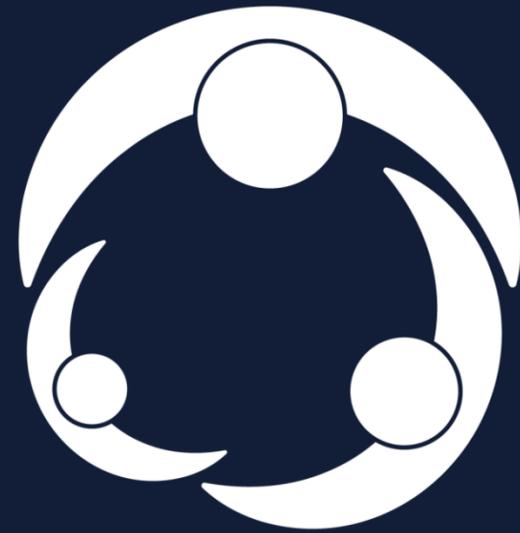# ICFP 2025

3-6 NOV • BOGOTÁ • COLOMBIA

Program Abstract Writing

Prepared by:

Scientific Subcommittee

International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP)

Contact email: abstracts@theicfp.org

Content

- Why present at ICFP?
- Purpose
- Title
- Program Intervention/Activity Tested
- Methodology
- Results/Key Findings
- Program Implications/Lessons

Why?

Why present your program abstract at ICFP?

- **Contribute** to the field of family planning (FP) with new knowledge.
- **Disseminate** the findings from your program implementation and learn from other potential similar programs or those addressing similar issues.
- **Raise** awareness about the lessons learned from your program evaluations.
- **Develop** new skills and practices through interactions with other researchers, advocates, service providers, program implementers and policymakers.
- **Add** to your professional development and overall profile.

Purpose

Purpose of a program abstract?

- **To demonstrate** to reviewers the relevance of your program and findings

- **To accurately summarize** the intervention, methodology, key findings, impact achieved, outcomes attained, and lessons learned

- **To briefly but clearly communicate** the preliminary or final findings of your program so that attendees can decide whether to attend your session

Title

The title is as important as the abstract content

- **Spend time on the title** – it is what all readers will see first.
- **Avoid long titles** – limit your title to 10-12 words.
- **Use descriptive terms and phrases that accurately capture the content.**
- **Considerations for a good title:**
  - Uses a few words to condense the content of the abstract
  - Includes the type of intervention (if applicable) – e.g. program implementation or evaluation
  - Captures the attention of the reader(s)
  - Differentiates the abstract from other abstracts on the same subject

Examples

- Not without us: A tool for responding to youth needs in Costed Implementation Plans

- Defining and Advancing Gender Competencies for Family Planning Service Providers: A Competency Framework

- Lessons learned from a public sector community-based distribution program for scaling up DMPA-SC contraceptive services in Nigeria

Scientific Program. 5th International Conference on FP (ICFP) ; November 12–15; Kigali, Rwanda. [online database]. https://www.xcdsystem.com/icfp/program/fhwQ4ds/index.cfm

Significance / Background

200 words maximum

Why was the program or evaluation necessary?

- **Provide the context of the program intervention or evaluation.**
- **For program implementation abstracts without evaluation results:**
  - Why is the program necessary, e.g. who is affected, what are the consequences?
- **For abstracts with evaluation results:**
  - The purpose of the evaluation
  - Who will be using the results
  - Stage of the program or project development
  - Project timeline

Why was the program necessary?

Do:

- Identify why your program is important.
- Provide relevant, specific context.

Do _NOT_:

- Do not summarize the context of the issue without identifying what specifically your program/project will address.
- Do not waste space on generic background information. Instead, be specific to the context and program.

Example

Global populations have wide diversity in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) needs and preferences. To better meet these needs --and improve health impact -- decision-makers are prioritizing expansion of the array of contraceptive and SRH innovations available in resource-limited countries. Self-injectable contraceptives (SI) are one such innovation. To integrate SI as part of local SRH service offerings, investments in social and behavior change (SBC), demand generation, and service delivery are necessary. Teams tasked with managing such interventions require evidence to understand women's movement along SBC use journey stages from awareness, to intent to use, to eventual use.

Where service delivery data reveals patterns in SI adoption, it cannot help implementers understand the linkages between adoption and earlier stages of the use journey linkages that are critical to real-time decision-making. To assess awareness, programs can leverage such digitally-focused metrics as impressions, reach, and click-through-rates on a weekly to daily basis. However, these do not assess saturation, nor reach to unique (individual) users or geographies. Though household surveys can offer a rigorous assessment of women's movement from awareness to intent, cost precludes their frequent use in data-to-action cycles. Standard methods thus leave many programs with a missing link.

