The MARC ACSM annual meeting will be held November 1st and 2nd in Lancaster, PA, and with it we will enjoy nearly 200 presentations across a range of disciplines from undergraduates to seasoned professionals. With so many abstracts to review, the research committee has established specific and detailed instructions for abstract submissions. Failing to adhere to these instructions in the most common reason for abstract rejection. In the short article, we offer researchers tips for successful submission, as well as improved consideration for awards.

An abstract concise summary of a study or paper and is typically about 200 – 250 words long; MARC abstracts must be **no more than 2500 characters**. A well-written abstract not only provided readers with the most salient details of your work, but it is also often the deciding factor for whether your paper is read, or your presentation is viewed. Moreover, search engines and databases use abstracts, your title, and key terms for indexing your work. For these reasons, it is not surprising that abstracts are often the only thing read by some individuals, so make your brevity count!

As outlined in our Abstract Submission Guidelines, your MARC Abstract must adhere to these key aspects:

- Use Title Case for a Title with Only Fifteen Words
- A 3-space indent followed by the authors names, and then the institution, city and state.
- The abstract body must be single-spaced of just one paragraph and include the following headings: **PURPOSE, METHODS, RESULTS, CONCLUSION and SIGNIFANCE/NOVELTY**.
- The **SIGNIFANCE/NOVELTY** describes the scientific progress achieved or novelty on the study.
- Experimental studies must include experimental data that is both described AND supported statistically; *failure to include experimental data typically results in abstract rejection.*

Like a good paper, abstracts often benefit from an outline, particularly if you are not starting from a completed paper. The nature of the abstract requires you to hit only the most relevant and "sellable" aspects of your research. Trying to just condense everything all at once can be challenging. Identifying two to four key bullet points for each section is a place to start.

Make your opener count!

A good title states what the study specifically did or showed, while the opening of the abstract can provide a brief background of the topic. While the latter is not mandatory, a well-written background can give needed context and set the tone for the abstract, drawing a reader's interest. The *purpose* should be succinct and to the point, while a hypothesis statement sets an expectation for the results.

Abstract methods and results often pose the most challenge because you may need to titrate many details into just a few sentences total. When it comes to *methods*, less is more. In most cases, you are going to target only the absolute most critical tests your performed, disregarding all the other detail, which can and should be read from the paper or learned in-person. You must identify what methodology simply cannot be left out. Similarly, describe the bare bones statistical analyses used.

Once you describe your concise methods, it's time to highlight your *results.* Start by outlining up to your top five results, which must include the results that answered your hypothesis; this is another good reason to include a hypothesis statement. You should only report the results that you can present in a poster or 10-min slide presentation, which is not a lot! Excluding your hypothesis, the inevitable question might be, *what results are most important to report*? This can vary, but some common tips here include:

- Participant characteristics typically directly related to the purpose and outcomes, so readers should get some basics like height, weight, and age, but also fitness measures, like $VO_{2\ Max}$, if it is relevant to the outcome.
- Unexpected or surprising results that perhaps change the context or conclusions.

In Conclusion…

The final pieces of the abstract include the *conclusion* and, unique to MARC, a *significance/novelty*. The conclusion is the one take home message you want the reader to know from the research. Where the

background can draw people in, the conclusion is often the determiner of whether they visit your session or read your paper. Conclusions need to nail your research down to perhaps single sentence or message. Once you write that, identify why your research results matter or what new insights they provide.

Submitting to MARC should be easy and we hope this article has furthered simplified the process. To further aid you, a brief mark-up with tips is provided below. You are also welcome to reach out to us for help. Upcoming articles will offer tips on creating your poster and preparing for slide presentation.