Guidelines for making poster presentations

Many people consider posters to be less important than an oral presentation. However, the poster medium affords certain strong advantages in communicating the results of your research or investigation:

- Posters can be viewed during at least several hours
- Data and graphics on posters are available as long as an individual wishes
- The viewer can go forwards and backwards through the poster
- The poster allows you to more personally interact with the people who are interested in your research
- A poster attracts audience that is really interested in your work

Preparing a poster

The standard format of a poster follows that of an oral scientific presentation and includes Introduction, Methods, Results, Conclusions; Recommendations. A poster, like an oral presentation, cannot (and should not) contain all information you have on the topic. Scientific posters should stimulate interest rather than provide a detailed presentation.

General guidelines:

- Think of the raw layout of your poster beforehand. Place the title at the top. Start with the Introduction at the upper left, finish with the recommendations at the lower right, with methods and results filling the central space.
- Use short sentences, simple words, and bullets to illustrate your points.
- Text should be broken up by including graphics or photos.
- Self-explanatory graphics should dominate the poster. The success of a poster directly relates to the clarity of your illustrations and tables!
- Avoid using jargon, acronyms, or unusual abbreviations.
- Use a non-serif font (e.g., Arial) for the poster.
- The poster (text and graphics) should be easily readable from a distance of about 2 meters. As a thumb rule, the text should be readable if the poster is printed out on an A4 sheet (e.g. Arial >24 points).

Title: Title should be in large fonts (e.g. Arial >80 points) and attract potential viewers. If possible,

institute logos or affiliations should be minimized in size and put in the lower corner of the poster, or,

alternatively, next to the title.

Introduction: Get your viewer interested about the issue or question while using the absolute minimum of background information and definitions. Put the objectives of your study at the end of your introduction.

Methods: Be short, but precise. State what study design you used and define your study population. Provide a case definition, if applicable. Mention statistical, laboratory and other methods that were used.

Results: Briefly provide descriptive results (response rate, age and sex distribution). Present data that more specifically addresses the hypothesis and refer to supporting charts or images. Tables and graphs should stand on their own.

- A minimal amount of text materials should supplement the graphic materials.
- Use regions of empty space between poster elements to differentiate and accentuate these elements.

- Graphic materials should be readable at a distance of 1.5-2.0 meters. The font size should be at least 1 cm high. Lines in illustrations should be larger than normal.
- Use colours for emphasis, but do not overuse (2-3 colours are usually enough). Avoid using patterns or open bars in histograms.
- Remove all non-essential information from graphs and tables (data curves not discussed by the poster; excess grid lines in tables).
- Graphics and tables should have a complete title and legend.

Conclusion and recommendations: Comment on main results and discuss why they are conclusive and interesting. Discuss potential biases. What are your recommendations?

Acknowledgments/further information: Thank individuals for specific contributions to project; mention who has provided funding. Provide your e-mail address for further information.

An example of a poster can be seen here: