

Liberty University

Master of Public Health

HLTH 698

**Sample Paper for Liberty University Practicum Class
or Other Paper Requiring Structured Abstract: Final Draft**

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December 28, 2020

Words: 1624

Abstract

(Use of a structured abstract is appropriate for original research, systematic reviews, and clinical reviews. For example, students completing original research or systematic reviews for their Practicum would use a structured abstract)

Importance: Begin the abstract with one or two sentences “explaining the clinical or research importance of the study or systematic review question.”^{1(pp31,33,35)} Single-space sections of the abstract; add one blank single-spaced line between sections.

Objective: The specific objective or study question should be stated in this section. For example, “To determine whether...” The entire abstract should be **no more than 350** words total for all structured abstracts except those for narrative reviews.^{1(pp31,33,35)} Do not cite references or include URLs in the abstract; reference citations are only included in this sample paper to credit the *AMA Manual*, where specific, quoted content was taken from.

Design, Setting, Participants: For Liberty University class papers, these three elements of design, setting, and participants can be combined in the abstract. Describe each feature, including “clinical disorders, important eligibility criteria, and key sociodemographic features of patients.”^{1(p32)}

Main Outcome and Measures: Include a summary of the anticipated outcome measurements as planned before collection of the data.^{1(p32)}

Results: Include all aspects of the results, including baseline demographics, risk measurements, effect sizes, and measures of uncertainty.^{1(p32-33)}

Conclusion: Per the *AMA Manual*, “provide only conclusions of the study that are directly supported by the results. Give equal emphasis to positive and negative findings of equal scientific merit.”^{1(p33)}

Introduction

The 11th edition of the *AMA Manual of Style* was released in 2020.¹ Section 2.8 includes details for each of the four headings required in Liberty University class papers that include structured abstracts, following the acronym IMRAD: **I**ntroduction, **M**ethods, **R**esults, **a**nd **D**iscussion.¹ The introduction section:

[S]hould provide the context for the article and state any objective of the study, the hypothesis or research question (purpose statement), how and why the hypothesis was developed, and why it is important. It should demonstrate to the experts that the authors know the subject and should fill in gaps for the novice. It should generally not exceed 2 or 3 paragraphs or 150 words.^{1(p38)}

Note that in block quotes, as above, the quote is introduced in the structure of the sentence with a colon, it is single-spaced and left-justified with the entire left margin indented ½”, and there is a blank single-spaced line before and after it. Note also that in the block quote above, the first letter is capitalized within brackets as required by section 8.8.6.^{1(p486)} AMA itself does not specify the length requirement for block quotes (ceding that decision to editorial judgment),^{1(p482)} but Liberty University deems any direct quote longer than four lines of text to warrant a block quote; these should be used very sparingly.

The *AMA Manual* likewise does not specify font size, line spacing, or margin justification. The *JAMA Health Forum*² does, however, and those requirements are incorporated into all Liberty University course papers: 12-point font (except for the title and level 1 headings, which are 14-point font), double-spacing, left-justification with ragged right margin, using Times New Romans font for the content in the body of the paper and Arial font for the title and headings.²

Students would not ordinarily include the page numbers with the citation for each resource as is done heavily throughout this paper; those are included herein solely to direct

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students to the relevant sections of the *AMA Manual* since this is a sample paper for students learning to master that format and those page numbers direct students where to find more information on that topic in the *AMA Manual*.

Methods

Section 2.8 of the *AMA Manual* details that the methods section should include a detailed description of the study design (including dates and period of study; approval of the institutional review board or ethics committee; conditions, factors, or disease studied, and setting from which the sample studied was drawn, including inclusion and exclusion criteria), details of the sample studied, intervention(s) and exposure(s) studied, details relating to primary outcomes and measurements followed by secondary outcomes and measurements, and statistical analysis.^{1(p38)} In addition to these standard required sections, two specialized papers have additional requirements. Random Control Trials, for example, will also include “a detailed power statement discussing the number of patients in each group needed to obtain a predetermined outcome.”^{1(p38)} The precise search strategy, date the search was conducted, and name of the database used are all required for reviews of existing literature.^{1(p38)} The purpose of a methods section is to be able to replicate steps taken to achieve the same results as a previous occurrence.

