

# HOW TO WRITE A QUALITY ABSTRACT

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

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01/20/2024

**Note:**

- This document is provided for you to identify specific requirements of writing a quality abstract in English, including two sections:
  - I. General Guidelines,
  - II. Sample Abstracts, and
  - III. Frequently Asked Questions
- Special thanks to the first-authors for allowing me to include and edit their published abstracts.

## I. GENERAL GUIDELINES

**1. Abstract Content:** The information below should be included in a complete abstract.

- (1). **Title:** Written in title case, no more than 15 words.
- (2). **Author and Affiliation:** Each author's name, affiliation, (mailing address, country,) and electronic contact information are required.
- (3). **Abstract Body:** A four-section structure should be followed as below.
  - a. **Background/Purpose:** Please describe the background of your study, define terminology, and identify the need and purpose of the study. This section should intrigue and convince the reader the necessity of the study, setting the stage for the rest of the abstract.
  - b. **Method:** This section should provide specific information about participants and research setting, research design, intervention vs. control (for an experimental design), data collection (measures and procedure), and data analyses. This section is especially important to the credibility and replicability of the study.
  - c. **Results:** This section focuses on reporting results/findings. For quantitative study, specific results computed from data analyses should be presented. For qualitative study, findings should identify major themes with supporting qualitative evidence. Minimize interpretation of results and leave it to the next section.
  - d. **Conclusion/Discussion:** This section should address questions such as how the results/findings of this study are similar to and differ from those found in previous studies, and what do the similarities/differences mean? What are the limitations of this study and how can they be addressed in future studies? And what are the practical implications of this study? Avoid reiterating the results section.<sup>1</sup>
- (4). **Keywords:** List 4–5 keywords to identify the main topic of this study.

**2. Writing Mechanism:** Two basic rules to follow when writing an abstract.

- (1). **Structurally Balanced:** Each section of the abstract body (i.e., Background/Purpose, Method, Results, Conclusion/Discussion) should be approximately equivalent in terms of the amount of information. Avoid a one- or two-sentence Background/Purpose and/or Conclusion/Discussion while excessive descriptions of Method and/or Results.

## SAMPLES

- (2). **Internally Consistent:** There are two types of internal consistence in an abstract. First, within each section of the body, all information should be consistent with what the section presents, e.g., sentences in the methods section are all about Methods but not Background/Purpose. Second, all sections are consistent from beginning to end, meaning, the methods used in the study should support the purpose, Results should be natural outcomes of Methods, and Conclusion/Discussion should be built on Results.
- (3). **Concise and Precise:** Communicate all required information in the fewest possible words while using an accurate, clear, and straightforward vocabulary. You are recommended to watch this [YouTube video](#) for writing concisely and precisely. For more academic writing tips, please visit [Texas A&M University Writing Center](#).

## II. SAMPLE ABSTRACTS

### Note:

- All sample abstracts included in this section are published.
- For educational purposes, all sample abstracts are re-edited with author permission.
- The sample abstracts feature commonly used research designs and methods.
- All sample abstracts are within the word limit of 400.

## **The Effect of School-Based Multilevel Interventions on Physical Activity: A Systematic Review**

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**Background/Purpose:** Insufficient physical activity (PA) has become a pandemic in many countries. Low PA is the major cause of most chronic diseases that account for up to 4.6% of direct national healthcare cost in many countries. Interventions thus are needed to start early and target children and adolescents for the promotion of PA. According to social ecological theory, health behaviors are influenced by factors at multiple levels including individual, society, institution, and the environment. However, it is not conclusive if multilevel interventions do promote PA among school-aged students. Therefore, we conducted this systematic review to investigate the effect of school-based multilevel interventions for PA promotion.

**Method:** Using keywords such as “multilevel intervention” and “physical activity,” we searched multiple databases such as ERIC, SPORTDiscuss, ScienceDirect, PsycINFO, Academic Search Ultimate, Child Development & Adolescent Studies, and Education Full Text in Summer 2022. The inclusion criteria are: (1) the study was based on randomized controlled school-based intervention, (2) the intervention targeted at least two levels (e.g., individual and school), (3) the primary outcome of the intervention was moderate-to-vigorous intensity PA (MVPA), and (4) MVPA was measured with an accelerometer.

