

MSF Scientific Days 2021: Guidelines for submitting a research abstract

Total abstract wordcount: **400 words**.

Abstract System Opens (window 1) (for submission to all Scientific Days, including MSF Scientific Days International): **23 November 2020**.

First Submission deadline: **13 January 2021. This is the deadline for MSF Scientific Days International.**

Abstract System Reopens (window 2) (for submission to MSF Scientific Days Asia, Latin America & Southern Africa **ONLY**): **25 February 2021**

Second Submission Deadline: **29 March 2021**

Please Note: The submission system for MSF Scientific Days 2021 will open twice this year. The first window is for submission to all events (MSF Scientific Days International, Europe, Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa). The second window is for MSF Scientific Days Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa **ONLY**. **If you wish your research or innovation to be considered for MSF Scientific Days International or Europe, it must be submitted in the first window (23 November 2020 – 13 January 2021).** If you submit your work during window one there is no need to resubmit during window two as all work will be carried forward for consideration by the editorial committees of MSF Scientific Days Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa.

Content

Your abstract should clearly and concisely give enough information about your research project to allow a reader to understand: why your research was needed; what you did; what you found out; and, importantly, what your findings mean for patients, MSF operations, or more widely.

Introduction

Why was your research needed and what was your aim in doing it?

- Please describe the relevant background e.g. for MSF projects, detail why MSF is present in the region, what the project involves, and the setting (e.g. community, clinic, or hospital).
- Programme descriptions: the introduction must describe what your programme is and what it aims to do.
- You need to explain why this study/medical programme is needed – what information gap is it addressing/what would have happened without it?
- Describe the aim of the study/ medical programme and name the methodology (e.g. in a prospective cohort study, we aimed to establish whether... or in this programme description, we assessed.)

Methods

What did you do?

Research studies:

- describe what was done
- how the data was collected
- how data were analysed
- ensure your comparison group is clear.
- Programme descriptions:
- describe how you analysed the programme.
- avoid duplicating information in introduction and methods sections;
- Include any comparison group or programme if available.

Results

What did you find out?

- Research studies: give primary outcomes, relate to aims stated in the introduction and to the methods described in the methods section – do not include results from work not described in the methods section.
- Programme descriptions: describe the outcomes of the programme, relate to aims stated in the introduction

Conclusion

What should MSF or others do with your results?

Your conclusions should describe the implications of your work and any recommendations you may have for its future.

- Explain the significance of your main findings – why are they interesting? Are you the first to report this? Is this the largest cohort? Is this a unique cohort? Don't just repeat your results again.
- Explain the implications (potential impact) of your study/programme – what this means for practice, policy or advocacy for MSF or others. Do not overstate your implications and ensure that any conclusions relate directly to the results you report.
- How would you like your results to be used by MSF? Propose next steps and a way forward (avoid saying "more research is needed...").
- Please include any limitations of your study/programme.

Application Process

Support

Assistance is available to review/assist in abstract writing. If you require this, please contact scientificday@msf.org as early as possible.

Abstract review

Abstracts are rated according to: quality of scientific content, relevance and importance for a medical humanitarian audience, novelty of topic/findings, and rarity of topic – some topics, such as maternal health, are under-represented in MSF research and abstracts on such topics receive extra consideration.

All abstracts are considered for the International, Europe, Asia, Southern Africa and Latin America events for either poster or oral presentation. The requirement to plan a high quality and geographically appropriate agenda for each event dictates where abstracts will be invited to present.

Poster authors may also be offered an opportunity to produce a video to support their poster.

Abstract editing

Abstracts accepted for oral presentations will be edited. The aim is to ensure that presenters are fully prepared to meet questions that may be raised during the conference and to ensure that MSF research is presented clearly and appropriately.

Authors must be available to revise abstracts and presentation slides according to the conference timeframes. Please note that the offer of an oral presentation or poster involves commitment by authors to meet deadlines and to respond to points raised by the Editorial Committee.

Abstracts will be edited for English language readability, scientific clarity, consistency, and adherence to abstract guidelines (see Content section above).

Edited abstracts will include questions/points raised by the Editorial Committee – these must be addressed in the abstract revision.

