

Top tips on writing a prehab abstract for a conference

There are more and more prehab services being set up around the country. Although the evidence base is growing constantly there is limited guidelines and recommendations of what the optimal mode of delivery is, what screening tools should be used and what outcomes should be measured. The evidence behind the benefit of the role of registered dietitians as part of the prehab MDT is also limited. Presenting an abstract at a conference is not only a great way to share the work dietitians are doing in prehab, but also helps increase the evidence behind prehab and helps us share best practice with our peers. It can be challenging and sometimes even scary to submit an abstract if you have never done it before. However, we strongly believe anyone can do it. Here are our top tips for writing and submitting an abstract to a conference.

❖ What can be written up as an abstract:

There are many types of work that can inspire an abstract including a service evaluation, service improvement or quality improvement project, or an audit. It doesn't have to be a large piece of research, small projects and pilot projects are equally important to share.

❖ Where to start from:

The first step to writing an abstract is deciding that you have data or a case study that you want to share. Look at your data and answer some of the questions below:

- What was the aim of your original audit or project
- What does your data show
- What is interesting about it
- What impact has it had on your work or service

❖ Writing up the abstract:

Once you have your ideas on paper, start placing them into an abstract format to help you narrow it down.

- Check the conference requirements including font, word count, paragraph titles requirements, submission date. For example, follow the link below to find instructions on the format for abstract submission to the BDA Research Symposium:
<https://www.bda.uk.com/events/upcoming-events/research-symposium.html>
- Clarify your aim – the whole abstract will link to the aim.

❖ **Methods**

- How was the data collected? For example, did you retrospectively go through dietetic online records, or did you collect that data prospectively as you patients were being seen? Did you send a questionnaire out?
- How was the data analysed? For example, did you use excel software or a data analysis software such as SPSS
- Did you register the audit with the trust, did you need get ethical approval from your trust's RDA or if not, why was it not needed.

❖ **Results:**

- How many people were included in the analyses, were any patients or records excluded and if yes why. What were the demographics of the population.
- Here you can write for each outcome you are reporting what the results are
- However you don't need to include all the raw data here

❖ **Discussion**

- Results are almost never conclusive, use this section to discuss what your results showed and what they could mean/what they suggest.
- How is that related to existing research. Consider comparing your results to other people's and discuss the similarities and differences.

❖ **Conclusion**

- How is your project going to impact your future practice?
- What are the next steps for the project?

Finally, check the BDA Oncology Prehab Subgroup website for ideas of conferences you may consider submitting an abstract to and to see examples of abstracts that committee members have successfully presented at various conferences.

