

Structured Abstracts

The *Spartan Medical Research Journal* (SMRJ) requires structured abstracts for original contributions and brief reports. Structured abstracts for review articles are also required.



Spartan Medical Research Journal

Research at Michigan State University
College of Osteopathic Medicine

All abstracts should be able to stand alone. Abstracts should reflect the critical information presented in the paper and should convey the principle points and findings, providing a brief synopsis of the paper.

Original Contributions and Brief Reports

Structured abstracts for original contributions and brief reports should include, at minimum, the following five headings: "Context," "Objective," "Methods," "Results," and "Conclusion." Additional headings for these types of submissions may include "Objective," "Design," "Setting," "Patients," "Interventions," and "Main Outcome Measures," as described below.

Context – A one sentence summary of the rationale for the study question.

Objective(s) – A one sentence description (e.g., "To determine..." "To establish...") of the study's primary objective. Authors may choose to include key secondary objectives. Any *a priori* hypotheses used should be addressed.

Design – A statement of the study's basic design (e.g., randomized controlled trial, double-blind, cohort, survey, cost-effectiveness analysis).

Setting – A one sentence description of the clinical circumstances of the setting (e.g., general community, primary care center, hospitalized care).

Patients (or other participants) – A brief description of the key eligibility criteria of the study's participants. Numbers of participants also should be included.

Interventions – A brief description of any interventions administered, if applicable.

Main Outcome Measure(s) – A brief description of the study's outcome measurements. If outcome measurements are not applicable to the study, authors should state so and briefly explain why. Authors also are responsible for stating here if the hypothesis was formed during or after the data collection.

Methods – A short paragraph discussing the design, setting, patients, and interventions (authors should include a methods heading only when the five previously mentioned headings are not included in the abstract).

Results – A brief summary of the main results along with declarations and explanations of any important measurements. Authors should include the study's relevant statistical information (e.g., confidence intervals, levels of statistical significance).

Conclusion – A brief summary of the study's conclusions directly supported by the reported evidence.

Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

Structured abstracts for systematic reviews and meta-analyses should consist of "Objective," "Data Sources," "Study Selection," "Data Extraction," "Data Synthesis," and "Conclusion," as described below.

Objective – A brief statement (e.g., "To determine..." "To establish...") of the study's primary objective. Authors should include specific information about the topic being reviewed (e.g., outcome, population, prevention).

Data Sources – A brief description of the data sources used (e.g., computerized databases, research institutions, bibliographic references). In cases where databases were used, authors should include any keywords used or any search constraints.

Study Selection – A statement of the criteria used for study selection. Authors should also identify the methods used to apply these criteria (e.g., blind review).

Data Extraction – A brief description of the methods used for extracting data.

Data Synthesis – A brief description of the review's main results and how they were obtained. Authors should include the study's relevant statistical information (e.g., confidence intervals, levels of statistical significance).

Conclusion – A brief summary of the study's conclusions directly supported by the reported evidence.

General Requirements

Structured abstracts are limited to 350 words, and unstructured abstracts are limited to 150 words.

Unstructured abstracts, which may include all the same information noted above but are not broken down into sections, are acceptable for all other types of submissions. In instances where manuscripts do not meet the criteria previously listed, "creative" structured abstracts are strongly encouraged.

For more information on requirements for structured abstracts, please see: *AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors*. 10th ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2007.

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