**Results:** A total of four articles were included the current study. All studies involved 2–4 levels of interventions. The intervention strategies included before/after school physical education (PE), integrated PA in classroom setting, PA during recess, school policy/environment, staff involvement, and family and community engagement. The intervention lengths ranged from 36 weeks to 2 years. Participants included preschoolers, children, and adolescents. Findings showed that three studies demonstrated significant intervention effects on daily MVPA improvement (all  $ps < .05$ ). The one study that did not have intervention effects may be due to relatively high MVPA level at the baseline.

**Conclusion/Discussion:** Based on the studies reviewed, it seems that multilevel interventions were effective in increasing participants’ daily MVPA. However, the number of studies focusing on multilevel interventions is small, probably due to the challenging nature of the studies—randomized controlled school-based intervention. To enrich the literature and promote physical activity, we recommend researchers conduct more studies to testify the effectiveness of multilevel interventions as well as to identify effective strategies for promoting PA among school-aged children and adolescents.

**Keywords:** Physical activity, physical education, multilevel intervention, school-aged students

## Understanding College Students' Endorsement of Achievement Goals in PA Classes

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### Abstract

**Background/Purpose:** Universities provide a variety of courses for students to participate in physical activity (PA). However, there has been a significant decline in PA participation and an increase in sedentary behavior during the college years. This problem needs to be addressed in research. One way to address it is to understand students' achievement goals that influence their motivation and PA participation. Therefore, this study utilized the 3×2 achievement goal model to investigate college students' achievement goals and key factors influencing their goal endorsement in PA classes.

**Method:** Fifty-three students ( $M_{age} = 20.11$  years,  $SD = 1.41$ ; 32 males, 21 females) were selected for participation in the present study. A 20-min interview was conducted with each individual, focusing five questions: (1) Why do you want to take this class? (2) What is your goal for this class? (3) What helped you do well in this class? (4) Would you please explain why you endorse certain goals? And (5) Was there anything in the class that made you endorse the goals? All interviews were audiotaped, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to content analysis. Trustworthiness of the study was ensured by member checking, peer debriefing, and data auditing.

**Results:** Findings from the first three questions revealed that college students considered their general goals towards PA classes were: (a) motivators inherent to the class, (b) learning and improving, (c) health-related benefits, and (d) external motivators/influences. Findings from question four showed that whether they endorsed certain achievement goals or not was determined by: (a) comparison/competition with classmates, (b) emphasis on learning and improving, (c) internal motivator, (d) benefits of correct technique, and (e) maximizing effort. Four themes emerged among answers to question five: (a) impact of learning environment, (b) influences of self and others, (c) learning and improving, and (d) opportunity for physical activity.

**Conclusion/Discussion:** Similar to previous research, this study revealed that college students participated in PA classes to have fun/enjoyment, be social, work out regularly, and earn credit. It also supports the literature that college students were more likely to enroll in PA classes when their goals were to learn new skills and activities. Additionally, influences of others may encourage students' endorsement of achievement goals. Thus, instructors are encouraged to use their influence as well as the influence of peers to help students endorse achievement goals that are motivationally beneficial, such as task/self-approach goals, in college PA classes.

**Keywords:** Achievement goals, college student, physical activity, physical education

## **Global Accelerometer-Derived Physical Activity Levels from Preschoolers to Adolescents: A Multilevel Meta-Analysis and Meta-Regression**

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### **Abstract**

**Background/Purpose:** Regular physical activity brings multiple aspects of benefit to children and adolescents. Global level physical activity surveillance studies, however, were primarily based on self-report data, which could be subjective and lead to inaccurate results. Therefore, in this study, we investigated global accelerometer-measured daily moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) changes from preschool age to adolescence as well as gender differences in MVPA while adjusting for the geographic regions and major MVPA cut points.