Note - poster abstracts are not published and therefore not edited. Authors will receive an edited version of their title and author affiliations to check for inclusion in the conference booklet.

Presentation/poster editing

Presentations and posters are not edited unless they are sent early and assistance is requested. However, they will be reviewed to ensure that poster and presentation guidelines are met – in particular around ethics statements, image use (author and copyright information included, including for maps; consent and ethics of using images of people or patients, particularly children), and clarity/accuracy of English language.

Presentation/poster presentation practice

All oral presenters must ensure they are fully prepared to present both to an in-person audience and an online audience of 1000s; so public speaking training is highly recommended

Presentation practice for presenters will be available online prior to MSF Scientific Days International. To take advantage presenters must register in advance by emailing scientificday@msf.org with a subject title of 'presentation coaching'.

If poster authors are offered an oral spot to present their poster they may also attend coaching online, and should register as above.

Content sharing

All abstracts, posters, slides, and videos of oral presentations will be shared on an open access gateway at <https://f1000research.com/gateways/MSF/scidays>. Posters will be shared in advance of the conference and tweeted via @msfsci. Highlights of the day will be written up for blogs and potentially further publication.

Deadlines

Abstract submission deadline for MSF Scientific Days International and Europe: **13 January 2021**

Abstract submission deadline for MSF Scientific Days Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa: **29 March 2021**

Feedback

If you have been successful in securing a poster or an oral presentation at the MSF Scientific Days International event you will be contacted by **10th March 2021** and asked to confirm participation.

If you have not been successful, you will be contacted by **25th March**, however you may still secure a place at the Asia, Latin America or Southern Africa events, for which timelines are yet to be set.

Ethics

MSF abstracts must have had ethics oversight and been approved for submission to MSF Scientific Days by the Medical Director from the Operational Centre responsible for the research.

Please see the [MSF Ethics Review Board \(ERB\)](#) for guidance.

For research from other organisations, abstracts should have the relevant Ethics Committee oversight.

In the submission system, you will need to choose from one of the options below:

- Approved by an Ethics Review Board (ERB) - please specify:
- This research fulfilled the exemption criteria set by the Médecins Sans Frontières Ethics Review Board for a posteriori analyses of routinely collected clinical data and thus did not require MSF ERB review. It was conducted with permission from (Medical Director, Operational Centre) Médecins Sans Frontières
- Other, please explain:

Conflicts of interest

You will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest. Failure to disclose these might lead to withdrawal of abstracts or presentations from MSF Scientific Days. All conflicts of interest will be published in the conference booklet.

A conflict of interest exists when professional judgement concerning a primary interest (such as patients' welfare or validity of research) may be influenced by a secondary interest (such as financial gain).

All authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organisations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work. Examples of financial conflicts include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patents or patent applications, and travel grants, all within 3 years of beginning the work submitted.

Financial relationships are easily identifiable, but conflicts can also occur because of personal relationships or rivalries, academic competition, or intellectual beliefs. A conflict can be actual or potential, and full disclosure is best practice.

Agreements between authors and study sponsors that interfere with authors' access to all of a study's data, or that interfere with their ability to analyse and interpret the data and to prepare and publish work independently, may represent conflicts of interest, and should be avoided.

All submissions must include disclosure of all relationships that could be viewed as presenting a potential or actual conflict of interest.

If there are no conflicts of interest, authors should tick the box to state that there are none.

Please note, all submitted MSF abstracts will be sent to the relevant Medical Director so that they are aware of what has been submitted.

Authorship

Please ensure that the names of all authors from the research team who qualify for authorship are included in the submission. Note that, wherever feasible, we would expect to see authors from the countries where the research is conducted.

Data reporting standards

- If you have quantitative data, give actual numbers, not only percentages. Do not use phrases like 'around half' unless supported by underlying numbers. Ensure that the denominator is clear throughout the analysis and include where needed.
- Means need standard deviations (SDs); medians need interquartile ranges (IQRs). Give 95% confidence intervals (CIs) and p-values where appropriate.

Get in touch

If you have any questions, please get in contact with us: scientificday@msf.org