

# Analysis of Titles of Posters Displayed in Anaesthesiology Conference – A Descriptive Study

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Posters form an important factor to shape a successful scientific career and an essential part of communicating with the scientific fraternity. The title is what grabs the attention of the viewer and triggers initial interest.

**Methodology:** This descriptive study analyzes the titles of 118 posters presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Karnataka State Conference of the Indian Society of Anaesthesiologists (KISACON). The titles were classified as: Descriptive, Declarative, Interrogative and Fancy. The number of words used in the title were also noted and classified as Short (less than 10), Average (11-20) and Lengthy (>20). The types of abbreviations used were also studied

**Results:** Of the 118 posters, 115 of the titles (97.4%) were Descriptive, 2 were Fancy (1.8%) and one was Interrogative (0.8%). The average number of words in a title was 11.6 with a standard deviation of  $\pm 4.73$  with 26 words being the maximum and 4 being the minimum number of words. Hyphen was the most common punctuation used

**Conclusion:** The length and the type of the title, though subjective and of the author's choice, has to be appropriate to the nature of the publication.

**Keywords:** Poster, Title, Scientific writing, Conference

## Introduction

It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words. A common saying is that we remember 10 percent of what we read, 20 percent of what we hear, 30 percent of what we see and 50 percent of what we see and hear. Posters form an important factor to shape a successful scientific career and an essential part of communicating with the scientific fraternity. Posters should be considered a snap of the work intended to engage other researchers in a dialog about the work, or, in one's absence, to be a summary that will encourage the reader to want to learn more.<sup>1</sup> They permit condensation of the most relevant points of a research paper into a portable presentation.<sup>2</sup>

The title of a poster is one of the key elements. It is what first grabs the attention of the viewer and triggers initial interest. It should be concise and comprehensible to a wide audience. Reading the title should compel the conference attendees to visit the poster. It may pose a question, hint at a new discovery or define the scope. The title is equivalent to the headlines of a newspaper—brief, sharp, and compelling.<sup>1</sup>

The title is also extremely important for subsequent publication. It must adequately reflect the subject matter and be suitably written. It should not be too extensive or complicated and conform with the journal's guidelines

for researchers. Gjersvik P et al showed that a paper with a poor title was more likely to be rejected after a thorough review as the title reflected the quality of the content.<sup>3</sup>

This study was undertaken to analyze the titles of posters presented at an anaesthesiology conference.

## Methodology

This is a descriptive study which analyzes the titles of 118 posters presented at the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Karnataka State Conference of the Indian Society of Anaesthesiologists (KISACON) which was conducted at SDM College of Medical Sciences and Hospital, Dharwad in October 2014. The titles with abstracts were obtained from the Souvenir published by KISACON.

To characterize the titles, a typology was used and the titles were classified as: Descriptive, Declarative, Interrogative and Fancy. Descriptive titles described the subject of the paper without revealing the conclusion. Declarative titles revealed the conclusion of the paper. Interrogative titles were framed in the form of a question. The number of words used in the title were also noted. Titles with a word count of less than 10 were considered as Short, 11 – 20 were considered as Average and > 20 were considered as Lengthy.<sup>3</sup> The types of abbreviations used in the titles were also studied.