Design and Setting

Each method subsection needs to consider what details are fully necessary to allow for replication of the project. For example, what are the full description of any potential inputs, outputs, and activities of the project; describe those accordingly. A full description of the design, context, and setting is appropriate as well. Be mindful that at this level students should be using level 2 headings^{1(p39)} as shown here and below which are in Arial, 12-point bolded font and title case, as determined by Liberty University for its class papers.

Sample

The methods section also needs a full description of any participants or details of the relevant sample for the paper or project here in this subsection. That can be presented through a combination or description of literature, groups, data sets, activities, or a full description of a sample size and demographics.^{1(p38)} In keeping with section 11.12.2 of the *AMA Manual*, use “he or she” or “his or her” rather than common-gender pronouns such as “he/she” or “s/he.”^{1(p544)}

Intervention (Project) Description

This should include several paragraphs, all peppered with ample references.

Data Collection

One paragraph under this subsection is enough to describe the data collection process. However, be mindful that students need to identify each step in the process with appropriate detail needed for replication. Further, be mindful about terms, words, and verbiage that identify potential bias, conflicts of interest, problems with jargon, or a lack of clarity,^{1 (505,538,540,543)} when describing the research methods and data collection. While, AMA may be less than forthcoming on formatting rules than some of the other formatting styles, it is exceptionally specific on the requirements and expectations related to biased work.

Measurements

This section will include specific details about the tools, assessments, and other resources used to collect and measure the data collected. Be careful not to leave headings isolated at the bottom of the page, separated from their supporting content. Note that the next heading was manually moved to the top of the next page to be with its content.

Data Analysis

In the analysis section, students will want to present their findings, including a summary of the anticipated outcome measurements as planned before collection of the data.^{1(p32)} Include all aspects of the results, including baseline demographics, risk measurements, effect sizes, and measures of uncertainty for a study design.^{1(pp32-33)} Per the *AMA Manual*, “provide only conclusions of the study that are directly supported by the results. Give equal emphasis to positive and negative findings of equal scientific merit.”^{1(p33)} When presenting various types of papers data analysis may include a variety of deliverables, project outcomes, findings, and impacts. Ensure that final results—as well as interpretation of those results—are presented using both narrative presentation and visual tables, graphics, and figures, as appropriate.

In academic papers and published articles, tables and figures are woven into the body of the paper because AMA’s stated “purpose of a table is to present data or information and support statements in the text.”^{1(p14)} This sample paper only has one table; if a student’s paper more than one, then those would be labeled consecutively: Table 1, Table 2, etc.

Table. Number of Presenting Cluster-B Personality Traits ^a				
Number of Presenting Traits	Antisocial	Borderline	Histrionic	Narcissistic
Pre-Treatment	12	7	3	6
Post-Treatment	4	2	4	2
Change	-8	-5	+1	-4
Met diagnostic criteria for personality disorder				
	Antisocial	Borderline	Histrionic	Narcissistic
Pre-Treatment	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Post-Treatment	No	No	No	No
^a Data adapted from C Owen. ¹²				

AMA specifies that there are three purposes to citations of resources: “documentation, acknowledgement, and directing or linking the reader to additional resources.”^{1(p60)} It also stresses that authors “should always consult the primary source and should never cite a reference

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that they themselves have not read.^{1(p60)} Citations should be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals in the order in which they are cited in the text; each will have a corresponding numbered entry in the reference list beginning on the page after the conclusion section.^{1(p63)} Section 3.6 provides specific details regarding citation rules¹; these are included in the [AMA Quick Guide](#).

