

Abstract Submission Process FAQs

PUBLISHING AND ABSTRACTS

If you are submitting an abstract that has been published, how old can that publication date be and still be valid?

There is no strict rule, but you should be presenting new work that is either not yet published or was recently published. You should not present results that were published prior to the previous Annual Meeting. As a rule of thumb, you should not submit an abstract for work that was published approximately six months before the abstract deadline, which would be within one year by the time of the meeting itself.

Is it OK to present work that is about to be submitted for publication?

Yes! It is OK and encouraged to present work that will be new and either just out in publication or about to come out in a journal at the annual meeting.

If I published my work as a pre-print online, can I still submit an abstract?

Yes, if your work is published in pre-print online, you can still submit an abstract.

POSTERS AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS

For poster presentations: Are there different categories for recent graduates, graduate students and faculty? Or is everyone grouped together based on discipline and research focus?

Poster presentations, like oral presentations, are judged on the merits of the science, and they are not broken out by level of training of the main submitter. An exception is the Young Investigator Award Competition, which is restricted to trainees and is a great opportunity to present alongside your peers. Your presentation will be considered by the judges and there are monetary awards for the winners.

What differences in criteria are used when selecting an abstract for a poster instead of an oral presentation?

The Program Committee will consider the strength of the data, the importance of the problem being addressed, the timeliness and novelty of the results. Generally the program committee reviews all abstracts for a given topic area that are submitted for oral presentation and then a subset are selected based upon the merits and for balance of science and representation across the community. All those not selected and those submitted for a poster are then reviewed for poster presentation. Generally, most if not all are accepted as posters unless they are extremely objectionable.

Do you recommend submitting an abstract that was accepted earlier as a poster presentation but wasn't presented because the author couldn't attend the Annual Meeting?

Generally the science would now be outdated. However, if the science is relevant and timely there is no problem resubmitting science that has been updated with new findings.

Which is more effective, an oral or poster presentation?

Given the selection process for oral presentations, it can be viewed more favorably on your resume than a poster presentation. However, both are an effective means to communicate your findings to your peers. The downside to presenting a poster is that there are many posters displayed each day and it can be difficult for participants to see all the posters they want to view.

What if you select your abstract for an oral presentation and the reviewer cannot fit it into the oral presentation schedule? Will the abstract be considered for a poster?

Yes, all abstracts will be considered for poster presentations and about 25 percent will be selected for an oral presentation. When you submit your abstract, those identified by the submitter and requesting an oral presentation are reviewed for oral presentation, and a subset is selected. Those not selected are automatically considered for poster presentation.

What is the rate of acceptance for a late breaker in August for poster session participants?

Generally, all submissions are accepted for an oral or a poster, with a few removed as a consequence of either being inappropriate or without any data. However, the acceptance rate for late breaker oral presentations is approximately 5 percent. ASTMH tries to encourage the broadest amount of science presented at the meeting so that the community can see all aspects of the science.

Can an author submit for an oral presentation only?

No, you can only request that you would like to be considered for an oral presentation, but submitting an abstract means that you intend to present your work at the Annual Meeting and you need to commit to someone attending and sharing the science.

SUBMISSION CATEGORIES

If an abstract falls into multiple categories or areas (such as Global Health and Malaria), what are tips for selecting a proper submission category?

(Please refer to the Call for Abstracts for tips on selecting the appropriate category for cross-disciplinary studies.) If there is a specific disease focus, we recommend you select the category for this disease. If the work is broader and/or spans multiple diseases, consider one of the cross-disciplinary categories such as Global Health, Clinical Tropical Medicine, etc., as appropriate.

WRITING

Is there a limit on the number of words in an abstract's title?

The character limit for the abstract (not including title, authors, etc.) is 1,850 characters (does not include spaces). Accounting for spaces, the character limit for the abstract is approximately 2,100-2,200 characters. Enter the abstract as one paragraph without embedded headings (e.g., Introduction, Methods, etc.). Do not include tables or figures, acknowledgements, funding sources, references or other supplementary information.

When using first-person pronouns, is it better to use "I" or "we"?

Use "we" to be inclusive of all authors unless you are the sole author on the abstract (very unlikely and rare). Most abstracts include more than one author.

DATA

Do we have to show p values on abstracts?

You do not need to show a p value; instead you can state that the result was significant. In the poster or presentation you can provide that level of detail with your data.

How recent should data be published to be eligible for presentations at the Annual Meeting?

There is no strict rule, but you should be presenting new work that is either not yet published or was recently published. You should not present results that were published prior to the previous Annual Meeting. As a rule of thumb, you should not submit an abstract for work that was published approximately six months before the abstract deadline, which would be within one year by the time of the meeting itself.