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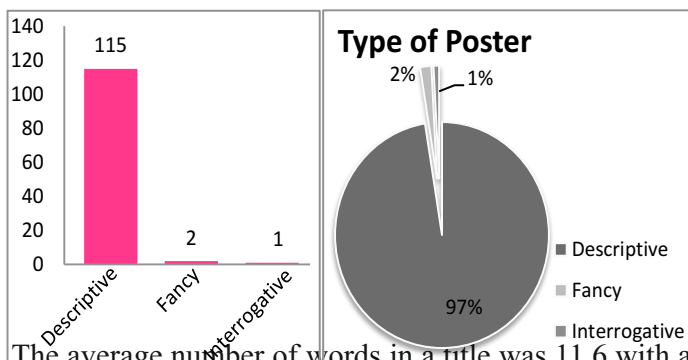
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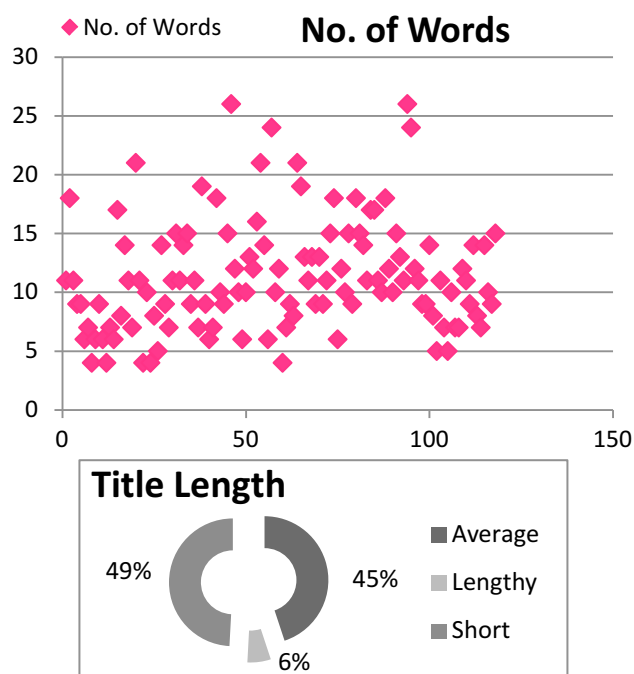


**Results :** There were 118 posters presented at KISACON 2014, all of which were included in the analysis. Of this, 115 of the titles (97.4%) were Descriptive, 2 were Fancy (1.8%) and one was Interrogative (0.8%).



The average number of words in a title was 11.6 with a standard deviation of + 4.73 with 26 words being the maximum and 4 being the minimum number of words.

The majority of the titles, i.e. 58 (49%) were Short



titles (45%) were Average and 7 (6%) titles were Lengthy. Punctuations were used in 34 (28.8%) titles. Of these, Hyphen was the most common punctuation used, followed by the Colon. Exclamatory mark was used in two titles and question mark in one title.

**Discussion :** The first thing that is noticed in a poster or a manuscript is the title. It conveys the content, significance and importance of the poster and makes the looker into a reader, i.e. it captivates the reader. Despite this, it is often the last component of completing a scientific paper and commonly receives very little

attention. The title completes the paper and hence it is like the pitch or the advertisement. It draws from all the sections and tries to capture the interest the reader.<sup>5</sup>

Most reviewers prefer titles to be short, concise, informative, avoid abbreviations and use key words early and carefully, so as to allow text retrieval by search engines and ensure future citations.<sup>3,5,6</sup>

Our analyses revealed that majority of the titles were Descriptive (97.4%); while Interrogative (0.8%) and Fancy titles (1.8%) were being used sparingly. The findings are similar to the study on Dissertation titles submitted to the Rajiv Gandhi University on Health Sciences in 2011, where majority of the titles were descriptive; and it was attributed to the probable fear amongst postgraduate students about rejection of a Dissertation with a Fancy title by the evaluators of dissertations. There were no Declarative titles. Paiva CE et al demonstrated that Declarative titles, which described the results of the study were cited more often.<sup>7</sup>

In our study 49% of the titles were short i.e. less than 10 words. Only 6% of the titles had more than 20 words. Most guidelines state that a title must be concise and short and almost half of the posters analyzed conferred to these guidelines.<sup>1,3,5,6</sup> However, there are conflicting ideas regarding the appropriate length for a title. It has been demonstrated that articles with shorter titles are cited more frequently.<sup>7</sup> However, according to a study by Habibzadeh H et al, longer titles have higher citation rates.<sup>8</sup> However, a brief and informative title is widely favoured.<sup>3,5-7</sup>

**Conclusion :** The length and the type of the title, though subjective and of the author's choice, it has to be appropriate to the nature of the publication.

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