Developing a Structured Abstract Using the VON Template

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Jump Starting Quality – Calling All Fellows! Strategies to Launch a Successful Quality Improvement Project
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Objectives: Improve abstract writing through review and revision of mock QI abstracts written by conference participants.
Quality Improvement Abstracts: A (Very) Brief Introduction
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Disclosure
• I have nothing to disclose

Title
• Clearly indicates that quality improvement is driver of work
  — Safety, timeliness, equity, efficiency, effectiveness, etc.
• Aim of intervention
• Setting of intervention
  — NICU, follow-up clinic, in-home, etc.
• Outcome
  — Proposed vs. ongoing vs. completed
  — “Outcome of a QI project to . . .”
• Direction of intervention, if known
  — “Effects of intervention” vs. “intervention alters” vs. “intervention increases”

Title Variation
• Standardized discharge tool to increase follow-up rates in newborns
• A quality-improvement project to increase the rate of follow-up in VLBW babies.
• Results of a quality-improvement project to increase the rate of developmental follow-up in VLBW babies.
• Increased developmental follow-up: results of a quality improvement project utilizing a standardized NICU discharge process
• Increased 24-month developmental follow-up of VLBW babies: results of a discharge quality-improvement initiative

Abstract Preparation: General Guidelines
• Read announcement and follow directions
  — Some organizations will include criteria for abstract evaluation
• Don’t start working on abstract the week (or day) that its due
• Recognize that the best abstracts result from iteration
• Align different sections of abstract with one another
  — Don’t introduce an intervention in Methods that won’t be reported on in Data/Results
  — Don’t write in conclusion about something you didn’t introduce in Methods
• Save nuance for presentation
  — Focus on most clear and important achievements

VON Abstract Guidelines
• Clear, explicit guidelines about format and details for inclusion
  — Aim: using SMART aim
  — Setting
  — Mechanisms: include driver diagram
    • Drivers of current practice
    • Drivers hypothesized to support desired change
  — Methods
  — Measures
  • Link to SMART Aim
  • Data / Results
  • Includes at least one annotated run chart or statistical process control chart
  • Reflects at least 2 PDSA cycles
  — Discussion
Abstract Evaluation

- Will likely be judged by
  - Quality of methodology
  - Adherence to specifications in announcement
  - Clarity and conciseness of presentation
  - Innovation
  - Potential for dissemination

Length

- Commonly 250 words
  - VON: 1 page, specified font
- Often a major constraint which requires prioritization
- Rank results from most-to-least important and serially omit those results (and perhaps associated elements from Methods section) until under limit
- Avoid words, phrases, sentences that aren’t essential
  - First "introductory" sentence often so general as to be unimportant
  - Phrases that are implied and can be left out:
    - “based on the fact that”
    - “for the purpose of”
    - “in a previous report, Johnson suggested…”
  - Superlatives: very, much, extremely, etc.

Small Group Discussions

- Led by fellows/participants
  - Act as “primary reviewer”
- Focus on clarity of abstract
  - Can the methods be predicted by the Aim and Setting?
  - Are the measures appropriate for the Aim?
  - Are the data and results clear?
  - Do the authors include non-essential details
- Spend approximately 10 minutes/abstract
- Try to provide suggestions for improvement rather than only criticism