Why is this project important? – Establishes the importance of the expansion of contraceptive and SRH innovations in resource-limited countries, specifically about SI.

Ontiri S, Cole C, et al: Layering innovative data sources to bridge the gap: delivering what's needed to manage Demand Generation for new family planning product introduction. Paper presented at: ICFP 2022; November 14-17; Pattaya City, Thailand. ICFP Program. [online database]. https://icfp2022.dryfta.com/index.php?option=com_dryfta&view=program&Itemid=684

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Relevant, specific, context– Provides brief description of the project.

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> Purpose of the evaluation strategy

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Program Intervention / Activity Tested

100 words maximum

Program intervention

Program Implementation

- **Describe the "what" in a few sentences.**
  - Goal(s) and objective(s)
  - Theory of change
- **What activities were conducted?**
  - Program delivery
    - Adherence
    - Adaptation
  - Program receipt
    - Beneficiary responsiveness
    - Attendance

Program Evaluation

- **What is(are) the key evaluation question(s)**
- **Clarify the type of evaluation-stakeholder relationship**
  - Independent evaluation
  - Participatory/collaborative evaluation
  - Empowerment evaluation
- **Scope of the evolution : What is the aim of the evaluation?**
  - Improve the program?
  - Was the program implemented well?
  - Determine any changes in the outcome?
  - Changes in outcome attributable to the program?

Determining the scope of abstract

Project Stage	Scope of Abstract
Project Design	• Formative research or evaluation • Needs assessment

Project Implementation	• Process evaluation
	• Summative Evaluation
	  • Outcome evaluation
	  • Impact evaluation
	• Economic evaluations
	  • Cost-minimization analysis
	  • Cost-effectiveness analysis
	  • Cost–benefit analysis
	  • Cost–utility analysis
	• Implementation science

Project Evaluation	• Summative Evaluation
	  • Outcome evaluation
	  • Impact evaluation
	• Economic evaluations
	  • Cost-minimization analysis
	  • Cost-effectiveness analysis
	  • Cost–benefit analysis
	  • Cost–utility analysis
	• Implementation science
	• Theory-based evaluation

Example

Delivering Innovation in Self Care (DISC) works in Nigeria and Uganda to build women's knowledge of and demand for self-care as a normative part of their SRH care options, beginning with SI. DISC implements demand generation interventions including digital health to reach women through internet-enabled devices, fostering their awareness and health information-seeking behavior. To bridge the data divide left by standard methods and meet the project's just-in-time data needs within resource constraints, DISC innovated its methodological approach. The project leveraged artificial intelligence to identify key influencers to survey nearly 2,000 women from its target segments.

Project objective

Project activities

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Methodology

200 words maximum

Tools and techniques used for the research

Location	Where was the program conducted?
Setting and design	• In which settings the program (evaluation) was implemented (conducted). • What design was used in gathering the information?
Data source	Data collection procedures, primary or secondary?
Time frame	Period when data was collected
Sample or participants size	Population, sampling procedures, number of treatments if any
Analytical approach or evaluation approach	Results measurements and analysis procedures

> **!** The scope of the evaluation will dictate the design, and the robustness of the design is the only way to establish causal relationships. Authors should clarify if their designs were experimental, non-experimental, or quasi-experimental.

Example

The DISC designed a structured ten-question self-administered online survey. It captured female respondents' age, region, parity, pregnancy status, contraceptive use, awareness of SI, source of SI information, awareness of DISC interventions, interest in SI, and intent to SI. This was translated into local languages.

With Affluence, DISC deployed an artificial intelligence (AI) instrument to identify key local opinion leaders, known as micro and nano influencers, to serve as the enumeration team. The AI tool screened influencers based on their active fora and key demographic, psychographic, and geographic characteristics.

Influencer-enumerators recruited respondents based on sex and residence, using an opt-in approach. They shared the survey through social media, group chats, and direct messages.

Desired sample sizes were calculated using estimated urban populations of women of reproductive age in Oyo, Lagos and Niger states in Nigeria, and Uganda's Eastern and Western regions, to yield a 95% confidence interval and margin of error of 4. Resulting desired sample sizes were 600 in each country. To encourage efficient recruitment of the sample, influencer-enumerators were offered a "speed bonus" of up to USD$5 to recruit participants within a proscribed time period. This time frame was adjusted during the survey to encourage productivity.