Only materials that have already been published should be include in the reference list; other materials, when mentioned, should be cited parenthetically in the text.^{1(p62)} Note that when citing a resource parenthetically, section 3.3 specifies that:

- the author(s) may not be named,
- the title may not be given,
- the name of the journal is abbreviated only when enclosed in parentheses, and
- inclusive page numbers are given.^{1(p62)}

The Bible can also be cited parenthetically—for example, Ephesians 6:19-20 (NASB) calls believers to witness to others—though it is acceptable to include a citation number and corresponding reference entry for it, too.^{1(pp93,459),3}

Results

The results reported in the paper must “be specific and relevant to the research hypothesis or study question.”^{1(p38)} Study participant demographics and population should be detailed, followed by the results. This section should name the validation measures utilized in the study, but not discuss any implications or weaknesses of the study itself.^{1(p39)} Likewise, it should not detail the methods, as those should be addressed in the Methods section.

Note that there is more space before a level 1 heading than level 2 headings. Back-to-back parentheses tend to be awkward and should be avoided; writers can instead use a single set of parentheses and separate the two items within by a semicolon.^{1(p475)}

Discussion

This section should span several pages. It should be comprised of “a formal consideration and critical examination of the study (i.e., a discussion of the results in relation to the literature),”^{1(p39)} including the research question or hypothesis, and a comparison of the results found in other studies. Liberty University anticipates that its students will often cite one or more common types of resources throughout the Public Health program. These include reports by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,⁴ articles in American Journal of Public Health (APHE),^{5,6} reports by the World Health Organization,⁷ and even official governmental social media content.⁸ In addition, Liberty University students may need to cite class lectures with a named presenter,⁹ class lectures with no named presenter,¹⁰ class handouts,¹¹ and even on rare occasions as permitted, content from a student’s prior class paper.¹² Those would be peppered throughout the body of the paper as specifically related to the content stated in the student’s sentences (as the citations to the *AMA Manual* have been throughout this sample paper).

Conclusion

The paper “should end with a clear, concise conclusion that does not go beyond the findings of the study and a statement of relevance of the findings.”^{1(p39)} Be careful not to include new content in the conclusion section.

References

1. American Medical Association. *AMA Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors*. 11th edition. JAMA Network; 2020.
2. JAMA Health Forum. Accessed November 14, 2020. <https://jamanetwork.com/channels/health-forum/pages/instructions-for-authors>
3. Ephesians 6:19-20 (NASB).
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Licensure of a meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menveo) and guidance for use - Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), 2010. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2010;59(9):273. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20224545/>
5. Freudenberg N. Adverse effects of US jail and prison policies on the health and well-being of women of color. *Am J Public Health*. 2002;92:1895–1899.
6. Lightwood J, Bibbins-Domingo K, Coxson P, Wang YC, Williams L, Goldman L. Forecasting the future economic burden of current adolescent overweight: an estimate of the coronary heart disease policy model. *Am J Public Health*. 2009;99:2230–2237. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2008.152595
7. World Health Organization. Regulatory situation of herbal medicines: a worldwide review. Accessed July 23, 2019. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/63801>
8. @HHSGov. Nearly 10.3 million people aged 12 years or older misused [#opioids](#) in 2018. Opioid [#addiction](#) can happen to anyone. Learn how you can help reduce the risk of addiction: bit.ly/2RTHLxK. September 23, 2020. Accessed September 24, 2020. <https://twitter.com/HHSGov/status/1308793298048495617>
9. Owen C. COUC 815: PTSD from Early Childhood Trauma as a Precursor to Attachment Issues [Class lecture]. Liberty University. Updated March 13, 2020. Accessed October 28, 2020. <https://learn.liberty.edu/>
10. Liberty University. NURS 515: Phenomenology of Isotopes [Class lecture]. Liberty University. Updated May 16, 2020. Accessed August 18, 2020. <https://learn.liberty.edu>
11. COUC 815 – week 1: comparison of diagnostic criteria of PTSD and attachment disorders [PDF class handout]. Liberty University. Updated March 18, 2020. Accessed October 30, 2020. <https://learn.liberty.edu/>
12. Owen C. Effect of reduced Cluster-B personality traits in adopted children on their parents' levels of family satisfaction. Liberty University, COUC 815; 2020. Accessed August 30, 2020.

Appendix

Fill in details or add attachments here (or omit page if not needed).