

Some tips on writing Good Abstracts – from the Western Cape Abstract Workshop: 6 July 2015

1) Good Abstracts are Specific!

*Many papers will state “We had a problem with X, so we tried *IMPROVEMENT*... AND THEN *MAGIC* happened.. and we got Y!” – Kaveh Shojania, Editor in Chief, BMJ Quality*

We want to know EXACTLY what you did and how you did it (clear explanation of the methods), with results and data so we can try it as well.

2) Good Abstracts Inform!

You should be able to find the following points in your abstract:

I discovered:

My key findings are:

The ‘bottom line’ is:

You should remember – ‘message to readers’:

[How To Write Good Abstracts](#) : London School of Economics Impact blog

3) Good Abstracts have Evidence

Show us your data – we need the proof!

4) Good Abstracts tell a CLEAR and COMPLETE story.

Your story should flow logically.

5) A few other tips:

- **Make sure to have a senior researcher / consultant review your abstract and work with you to shape it. Expect to do around 4-5 edits.**
- **Get approval from ALL members of the team before submitting.**
- **Specific, Informative Title:** This should give a headline for the project and even a hint of the results.
- **Everything in its correct place:** Methods in methods, results in results
- **No surprises!** Don’t tack on a conclusion that has no data to back it up, for example.
- **Check Tenses of Verbs.** If something happened, you aren’t going to describing it.
- **Keep it Short**