

Quick Tips for Peer Reviewing SOFT Conference Abstracts

First Steps

- Read the abstract in entirety to understand what is being presented.
 - Do not look to make edits on this first read through, only read for understanding.
- Ensure the abstract is divided into appropriate sections, including an introduction, objectives, methods, results, and discussion.

Title

- Does the title accurately summarize what is being presented in the abstract?

Introduction

- Is a problem or question highlighted?
- Is there enough background given to illustrate why the study being presented in the abstract is needed?
- References should not typically be included in an abstract.

Objectives

- Is the goal of the study clearly defined?
- Does the objective address the question raised in the introduction?

Methods

- Were all steps of the study summarized?
 - There doesn't need to be enough detail to completely replicate the study from the abstract alone, but all major aspects should be highlighted.
- Small tables can be used to summarize data such as LC gradients but are not required.
- Are the methods used appropriate to answer the question raised in the introduction?

Results

- Are the results clearly summarized or is there enough preliminary data to show the project is viable and can be completed in time?
- Are the offered results consistent with the methods used to achieve them?
- Do any of the results being presented seem unlikely? If so, why?

Discussion

- Is a conclusion to the study question offered?
- Are discussion points supported by the summarized results?
- Are there any caveats or major limitations that could impact the results discussed?

Categories

- Does the study fit the proposed session? If not, would the study be a better fit for another session?
- Poster vs oral – what is the impact/significance of the study?
 - Oral presentations should typically be reserved for higher impact studies or studies that address a topic that could more greatly impact multiple laboratories.
 - Poster presentations may include topics such as basic method validations or drug use trends with a city or county.

Overall Comments

- Does the abstract read well? Are there any spelling/grammatical errors?
- With no other outside information, does the abstract contain enough information to stand on its own and summarize:
 - A problem currently facing the forensic community.
 - Methods used to address that problem.
 - The results from the study addressing that problem.
 - Proper interpretation of the results.
- When reviewing, be objective, professional, and constructive.