

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2025

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Category: Educational Research

Inquiry Student: No

HUMOR INCREASES ADHERENCE TO ABSTRACT GUIDELINES

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* EQUAL CONTRIBUTION

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EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE: Participants should be able to write an abstract that adheres to the requested guidelines

ABSTRACT: (max 250 words): my word count: 252 words

Background: Despite explicit guidelines, students write abstracts based on how other students do or how they think it should be done.

Goal/Hypothesis: The purpose of this study was to investigate if adding humor to abstract submission guidelines will increase the rate of adherence.

Methods: A pool of 100 students was randomly divided into two groups of 50. Each group was asked to write an abstract on a topic of their choice. Both groups received exactly the same guidelines. In addition, group A (control group) received a regular example abstract, whereas group B (intervention group) received an example abstract written with humor. Submitted abstracts were counted and evaluated by two independent investigators. In a separate questionnaire, students were asked for their feedback.

Results: Group A submitted 42 abstracts: Because 2 were emailed a day after deadline and 3 described case studies, they were eliminated. Of the remaining 37 abstracts, 6 failed to separate the text into the required categories, 4 did not state their goal/hypothesis, 2 referred to data not yet obtained, 1 was grammatically intolerable, and 1 surpassed the maximum word count. Group B submitted 50 abstracts: all adhered to the guidelines. In summary, 23 abstracts (46%) from group A and 50 abstracts (100%) from group B met the guidelines and were thus considered for poster presentation.

Conclusion: Including humor in abstract submission guidelines significantly increased adherence to instructions. Our data thus raise awareness to the importance of reading and following rules, although not every student found the humor humorous (we apologize).