Writing Effective Abstracts

• Every article submitted to a journal or a conference must have an abstract.

• The quality of your abstract determines whether or not anybody actually reads your paper or comes to your talk.
Types of Abstracts

• Typical abstract
  – Written after the research and the paper have been completed.
  – Consists of items easily identified in the paper and written into abstract form.

• Promissory abstract
  – The major finding and results will not be included, or will be included as a prediction.
  – Written for a preliminary paper before the research has been done.
Answer four simple questions to create a perfect abstract.

1. What problem did you study and why is it important?
2. What methods did you use?
3. What were your main results?
4. What conclusions can you draw from your results?

Make your sentences as specific and quantitative as possible.
A good abstract contains:

- What has been done
- Why it has been done (purpose)
- Under what conditions it has been done
- How it has been done
- Major findings (results)
- Conclusions
How Long Should It Be?

- APA guidelines = 120 words or less
- Journal articles: 75-250 words
- Conference abstract: 150-1000 words
- Master’s Thesis: 150-300 words
- Dissertation: 350 words

However, always check with your instructor. See page 12 of the APA handbook for more detailed instructions.
Checklist

✓ Subject of paper is stated immediately.
✓ Scope and objectives of work are described.
✓ Methods and operational ranges are specified.
✓ Significant findings are summarized.
✓ Results are emphasized.
Style Conventions

✓ All abbreviations, acronyms, mathematical expressions, and special symbols are defined.
✓ Only simple (linear) equations are used.
✓ No figures or tables are included.
✓ The abstract stands alone
  ✓ No mention is made of figures, tables, or equations used in the main text.
  ✓ No references are cited.
Read your abstract critically.

✓ Ideas are expressed clearly and concisely.
✓ Language is familiar and precise.
✓ Standard nomenclature and notation are used.
✓ Stylistic conventions are observed.
✓ Text is free of typographical errors.
Here are some examples of abstracts in different subjects.
Forward head posture and neck mobility in chronic tension-type headache: a blinded, controlled study.

Forward head posture (FHP) and neck mobility were objectively assessed in 25 patients with chronic tension-type headache (CTTH) and 25 healthy controls. Side-view pictures were taken in a sitting position to measure the cranio-vertebral angle. A cervical goniometer was employed to measure the range of all cervical motions. Patients with CTTH showed a smaller cranio-vertebral angle (45.3° ± 7.6°) than controls (54.1° ± 6.3°), thus presenting a greater FHP (P < 0.001). Patients also had lesser neck mobility for all cervical movements, except for right lateral flexion (P < 0.01). There was a positive correlation between the cranio-vertebral angle and neck mobility. Within the CTTH group, a negative correlation was found between the cranio-vertebral angle and headache frequency, but neck mobility did not correlate with headache parameters. Further research is needed to define a potential role of FHP and restricted neck mobility in the origin or maintenance of TTH.
Objective: To gather data on current preoperative transfusion practice and postoperative complications in sickle cell disease (SCD) as a prelude to a randomized trial. Methods: A prospective one year survey of 114 SCD patients undergoing elective surgery in 31 English hospitals was undertaken. Results: 43%, 39% and 23% of patients, respectively, received no transfusion, top-up and exchange transfusion preoperatively. Overall postoperative complication rates were 18%, 26% and 17%, with HbSC/HbSβ<sup>+</sup>thalassaemia and 71% of obstetric and gynecology patients were not transfused preoperatively, whereas 59% patients undergoing ENT procedures and 83% of hip replacements had top-up and exchange transfusions respectively. Multivariable logistic regression analysis revealed that having moderate/high risk procedures was a predictor of postoperative complications (OR 4.9 (95% CI: 1.3 to 18), P = 0.017) while preoperative transfusion was not (OR 1.7, (95% CI: 0.5 to 6), P = 0.41). Conclusion: The lack of clear benefit of transfusion confirms the need for a randomized controlled trial of transfusion vs. no transfusion in patients with HbSS and HbSβ<sup>0</sup>thalassaemia.
Monarchy to protectorate: re-drafting the Humble Petition and Advice, March-June 1657

The Humble Petition and Advice came in two distinct versions: the monarchical one presented to Oliver Cromwell on 31 March 1657, and the protectoral one accepted by him on 25 May - under which he was reinstalled as protector on 26 June. Yet only the protectoral version has been available to historians in a printed form. This article seeks to clarify the differences between the two versions, and to explore the often inconsistent and unsatisfactory ways in which this major constitutional change was achieved.
Integrated energy systems and local energy markets

Abstract (Document Summary)

Significant benefits are connected with an increase in the flexibility of the Danish energy system. On the one hand, it is possible to benefit from trading electricity with neighboring countries, and on the other, Denmark will be able to make better use of wind power and other types of renewable energy in the future. This paper presents the analysis of different ways of increasing flexibility in the Danish energy system by the use of local regulation mechanisms. This strategy is compared with the opposite extreme, i.e. trying to solve all balancing problems via electricity trade on the international market. The conclusion is that it is feasible for the Danish society to include the CHP plants in the balancing of fluctuating wind power. There are major advantages in equipping small CHP plants as well as the large CHP plants with heat pumps. By doing so, it will be possible to increase the share of wind power from the present 20 to 40%.