

Guidelines for Poster presentations

An academic poster is the visual aid for a compact presentation of (a part of) a research project. Both content and layout are essential. The poster should attract the attention within few seconds and the reader should be able to get the main points from the headings alone.

Before you start

Generally three parties are involved in the design of the poster: the congress organization, your own organization and the printer company. Each may have their own guidelines.

- The congress organization defines the constraints of the poster size, depending on the available poster boards. In general the size of the VRA poster boards allow portrait (100 x 150 cm).
- Check the preferred (or compulsory) poster format of your organization. Generally an institutional template is available.
- Check preferred delivery format of the company responsible for printing the poster.

Structure

The general structure includes *Introduction*, *Aim* of the study, *Methods*, *Results*, *Discussion/Conclusion* and the *Clinical Message* in case of clinical meetings like the VRA. Abstracts are not needed, because the information is already condensed on the poster.

Try to make *title* and *headings* as informative as possible, i.e. not too general. Preferably the reader should be able to get the main points from the headings alone.

Introduce the *Aim* of the study.

Try to reduce *Methods* and *Study Design* in a photo or scheme with subscript and focus on the principle outcome measure(s).

Present your *Results* in simple graphics. All visuals should relate to the main message and conclusion.

The *Conclusion* should be the direct answer to the *Aim* of the study.

The *References* contain background information and can be presented in a compact way (e.g. 1st author et al. Journal (short form), Issue, Pages).

Text format

Title should be readable at about 5 m, text is generally read at 1 or 2 m. It is recommended to use bulleted points and to use an active voice. Keep text elements to 50 words or fewer.

Fonts:

- For headings (at least 36 point) and bulleted points use sans serif fonts like Arial or Tahoma
- For blocks of texts use serif fonts like Times New Roman, Palatino or Garamond of at least 24 point, since they are easier to read.

Colors

Use light color background and dark color letters for contrast, as poster boards are not always in the spotlight. Use a theme of only 2 or 3 colors. The use of transparent or background pictures may go at the cost of readability of text: what you see on screen is not always what you get after printing! Avoid red-green combinations because of color blind visitors in the audience.

Figures and Artwork

Usually 4-6 figures are included in a poster. Make them simple, readily comprehensible and self-contained. Lines in graphs are generally identified by form or color. We do advise you to use the combination of both. (see also colors). Figures and artwork are magnified on posters. In case of bitmap photo's and figures try to maintain sufficient resolution (at least 150 dpi at the final format). Keep figure legends short (10-25 words maximum).

Presentation

The poster is your visual aid supporting the principal message(s). Plan and practice a 2-3 minute presentation to inform interested visitors. Also prepare to provide more information if requested.

At VRA meetings you will announce your poster in a 1 minute presentation. You are asked to introduce yourself and your affiliation and present the main message of the poster.

Sources (commercial):

www.sfeddit.net

http://www.media-studio.co.uk/media/factsheets/Factsheet%20-%20Designing_Posters_10.pdf

<http://toolboxes.flexiblelearning.net.au/demosites/series3/301/content/factsheets/poster.pdf>

Author: J. de Groot, Scientific Committee March 23, 2011