Setting and design

Analytic approach

Data sources

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Results / Key Findings

250 words maximum

Main findings

Scope of abstract	Main issue(s) to address
◉ **Formative research or evaluation**	◉ Specific recommendations for a public health intervention
◉ **Needs Assessment**	◉ Specific priority recommendations for targeted intervention
◉ **Process evaluation**	◉ Was the project implemented according to the plan, how well was it done, what was the access and coverage?
◉ **Outcome evaluation**	◉ The change in observed characteristics of the target population. (Note: Not the state of the program).
◉ **Impact evaluation**	◉ The change in the observed characteristics of the target population that can be attributed to the program. ◉ Requires rigorous design and analysis to establish the causal link ◉ What was the net effect of the program?

Main findings

Scope of abstract	Main issue(s) to address
◉ Cost-minimization analysis	◉ Least costly alternative intervention among those assumed to produce same health outcomes?
◉ Cost-effectiveness analysis	◉ Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratio comparing the economic value of an intervention compared with an alternative.
◉ Cost–utility analysis	◉ Summary measures comparing costs of interventions in monetary units with health outcomes regarding their utility and mortality - Utility measures (QALYs, DALYs, etc.)
◉ Cost–benefit analysis	◉ Comparison of costs of different interventions and health benefits (and risks)
◉ Implementation research	◉ Key finding depending on the focus of the implementation research ◉ What findings from your implementation research can improve the implementation of implementation of health policies, programs, and practices? Consider the following aspects: ◉ Sustainability ◉ Scale-up ◉ Fidelity ◉ Replication ◉ Feasibility ◉ Equitability ◉ Unintended consequences etc.

Preliminary or final results

- Answer the main question(s).
  - Describe the relevant results or lessons learned.
- Consider your audience.
  - What would the ICFP scientific community want to know?
  - What do they already know?
  - What appears new from the findings in your research?
  - Are there any new relationships or trends to emphasize?
- Be specific and as clear as possible.
- Report both positive and negative findings when relevant.

Preliminary or final results

- Organize your results first to start with descriptive findings before analytical findings.

- Report your findings in parallel with your methodology.

- For **quantitative** research abstracts:
  - Report associations with confidence intervals or p-values.

- For **qualitative** research abstracts:
  - The results must be rich with depth, details, and nuance.
  - Results must be clearly tied to the methodology used to reach them and addressing the described research questions or hypothesis.

Preliminary or final results

Your findings do not need to be final to be submitted. *HOWEVER*, abstracts that present at least some results are stronger than those that only have anticipated results.

Do:

- Focus on the key findings related to implementation or evaluation.

- Present results even if they are not what you expected, including no relationships if of central interest to the project.

Do _NOT_:

- Do not focus on results from descriptive analyses at the expense of your key results.

Example

Influencer-enumerators included a pool of "micro-influencers"(those with 10,000-20,000 social media followers) and "nano-influencers"(those with 1,000-10,000 followers),as well as informal influencers.

Over two weeks, 40 influencer-enumerators (20 per country) engaged 968 respondents in Nigeria, and 1,017 in Uganda. These subsequently yielded a completed survey sample size of 618 respondents in Nigeria, and 602 in Uganda, surpassing DISC's minimum desired sample size requirements.

All respondents originated from DISC states and districts and represented women both within DISC segments (urban women aged 18-24 and 25-35) and those beyond, allowing for comparison of awareness and intent results among users reached within DISC segments as compared to the general population of women of reproductive age.

Limitations to the data set included self-selection bias and the inclusion of respondents who are literate, who have online access, and who have and can afford internet-enabled smart phones (particularly important in Uganda where taxes on data use are prominent. This resulted in a sample of women who may typically be younger and more inclined toward online engagement than the overall population of women of reproductive age in the project's target segments and areas.

Full design and execution of the survey was completed within a total of only four weeks. This in turn enabled a data-to-action cycle (for programmatic decision-making) that began and concluded within a two-month period. The average cost per user was less than USD$4.90, about half of standard online or phone-based survey costs.

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Program Implications / Lessons

250 words maximum

Key takeaways

- Most important takeaway message or lesson from your abstract
- Formulation: a few precisely worded sentences
- Three essential questions:
  - **Message:** How does your findings address the "why" described in the first section?
  - **Importance:** What is the implication of your key lessons, highlights or findings to existing and future programs, policies, and services?
  - **Perspective:** What are the recommendations and future research and evaluations?

Important considerations

- Your conclusions must be accurately supported by the data.
- Where applicable, key takeaways may focus on key indicators of the program.
- Allow space to mention important or unexpected findings (including null results).
- Iterate on the implications of your findings for FP practice in program and policy.
- Ensure your conclusions are scrupulously honest and no claims are not supported by your data.

