

Poster Presentation

How to stand out

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Authors

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Title

2015 winner of poster presentation in the category of Outstanding Post-doctoral Fellows Poster, Discovery Day

- Hyein Jeon, MD student

2015 3rd place in the category of Outstanding Medical Student Poster, Discovery Day

- Stephanie Schleidt

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Outline

- There are different types of posters, but the general idea is the same for all
- Know your audience and tailor your poster to it
- Know your research
 - Collect all data and organize it into a coherent flow
 - Build the remainder of the poster, abstract, introduction and discussion, around this flow
 - Discuss this with your co-authors and PI often

Outline

- When preparing your outline focus on the flow and logic of your story
- Be open to even fundamentally changing the outline, if it makes it better
- The outline should be completed 2-3 weeks before the event to leave enough time for poster production and practice
- Collect data graphs and images and make the figures. Take into account that this will take a good deal of time to get right
- When the outline is complete, start with the poster. We recommend using one of the template found [here](#). They will help with the layout and the color palette.

How to construct the poster

- As mentioned before, create a logical flow through your data, rather than chronological, for example. It will help your audience understand your research more easily
- Very Important: With every portion of the poster and every figure, as well as with the poster as a whole, TELL A STORY!

Poster Content

- Abstract: short summary
- Introduction/ Background: explain about existing data and the rationale for your study
- Methods: There are two ways to do this, include a separate, brief, methods section, or touch on the methods when presenting each figure
- Results: Logical flow; Mark important points to look at and explain it well; do not dwell on parts that have not worked out as expected but instead emphasize the parts that support your story; However, be ready to explain potentially unclear points
- Conclusion/summary: Consider here to have an image of your pathway, for example, to demonstrate your findings and put the results of your study into context with the existing body of research
- Future directions: Briefly discuss next steps to further your research
- Acknowledgements: Recognize the people who helped with your research and only those; Also, reference your funding sources

Poster Preparation

- No data is ever perfect. While you prepare your poster consider how others might view it. Make it interesting for THEM
- Keep in mind that the quality of your data and presentation is relevant and what makes you stand out. Be creative without becoming ridiculous. No word art. Stick to one font and a very limited number of colors, if you have to emphasize something
- Exchange your thoughts and ideas with your colleagues. Take constructive criticism as what it is and not as a personal affront. It will make your poster better
- You have very limited space and a lot to tell. Be concise and avoid flowery speech or long stretches of text
- When you are done, make sure to leave enough time to print your poster

Practice

- Once your poster is done start practicing. For a successful poster presentation this is critical
- First, practice by yourself. Use the computer screen and speak out loud to see how the flow is and how long it takes
- Try to keep the presentation to 5-7 minutes
- Keep in mind that your first few times will not be perfect or possibly even any good. Do not give up.
- Recording yourself during your presentation is helpful to make you aware of your stumbling stones.

Practice

- While you practice on your own, think about questions someone might ask and focus on the good of your story. You do not have to point out the flaws
- Anticipate questions and be prepared to answer them confidently
- Explain each figure well and, again, be consistent and concise
- Once you feel good about it print your poster on regular paper and hang it up. Schedule practice sessions with a number of different people, lab mates, classmates, friends, and take their comments about your presentation as well as your poster. Make changes, if necessary.
- Remember, the more you practice, the better and the more confident you will be.

More Practice

- While you speak, watch out for um's, uh's, like's and the like. They make you look unsure, immature, and unprepared.
- Be enthusiastic and confident about your data and your poster, but do not become overly exuberant.
- Before you finally print the poster, double and triple-check for typos, missing words, and too long or unstructured sentences.

Printing

- Finally, the poster is finished and you are ready to print. Leave some time for this. Especially with bigger events, when many posters require printing, this can take some time
- Leave some time to practice with the finished product on a poster board or similar
- Then, roll up your poster, put it into the transportation tube, and take it to the event.
- You are now well prepared and you will be able to wow your audience with your confidence, knowledge, and poise.

Questions or Comments?

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