**Method:** A comprehensive search, focused on key terms such as “accelerometer” and “physical activity,” was conducted among 30 databases such as ERIC, PsycINFO, and ScienceDirect. We included both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies that tracked daily MVPA among preschoolers, children, and adolescents with waist-worn accelerometers and that used either Freedson 3 METs, 4 METs, or Evenson cut points. Risk of bias assessment of the selected articles was conducted based on a modified version of the Downs and Black (1998) assessment tool. Meta-analyses were conducted using the *rma.mv* function within the *metafor* package in R.

**Results:** We included 84 studies reporting on 124 effect sizes with a total of 57,587 participants. Results showed that children and adolescents accumulated an average of 73.26 min of daily MVPA worldwide. There were significant MVPA differences among various continents of participants ( $p < .001$ ) or cut points ( $p < .05-.001$ ) for both preschoolers, children, and adolescents. Globally, when continents and cut points were controlled, individuals’ daily MVPA time decreased every year by an average of 7.88, 10.37, and 6.68 min from preschool age to adolescence, preschool age to children, and children to adolescence, respectively. When cut points and continents were controlled, boys had significantly higher daily MVPA than girls for all three age groups ( $p < .001$ ).

**Conclusion/Discussion:** Our results are consistent with the literature that children’s PA tends to decline as they age. Particularly in our study, individuals’ daily MVPA started to decline dramatically as early as the beginning of preschool age after adjusting for cut points and continents. We also concur that the largest MVPA difference exists among children; specifically, boys were more physically active than girls. Based on the results, we recommend that interventions should start as early as preschool ages to counteract the high decline rate in MVPA. Since we limited participants’ MVPA from preschool to adolescence, future studies are suggested including PA changes from youth to adulthood.

**Keywords:** MVPA, accelerometer, cut points, gender difference, meta-analysis

## **Long-Term Predictions of Mastery- and Performance-Approach Goals in Physical Education/Athletics**

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### **Abstract**

**Background/Purpose:** Achievement goal theory (AGT) has been widely used to understand students' motivation and resulting outcomes in physical education (PE) and athletics. Research has revealed mastery-approach (MAp) and performance-approach (PAp) goals are likely to be more beneficial than other, avoidance, goals. The benefits of MAp and PAp, however, were primarily documented in cross-sectional studies. Consequently, little is known about their long-term effects. To address this research gap, we examined if students' MAp and PAp assessed near the end of the fifth grade would predict their effort (EF) and intention for future running participation (IFFRP) assessed near the end of the eighth grade.

**Method:** Participants consisted of 340 students ( $M_{\text{age}} = 10.90$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ; boys = 169, girls = 171) from a school district located in Southwest Texas. MAp and PAp goals were each assessed with six items near the end of the fifth grade, whereas EF was assessed with five items and IFFRP assessed with two items near the end of the eighth grade. All items were adapted from published research work and are on a 5-point Likert scale. All data were collected during regularly scheduled PE or athletics classes. Data analysis included computation of scale reliability, descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and a path analysis.

**Results:** Results revealed the MAp, PAp, EF, and IFFRP measures all demonstrated good scale reliability ( $\alpha s = .71-.85$ ). Their mean scores ranged from 2.98–3.93. MAp was significantly correlated with EF ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and IFFRP ( $r = .19$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and the latter two were significantly correlated as well ( $r = .48$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Path analysis revealed that only MAp emerged as a significant predictor for EF ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and IFFRP ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while PAp had no predictability on either EF or IFFRP.

**Conclusion/Discussion:** One important result of this study revealed the long-term motivational effects of MAp, which suggested students who adopted MAp near the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade were more likely to put forth effort and participate in future running near the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade than their peers who did not adopt MAp. The significance of this finding is that MAp could have a long-lasting effect on students' motivation and behavioral outcomes in PE/athletics classes. Based on this finding and previous research that documented benefits of MAp, we strongly recommend physical educators to promote this particular achievement goal in PE/athletics settings.

**Keywords:** Achievement goals, physical education, athletics, effort, intention

## **Construct Validity and Temporal Stability of the IBS Among At-Risk Boys**

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### **Abstract**

**Background/Purpose:** According to the self-determination theory, social supports for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are important to facilitating people's motivation towards physical activity participation. These supports are generally interpersonal behaviors, such as instructors allowing choices, providing positive feedback, and building a good relationship with participants. As a measure of the three supports, the Interpersonal Behavior Scale (IBS) has demonstrated acceptable construct validity and scale reliability among high school students, but it has not been examined among younger children. This study, therefore, examines its construct validity and temporal stability among a group of at-risk boys in a summer sports camp.