Example

Efforts to advance knowledge of and demand for new SRH products require timely and rigorous data that reach beyond standard social media metrics, and which are resource-efficient. The combined approach of recruiting enumeration teams via AI and conducting online survey of respondents presents important data opportunities for digital health focused programs. Within two months, the DISC project generated needed data to understand women's shift in awareness and intent to use this new SRH product and to use this data to shape program implementation. Complementing more resource-intensive household surveys, the AI innovation was an efficient and cost-effective method to collect process data to shape ongoing program design and implementation. As an added benefit, trained influencer-enumerators can be engaged in subsequent rounds of surveillance with limited repeat investment in training.

Further, unlike traditional research approaches, project teams also gained a programmatic asset in influencer-enumerators. As influencers, the benchmark of success is effective engagement of an online community-an objective aligned with demand generation-oriented project goals to reach and engage women to learn about new SRH innovations. As such, they can be engaged for versatile uses, without introducing conflict of interest with research aims. As respondents' completion of surveys is fully independent, key influencers can be engaged to foster interest in content as well as survey participation without risk of undue influence on the content of survey responses. Within the parameters of the limitations and biases noted, influencer-enumerators are a highly effective means of respondent recruitment.

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Research Misconduct

Good research conduct is essential

🔴 **Fabrication:**

The ICFP Scientific Subcommittee conducts thorough investigations whenever data fabrication is suspected, and abstracts are likely to be rejected in such cases.

🔴 **Falsification:**

Any manipulation of research findings or inaccurate representation of data may lead to rejection of the abstracts.

🔴 **Plagiarism:**

Using another author's words, ideas or phrasing without proper attribution is strictly punishable and concerned abstracts will be rejected.

More on our research ethics policy can be found here: https://www.jhsph.edu/offices-and-services/student-affairs/resources/student-policies/_documents/academic-ethics-code.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions

Which abstracts are likely to be accepted for ICFP?

- Abstracts strictly following the guidelines and word count.

- Abstracts presenting new knowledge or evidence supported by the data and clear analysis methodology.

- Abstracts written in **English, French, or Spanish**.
  - Abstracts in **English, French, or Spanish** languages have equal chance to be accepted.
  - Ensure clarity of the language used in the abstract.
  - Review your abstracts to make sur there are no typos or wrong words.

Why long abstracts for ICFP (1000 words vs 300 words)?

- ICFP allows up to 1000 words for individual abstracts and 400 words for abstracts submitted as part of a preformed panel.

- Long abstracts allow authors to:
  - Provide sufficient details that allow the ICFP Scientific Subcommittee to appropriately review the abstract.
  - Clearly clarify the research question(s) and context.
  - Explain the methodology in detail and results.

What to do and what not to do

- Make sure you stay on topic
  - **Abstracts that do not address family planning will not be accepted.**

- Rule of three: "Simple," "Clear," and "Comprehensible"
  - Avoid very long sentences and dense paragraphs.
  - Do not use unusual terms and acronyms without defining them.
  - Consider having your abstract reviewed by a native speaker of the language of your abstract before submission.

- Be consistent when you write the confidence intervals and the number of decimals.

Source: Mary M. Shirley. 0A Dozen Dos and Don'ts: Thoughts after Reading Hundreds of Abstracts. https://www.coase.org/writings/shirley2010dosanddontsinabstracts.pdf

What to do and what not to do

- Avoid using the passive voice.
- Use the present tense to describe:
    - The problem addressed by your abstract
    - Implications of your research findings
- Use past tense when describing:
    - Methods used
    - Results found
    - Study limitations and strength
- Never start a sentence with a number.

What to do and what not to do

- Your first lines should iterate on why anyone should care about the topic of your abstract.
- Remember, the abstract is about:
    - "What you did"
    - "How you did it"
    - "What you found"
    - "What you learned"

Recommended resources

- Mary M. Shirley. 0A Dozen Dos and Don'ts: Thoughts after Reading Hundreds of Abstracts. https://www.coase.org/writings/shirley2010dosanddontsinabstracts.pdf

- Andrade, C. (2011). How to write a good abstract for a scientific paper or conference presentation. Indian journal of psychiatry, 53(2), 172.

- Conn, V. S. (2020). Crafting Effective Abstracts.

- Ferreira, J. C., & Patino, C. M. (2018). Twelve tips to write an abstract for a conference: advice for young and experienced investigators. Jornal Brasileiro de Pneumologia, 44(4), 260-260.

- Simkhada, P., Van Teijlingen, E., Hundley, V., & Simkhada, B. (2015). Writing an Abstract for a Scientific Conference. Kathmandu University Medical Journal, 11(3), 262-265. https://doi.org/10.3126/kumj.v11i3.12518

Questions?

Any questions regarding abstract submission may be directed to abstracts@theicfp.org.

Thank you.