Clinical Update Sleep
16th October 2020

Posters Design Notes

Guidelines: Designing an (A0) Poster

Viewers of your conference poster should walk away understanding your work and feeling they have learnt something.

This short guide will give you some useful tips to creating a professional looking, readable poster.

Designing a suitable poster takes time; *do not leave it until the last minute.* Remember to allow enough time to design and review your poster, as well as time for printing.

Layout of your Poster

For standardisation, all posters should be submitted as a PDF presented as A0 (841mm x 1189 mm) **landscape size** and should include:-

- Heading: include the title, authors and affiliations

- If the Poster has been previously published, the author should indicate the date and publication

- When presenting data and health information (including photos) all presenters must have informed consent that conforms with data protection guidelines

There are a variety of different layouts you could use for your poster. Some people suggest that having 6-9 main areas on your poster is a very effective layout making it simple to read and less confusing. In general:

- Keep the layout so it is readable in columns (top to bottom, then across from left to right).

- Layout does not have to be 'rigid'. Parts of a diagram may overlap areas (just don't let it block any text).

- Remember to keep a certain amount of white space – to help separate the columns and not over power the reader with too much text.

- Items at the top/middle of the poster are more likely to be read than the lower parts of the poster. (Maybe keep the bottom few lines for Acknowledgements and contact details etc).

- Try to balance the items you put on the poster – for example, do not have all the diagrams, charts and pictures in just one column. Spread them out as evenly as possible.

- Avoid putting images behind text – it makes the text harder to read and you do not want people to strain their eyes reading your work.

- Ensure the Title is at the top – either top centred or top left aligned.

- Edges - keep away from the edges of the poster because:
    - The eye likes a margin. Putting text and images hard up against the edge of the poster makes it look crowded and it becomes harder to read.
    - When you print the poster a small area round the edge may not be printed.

General Design Principles

Text

- Keep text to a minimum (less is more principle) and do not 'over fill' your poster.
- Recommend maximum of 800 words on A0 poster.
- It is important to have a certain amount of 'white space' on your poster to help guide the reader through the layout.
- Too many words and people will not read it – they will lose interest more easily and they often just look at the parts that stand out – such as headlines and figures.
- Avoid blocks of text longer than 15 lines.
- Minimise use of underlining – use *italics* instead.

.

Line Spacing

- Have line spacing at 1 or 1.1 size. It is important to have consistent line spacing throughout the poster for a professional image and easier readability;   it also helps when displaying superscript or subscript data.

Graphics

- It is advisable to use some graphics on your poster – pictures, charts, flow diagrams etc. These will help break up blocks of text and make the poster more attractive. As the saying goes – a picture is worth a 1000 words.
- Graphics obtained from web pages may have low resolution (this is so they can load up quickly on the net) however, you may find they are unsuitable images once you have resized them to the size you require – some quality of the image will be lost.
- Avoid using 3D charts – it makes it harder for some people to interpret the values and this may become confusing.

Review

- It is important that you prepare the poster in advance and get some other people to review it and provide you with suggestions. They may spot grammatical/typing errors, or point out sentences that are difficult to understand. What you understand, others may not – so it is important to gain other peoples point of view.

  - It could be embarrassing at a Poster Presentation if you have a typo on your poster. So double check and then check again!
  - Consistency is important for flow and image of the poster.
  - Not a lot of space for overview of research, so be brief, specific and keep to getting the main points across. Think of this when reviewing the poster and checking whether what you have put is really needed.

What sections to include?

1. **Title** -one to two lines maximum. Avoid use of colon here. Title should be catchy –says what research is about / findings. Below the title in the same font, but much smaller, add your name(s).

2. **Abstract** –You should have already sent this to the conference organisers but this will not be included in the conference brochure and should be featured as part of the Introduction.

3. **Introduction** – About 200 words. Explain in here about your work, why it matters (importance/relevance), have a/some picture(s) to emphasis research if possible. If people find this part boring, they could move away from your poster without reading the rest – so spend time making it interesting!

4. **Methods / Procedures Used** – About 150 words. Briefly describe the methods/procedures used and how they will help you find out about your hypothesis. Could use flow diagrams to help illustrate your procedures (this will help break up your text and make the poster look more interesting). Ensure you label diagrams if needed.

5. **Results** – don't forget to say if it worked/not worked then say why. Try to be descriptive and focus on key points. About 150 words.

6. **Discussion and Conclusion** – Without sounding like you are repeating yourself start by reminding the viewer of your hypothesis and result. Then discuss your results, why they are interesting, how the conclusion links back to your hypothesis and what could be the next step in this research in the future. About 250 words.

7. **Acknowledgements** – a section for thanking people:
   a. Short list of your sources in a 'Literature Cited' section. Ensure these are written in the correct format for referencing.
   b. Acknowledge department / individuals who gave assistance.
   c. Acknowledge Funding Sources.

8. **Further Information** – where can people find out more information about your project – include your email, possible a link to a website or PDF version of your poster.

Font Size and Style

For an A0 poster:

- **Title** Text = Bold, Large size (72 – 84pt). Sans serif font. Viewable from 5 metres away. <u>Sentence</u> case for the Title.
- **Author Text** = Same font as title, smaller, perhaps Italic.
- **Side Headings** – Larger than the main text, often in Bold as well. Sans serif font. Keep consistent. Viewable from 3 metres away.
- **Main Text** – Minimum of 24pt, so readable from of distance of 2 metres. Serif font.
- **Reference Text** – can be a bit smaller to fit the poster. Serif font. Same font style as Main text.
- Do not write entirely in **CAPITALS** – it is like you are shouting at someone and is harder to read.

SERIF FONT –font styles with little lines at the end of the stroke of the letter. E.g. Times New Roman, **Bodoni**, Baskerville Old Face.

SANS SERIF FONT / NON SERIF FONT – font with no little lines at the end of the stroke of the letter. E.g. Arial, Calibri, Trebuchet MS, Comic Sans MS.

Colour

- Most people prefer to read dark text on a light background
- If you have a dark background, ensure you have light text on top so it is readable, also, it is suggested that you frame figures in white boxes so they are easily distinguished from the background.
- Approximately 8% of Males and 1% of females have a colour vision issue – so avoid too many greens/reds. You can go http://www.vischeck.com/vischeck/vischeckImage.php to check how your poster would look to people with different colour deficits. (You will need to save your poster as a PNG image in the Save As box).
- Try and have a theme of colours to use – about 2 or 3 colours. Include a pastel colour in with this. Avoid over bright colours (although they are attractive and eye catching, they may give readers a headache and they may strain to see them (depending on background colour).