**Method:** Ninety at-risk boys ( $M_{\text{age}} = 12.02$  years,  $SD = 1.22$ ) participated in the 2014 camp, 102 ( $M_{\text{age}} = 11.72$  years,  $SD = 1.26$ ) in 2015, and 64 participated in both years. The IBS, including 12 items (two reverse-coded) on a 5-point Likert scale with three items assessing each support, was administered in the last week of the camp. Data analyses started with data screening and cleaning, processing missing data and outliers, and computing descriptive statistics. Next, confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) assessed construct validity in each year. Cronbach's alphas were calculated to evaluate scale reliability. Finally, temporary stability was assessed through the correlation between the two years' composite scores.

**Results:** For both years, each item scored above the scale's midpoint 3, skewness and kurtosis were within  $\pm 2$ . After removing the two ineffective reverse-coded items, CFAs resulted in a good model fit for both years,  $p$  values for Chi-square tests  $> .05$ , CFIs  $> .95$ , SRMRs  $< .05$ , RMSEAs  $< .05$ . Factor correlations in both CFA models, however, were greater than  $.85$ , indicating a poor discriminant validity. A respecified one-factor model resulted in an acceptable with good discriminant validity. Scale reliability for this single factor was high (Cronbach's  $\alpha s > .87$ ). Correlation between the two composite scores demonstrated an acceptable temporary stability ( $r = .38, p < .01$ ).

**Conclusion/Discussion:** Different from the literature, our study showed that the two reverse-coded items of the IBS were ineffective in assessing social supports among this group of at-risk boys. Also, they were unable to distinguish supports for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The respecified one-factor model demonstrated acceptable construct validity and temporary stability across two years. Therefore, we recommend using one composite score to represent perceived social supports among similar populations. Future research can follow up with a larger sample size and examine the IBS' prolonged validity and stability.

**Keywords:** Self-determination theory, social supports, autonomy, competence, relatedness, at-risk children



## Young Adults' Enjoyment and Motivation in Exergaming and Aerobic Dance

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### Abstract

**Background/Purpose:** Exergaming has been evident to be a novel and interesting channel to enhance young adults' enjoyment and motivation while engaging in physical activity, yet no known research has been conducted to compare its efficacy versus traditional content- identical exercise modality. In response, this project investigated mean differences in young adults' self-efficacy, enjoyment, and self-determined motivation in different content-identical exercise modalities (exergaming aerobic dance vs. traditional aerobic dance).

**Method:** Forty young adults (20 females, 20 males;  $M_{age} = 20.38$ ) were recruited from a Chinese university and completed two separate 12-minute dance sessions: (1) nonstop exergaming aerobic dance (Xbox 360 Kinect Just Dance - Just Sweat around the World) and (2) traditional aerobic dance led by an experienced instructor. Participants' self-efficacy, enjoyment, and self-determined motivation (intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, external regulation, amotivation) were measured by a battery of validated questionnaires during each session. MANOVA with repeated measures was used to examine mean differences in these outcomes between the two dance sessions. The significance level was set at 0.05.

**Results:** Significant differences were identified between the two dance sessions for the overall model, Wilks' Lambda = 0.437,  $F(7, 33) = 6.069$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $\beta^2 = 0.563$ . Post-hoc tests revealed that participants had significantly higher enjoyment toward exergaming dance ( $3.54 \pm 0.56$ ) compared to their enjoyment toward aerobic dance ( $3.31 \pm 0.60$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 3.59$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ,  $\beta^2 = 0.08$ . In terms of self-determined motivation, exergaming dance resulted in significantly higher intrinsic motivation ( $6.11 \pm 0.98$ ) than aerobic dance ( $5.62 \pm 1.32$ ),  $F(1, 39) = 3.82$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $\beta^2 = 0.09$ . No other significant differences were detected for other outcomes.

