81	0.259
Hospital days	0.05 (0.31)	0.04 (0.33)	0.01 (0.46)	0.24	81	0.810
Clinical measures						
BMI	25.20 (3.41)	24.43 (3.06)	0.76 (1.39)	4.95	80	0.001
HbA1c						
%	6.9 (0.70)	6.3 (0.51)	0.6 (0.59)	9.35	80	0.001
mmol/mol	52 (8)	45 (6)	7 (6)			
Total cholesterol	195.72 (34.88)	171.41 (35.31)	24.31 (38.42)	5.69	80	0.001
Triglycerides	139.06 (46.96)	125.31 (40.18)	13.75 (49.68)	2.49	80	0.015
HDL	58.84 (14.37)	52.23 (13.89)	6.60 (13.98)	4.25	80	0.001
LDL	105.21 (27.21)	92.14 (28.46)	13.07 (31.20)	3.77	80	0.001
Fasting blood glucose level	138.80 (30.11)	116.98 (27.56)	21.83 (21.43)	9.17	80	0.001
Systolic blood pressure	134.32 (13.77)	124.43 (11.09)	9.89 (13.12)	6.78	80	0.001
Diastolic blood pressure	76.89 (8.58)	72.42 (7.43)	4.47 (10.39)	3.87	80	0.001

Abbreviation: df, degrees of freedom; BMI, body mass index; HbA1c, hemoglobin A1c, HDL, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol; LDL, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol.

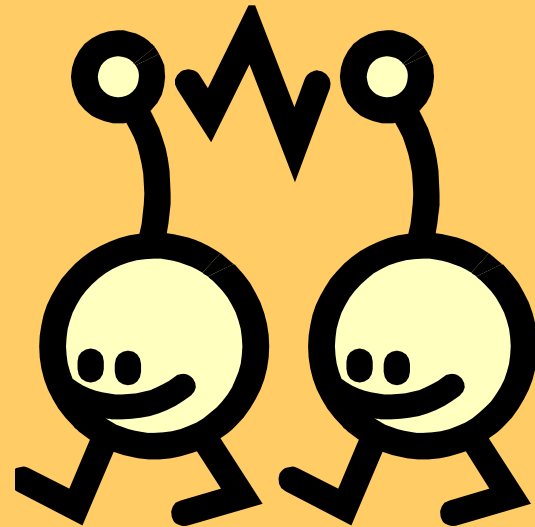


# Our Abstract

- Problem.
- Purpose.
- Methods.
- Findings.
- Implications.

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Activity

- You want to submit an abstract to present at a conference
- You have
  - A title
  - Table of findings
- You know
  - The formula!



# Testing a Curriculum to Increase Knowledge, skills, and Empathy among Direct Care Workers in Elder Care

Measure	Pretest	Posttest	<i>p</i>
Knowledge score ( <i>n</i> = 81) <sup>a</sup>	14.84	18.04	.000
Attitude measures ( <i>n</i> = 56) <sup>b</sup>			
Older people are very much alike	2.27	1.80	.02
Old age is the worst time of life	2.14	1.41	.00
Aging is going to happen, and I can't do anything about it	3.16	2.67	.05
Aging is scary	3.04	2.33	.00
Older people are like children and need to be told what to do	2.23	1.41	.00
When old people misbehave, they are just trying to get me	1.89	1.16	.00
I appreciate older people	4.38	4.89	.00
I like working with older adults	4.19	4.73	.00
I would like to learn more about aging	4.54	4.82	.01
I often lose my patience with older adults	2.04	1.41	.00
Mastery of learning objectives for five of six modules <sup>c</sup>			
What is Aging? How Old is Old? ( <i>n</i> = 60)		18.08	
Getting Healthy, Staying Healthy ( <i>n</i> = 81)		19.50	
Understanding Disability and Disease ( <i>n</i> = 72)		19.60	
Being a Successful Caregiver ( <i>n</i> = 81)		19.67	
Death and Dying ( <i>n</i> = 81)		18.45	

Perceived usefulness of course in helping the participant ( <i>n</i> = 88) <sup>d</sup>	
Understand the aging process	9.73
Gain a more positive view of older adults	9.73
Build empathy toward older adults in need of care	9.80
Develop skills to more effectively care for older adults	9.71
Overall satisfaction ( <i>n</i> = 88) <sup>d</sup>	9.82

<sup>a</sup>Out of 20, this is the number of true–false items answered correctly on *What's Your Aging IQ?* (National Institute on Aging, 1991).

<sup>b</sup>This is measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

<sup>c</sup>Out of 20, this is the number of short-answer items answered correctly.

<sup>d</sup>This is measured on a line scale from 0 = not at all to 10 = very.

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Activity

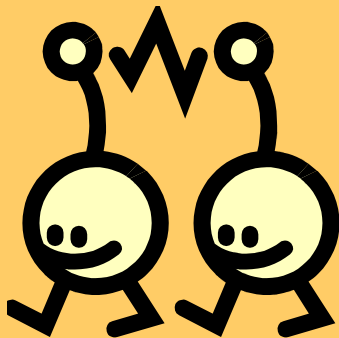
## Formula for Abstract

Problem	1-2 sen
Purpose	1 sen
Methods	1-3 sen
Findings	1-3 sen
Implications	1-2 sen

- Write and abstract around this title and table

OR

- Write your own



# Your Abstract

- Problem.
- Purpose.
- Methods.
- Findings.
- Implications.

# Take-Home Messages

- Presume that decisions will be made (or opinions colored) by the abstract

- Follow directions.
- Use the structure.
- Get feedback!



QUESTIONS

# Wrap Up

- One thing you learned
- One thing you'd like to learn more about





More info

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