The Art of Poster Presentation

Karen Zier, PhD
Associate Dean for Medical Student Research
Poster Pointers

• Tell a story
  - What is the punch-line
  - What is the best way to tell it

• Keep it simple
  - What is the question
  - What pieces of data answer the question

• Fewer words are better
  - Simple sentences
  - Clearly state what you want to say
Poster Components

• Title, authors, institutions
• Introduction and/or Abstract
• Hypothesis
• Materials and Methods
• Results
• Model (if relevant)
• Summary and Conclusions
Content
Title

• Title:
  - First glance of work
  - Short and to the point

• Authors:
  - First is usually presenter
  - Rest contributed to work

• Institutions:
  - Departments and institutions where work was performed
  - Can give email address
Introduction

• Abstract (optional)
  - Identical to what was submitted
  - Fill the page

• Introduction
  - 5-6 sentences introducing work
  - Purpose of study

• Hypothesis
  - What are you going to test
  - Can give the punch-line
Materials and Methods

• Titles for each method used in study
  - Patient demographics
  - Flow cytometry

• Brief summary of method
  - Not detailed
  - Just enough to let reader know what you did

• If you published, give reference
Data

• Data
  - Background: patient history and lab findings
  - Key pieces: test hypothesis

• Titles and Legends
  - Question/title: introduce experiment
  - Legend: Explain data in figure

• Schematic Models
  - Great for the reader: use them
Summary and Conclusions

• Summary
  - Brief review of work shown
  - What are the findings

• Conclusions
  - What did this study show
  - How does it contribute to literature
  - What will you do next
Mechanics
Presenting Your Project

• Fonts
  - Comic Sans
  - BOLD
  - Big enough for viewers to read

• Figures, graphs, pictures
  - PowerPoint
    • anything in PowerPoint can be inserted
    • any scanned picture can be inserted
    • excel graphs can be inserted
Presenting Your Poster

• Introduce yourself
• Have a script prepared
• Guide visitors through the poster, briefly discussing:
  - The goal of the project and why it’s important
  - The most important points
  - Future goals
  - Take questions
  - Thank people for coming
Remember

• You are selling your work, so look the part
• Dress professionally
• Look at visitors and talk directly to them
• Speak slowly
• Don’t be defensive and accept you don’t know everything
• Have a concise take home message
• Thank people for suggestions they make
Common Mistakes

• Not being at your poster
• Discussing too many details – one size does not fit all
• Poster simply contains too much information
• Too much text, not bullets
• Lack of a uniform style
• Too much data – white space is good!
• Font too small, too fancy, hard to read
• Graphics that are too fancy and distracting