**Conclusion:** In consistent with the literature, this study suggests that exergaming dance may lead to higher perceived enjoyment and intrinsic motivation among young adults, compared to traditional aerobic dance. This finding has practical implications for physical activity promotion, in which young adults might be more likely to engage in game-like exercises when they perceive more enjoyment and/or are more intrinsically motivated toward the activity. Future research may test this conclusion by including more participants from various age groups and with diverse backgrounds.

**Keywords:** Young adults, physical activity, exergaming, dance, motivation

## **Middle School Students’ Behaviors, Fitness, and Knowledge Related to Active Living Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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### **Abstract**

**Background/Purpose:** During COVID-19, many schools transitioned from in-person to hybrid or online instructional mode. This change might have limited students’ physical activity (PA) opportunities and prompts researchers to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on middle school students. This study, therefore, aimed to compare students’ behaviors (PA at school, PA out of school, and sedentary behaviors), health-related fitness (cardiorespiratory endurance and abdominal endurance), and knowledge related to active living before and during the pandemic.

**Method:** The study took place in a public middle school located in the southeastern US. Data were collected at T1 pre-pandemic ( $n = 403$ ; February 2020), T2 partially reopened ( $n = 436$ ; February 2021), and T3 full reopened ( $n = 460$ ; March 2021). A high intensity interval training (HIIT)-based fitness education unit was implemented in the spring semester of 2021. Students in grades 6–8 completed the Youth Activity Profile, 20-meter PACER test, Plank test, and a validated written test to measure behaviors (T1-T3), fitness (T2-T3), and knowledge (T1-T3). MANOVA was performed to examine changes in the three outcomes by time, gender, and grade.

**Results:** Analyses revealed a significant time main effect (Pillai’s Trace = .02,  $F_{6, 2560} = 5.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a time\*grade interaction (Pillai’s Trace = .02,  $F_{12, 3843} = 1.93$ ,  $p = .03$ ) for active-living behaviors. Subsequent post-hoc tests identified a significant decline in PA out of school from T1 to T2 ( $p < .001$ ). Sedentary behaviors increased from T1 to T2 but declined from T2 to T3 for 8<sup>th</sup> graders and declined from T1 to T3 for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Cardiorespiratory endurance and abdominal endurance increased from T2 to T3 ( $p < .001$ ). Knowledge showed a gender effect ( $F_{1, 1281} = 46.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a time\*gender interaction effect ( $F_{2, 1281} = 4.42$ ,  $p = .012$ ), with scores of boys decreased and girls increased.

**Conclusion/Discussion:** This study found that middle school students’ PA out of school and sedentary behaviors changed before and during the pandemic, and these changes differed by grades. Boys and girls displayed opposite changes for active living knowledge. Further, the school re-opening saw an improvement in students’ health-related fitness, which may partially attribute to the HIIT-based fitness education unit. The findings indicate the disruptive impact of COVID-19 on middle school students’ behaviors, fitness, and knowledge related to active living. However, providing more opportunities may allow children to be active, fit, and to learn.

**Keywords:** Middle school, physical activity, fitness, active living, COVID

### III. Frequently Asked Questions

This section may address commonly asked questions.

#### 1. Abstract Writing

**(1). Are citations necessarily included in an abstract?**

Generally, in-text citations are not necessarily included in a stand-alone abstract. The purpose of inserting citations in text is to credit the author of the information and direct the reader to the original source where the information is located. In a full-length paper, an in-text citation must be accompanied with a complete citation in the reference list. With both citations, the reader can identify the in-text, locate the complete citation in the reference list, and further find the original source. Therefore, providing in-text citations only in a stand-alone abstract, without an accompanying reference list, may not suffice the purpose of using citations. In practice, however, reviewers usually do not mind the inclusion of in-text citations in an abstract. As such, including in-text citations or not will be up to the author's discretion.

**(2). My abstract only contains one hundred words. Should I add more?**

Yes, you should add more words to your abstract such as providing more rationale for your study, describing more details on how you collected and analyzed the data, and/or discussing what the results indicate and call for. You can refer to the samples in Section II for more guidance.

**(3). I am writing and submitting my abstract in Chinese. Do I still have to follow the guidelines described in Section I?**

Regardless of languages, you are expected to follow the guidelines to come up with a quality abstract.