If I submit an abstract or poster with data and conclusions, and then add data from subsequent trials that changes the statistical significance, would this be better to submit the following year? Or is it OK to present the more complete picture even if it is different from the early abstract?

Yes, it is absolutely fine to add more data you acquired after submitting the abstract and draw further conclusions from your new data. However, you want to be confident in the preliminary findings that you provide in the abstract. The original abstract will be published in the Program Book and you don't want these results to be incorrect.

Can I present an abstract focusing more on management work instead of scientific data?

Depending upon the nature of the management work (e.g., operational and programmatic), if it is research-based it may be appropriate in a Global Health or other category. However, you should consider that the content is evidence-based and relevant to the topics of the meeting. Please refer to the Call for Abstracts.

How do you present an abstract with timely, ongoing research?

It is important to be confident of your preliminary findings and their ability to answer the question posed in your background/introduction section of the abstract. If you cannot answer the question at the time of the abstract deadline, we advise you to wait until next year or, if very exciting data emerge by August, as a late breaker abstract. You can also add data acquired after the April deadline to your final poster or oral presentation. These data should build on the findings provided in your abstract.

JARGON

How can an author balance jargon (sometimes unavoidable) with keeping an abstract simple and understandable for those new to the field?

Try to avoid jargon as much as possible, but define terms that are important. Have folks from outside your specific discipline read the abstract and point out where you may be using terms or phrases that are unclear to them. If necessary, introduce the jargon by first providing an explanation of what the term means.

Providing definitions minimizes the use of jargon, but which words should an author define to keep the word count within reason?

It will depend on your topic area, but ask yourself what is the minimal information required to tell your story. Then, if there are some technical terms, be sure they are defined. Be aware that some of the people coming to your presentation will not be in your field of expertise. Try to make your presentation accessible and of interest to all. One suggestion is to ask a colleague who is not in your field of research to read your abstract and get their feedback before submitting your abstract.

ASTMH SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Does the Program Committee ever recommend that an abstract be considered under a different category than the one designated by the author?

Yes, this happens occasionally when there is clearly another category or topic area that is more appropriate for the abstract. The Program Committee may also invite additional reviewers from other review committees to evaluate a given abstract.

If a researcher chooses to send an abstract as a poster, is it possible that the Program Committee may encourage him/her to present the work as an oral communication?

Sometimes this happens, but it is very rare. Generally, it will only happen if there are not sufficiently strong abstracts for a topic area, but this does not often occur. If you have any questions, submit it as an oral presentation. Don't be afraid to present it orally. Even if English is not your first language, you can communicate well with good practice.

Are there areas of tropical medicine that are given priority?

Typically we structure the meeting based upon the set or given topic areas that may be adjusted to meet the needs of the community. Really new or emerging topics are generally presented under Symposia.

When an abstract is rejected, are the reasons for rejection given to the person who submitted it?

Abstracts are rarely rejected outright, and we don't specifically provide feedback. You can approach the Program Committee if you had an abstract rejected for a rationale. Again, this happens only when there is either no data or the topic area is inappropriate or outside the meeting scope. Also, any concern about science that is not done under ethical standards may be rejected.

What is the selection criteria?

The Program Committee will consider the strength of the data, the importance of the problem being addressed, the timeliness and novelty of the results. Scientific merit, balance of topics and groups and perspectives under a specific topic area also factor into selection for oral presentation.

How is ASTMH's review process different from other committee reviews for other meetings?

We can only really comment on ASTMH's process. However, we can state that the mission and mandate of ASTMH is to be inclusive of sharing as much data from and with the community as is possible, so there seems to be a more generous acceptance rate than other meetings.

OTHER

In thinking about career/job evaluations, do abstracts presented at the Annual Meeting carry the same weight as a published full article?

Generally not, but they are considered as a published abstract. Usually on your CV you will distinguish journal publications and published abstracts. Generally, meeting presentations eventually make their way into publications, so the feedback and information you gain from questions, etc., help improve your science for publication.

Do I have to be a member in order to submit an abstract?

No, but we encourage you to consider the benefits of becoming a member, including reduced registration costs to the meeting. There are very low-cost memberships for trainees and individuals from low-income countries.

After sending the abstract, is there a conference where we should submit an entire paper?

Entire papers are usually only submitted to journals for publication and are not shared at the meeting.

What advice do you offer for presenting a work that is about to be patented?

Speak to the tech transfer office at your institution to discuss this ahead of time. You need to be aware of potential disclosures before presenting your work in public.

For presenters who are selected for an oral presentation, will they also need to prepare a physical poster for the conference?

No, you do not prepare a physical poster if your abstract is selected for an oral presentation. The only caveat to this is that if you participate in the Young Investigator Award Competition. You will first present a poster and if the judges select you for the next round, you will be asked to give a short oral presentation.