

What should be included in a summary

Qué debe llevar un resumen

The abstract is one of the most important parts of a manuscript. It quickly conveys the content of the article, it is what appears in databases and search engines, since it is the guide to what is most important. Hence, it must be complete for the reader to be interested in the information. In some journals, the abstract is initially sent only to the reviewer, so that he/she decides whether it is worth sending the full text.¹

The abstract should answer the following manuscript questions:¹

1. What did you do?
2. Why did you do it?
3. What did you find?
4. Why are these findings useful or important?

If we answer these questions, readers will know the important points of the study and decide whether the rest of the article is worth reading. The context should say what is known about the topic, what is not known and what is the reason for writing about it. It should be no longer than two or three sentences and with a homogeneous style. The abstract should be written once the whole manuscript is ended highlighting the most important aspects of each section.^{1,2}

The “Materials” section is the longest part of the abstract and should contain sufficient information to allow the reader to know what was done and how, the sample size, doses of drugs used, duration of the study, groups formed, etcetera.

The “Results” section should have the corresponding information, and if the number of words allows it, present it in the best way for the reader to understand.

The “Conclusions” section should have a “take home message”, the findings of importance and the author’s perspective.

The information in the abstract should be in the original manuscript, should not contain citations, abbreviations, acronyms, images or tables.² It should not be a commentary on the manuscript, not a historical narrative, not change the language and not deviate from the main topic. It should not be written in the first person and should be written in the past tense.

According to the instructions for authors of each journal, it is necessary to verify how many words it should have, which generally is between 250 and 300.² If the registration number of the clinical trial is available, it can be added at the end of the text.



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REFERENCES

1. Andrade C. How to write a good abstract for a scientific paper or conference presentation. *Indian J Psychiatry*. 2011; 53 (2): 172-175.
2. Díez MB. El resumen de un artículo científico: qué es y qué no es. *Invest Educ Enferm*. 2007; 25 (1): 14-17.

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