**(4). I'm not confident in English writing. Can you help me find professional editing services?**

You can reach out to professional editing services or individuals who have knowledge about it. However, as a non-profit organization ICSPAH does not provide such service.

#### 2. Abstract Submission

**(1). I am having difficulty registering an account. Can you help me?**

To register an account, please follow the steps listed on the [system support page](#). The registration process is relatively easy to follow, you should have no problem with it. If you have, please contact the [system support](#) service.

**(2). Can I send you a copy of my abstract instead of submitting it on the submission system?**

No, we do not accept abstracts sent via email. To successfully submit your abstract, you have to [register an account](#) in the submission system and submit it on your own.

**(3). I am a student. Can I submit an abstract as the first and/or corresponding author?**

## FAQs

Yes, you can. The authorship is merely depending on how much credit you deserve for the abstract.

**(4). I cannot find a place to fill out the title and abstract body in the submission system. What should I do?**

Once you have logged in the system, you should find places titled “Title” and “Abstract” to fill in needed information. For more guidance, please visit the [abstract submission support service](#).

**(5). I filled the submission form out but why I received a notification saying my submission was “Incomplete?”**

All items with \* are required to answer. You might have skipped at least one required question so that you received an “incomplete” notification. In this case, you can simply go back to the submission form, double check every item, and make sure all required questions are answered.

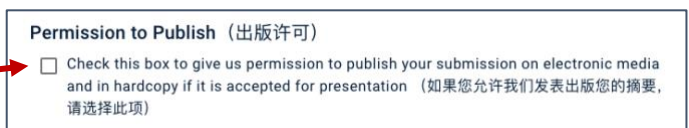
**(6). Can I make changes to my submitted abstract?**

Yes, you can make changes to your submission as long as the changes are made prior to the submission deadline. To do so, simply log back in the submission system, click the “Edit” button, and then you will be able to edit your submitted abstract.



**(7). Can I present my abstract during the conference but choose not to publish it in the Journal of Physical Activity and Health (JPAH)?**

Yes, that's your decision. You can indicate intent by **NOT** checking the “Permission to Publish” option in the [submission system](#). If you have already submitted your abstract but now would like to choose not to publish it, you can go back to the submission system and edit your option.



### 3. Abstract Acceptance and Presentation

**(1). My abstract is Accepted with Major Revision. What does this decision mean?**

It means your abstract has met the minimum requirement of acceptance. You can prepare to present the abstract during our conference. However, it may not be considered publishing without major revision. If you wish your abstract to be published in the JPAH, please make substantial revision (by going back to the submission page and clicking “Edit”) before the conference kick-off date.

**(2). Following up with the previous question: Will my abstract be published in the JPAH if I have made a major revision?**

We cannot guarantee whether your revised abstract would be published or not. It all depends on the quality of the revision.

## FAQs

**(3). If my abstract is accepted and presented during the conference, will it be published in the IJPAH?**

It depends. As we outlined in the Call for Abstracts, only qualified abstracts written in English, regardless of presentation types, can be published in the IJPAH.

**(4). I have prepared to present my abstract in Chinese; however, do I need an interpreter aside to translate my presentation?**

No, an interpreter is totally unnecessary. As we outlined in the Call for Abstracts, you can present your abstract in Chinese, although our official language is English.

**(5). I have submitted my abstract written in English; however, can I present it in Chinese?**

Yes, you can present your abstract in Chinese, but we encourage you to do your presentation using English.

**(6). I have submitted my paper to another conference. Can I submit it again to the ICSPAHA annual conference?**

If you have submitted your paper to another conference, you cannot submit it again to any other conference anymore. This is a basic academic ethic requirement.

**(7). I know that I need to submit an abstract only at this time, but do I need to submit a full paper latter?**

No, submission of a full paper is not required for this conference.

## 4. Other

**(1). Is the ICSPAHA conference a level 1 conference?**

It is an international conference.

**(2). Can I ask a few questions about the conference registration?**

This guide focuses on abstract writing. If you have questions about conference registration, you can view the FAQs for Conference Registration document on our website or send us an email at [icspah@hotmail.com](mailto:icspah@hotmail.com).