



## GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING AND SUBMITTING AN ABSTRACT

### Introduction

This guide is designed to help you through the abstract submission process for IHRA's 2008 conference in Barcelona, Spain – from identifying and developing your initial ideas through to writing the abstract itself.

*Please note: This guide is for abstracts for the main conference programme. A separate guide will be released in due course describing the submission process for film festival abstracts.*

**The deadline for the submission of abstracts is:  
November 14<sup>th</sup> 2007**

### The Conference

This prestigious event will comprise high profile opening and closing ceremonies, plenary sessions, major sessions, concurrent sessions, symposia, workshops, training events, a film festival, poster exhibitions, exhibition areas, satellite meetings, social and networking events (including a conference party) and the annual IHRA award presentations.

### How Abstracts Are Selected for Presentation

Under the leadership of the Programme Director, the Executive Programme Committee (EPC) is responsible for the construction of the agenda for the conference. The EPC meets regularly via teleconference to decide on the themes of the conference and to monitor development of the sessions that make up the programme. Sessions may be designed with invited speakers, although the majority are abstract driven.

All of the submitted abstracts are assigned a number and are peer-reviewed by members of the International Programme Advisory Group (IPAG) - a team of experts from around the world who are appointed by IHRA in August each year. Each abstract is reviewed two or three times. The reviewers assign the abstracts with a score (up to 100) based on content, significance, originality, relevance and overall presentation. This score is used as a recommend for whether an abstract should be accepted as an oral or poster presentation or not.

The EPC then meet in December for the 'Programme Marathon Meeting', at which the recommendations of the IPAG are reviewed and the final programme for the conference is constructed.



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### What Can I Present?

The central theme for Harm Reduction 2008 is “Towards a Global Approach” – which reflects IHRA’s commitment to include presentations from around the world and create a balance of research, practice, advocacy and policy. We want the conference to inspire delegates and introduce them to new ideas and ways of thinking or working. However, any conference is only as strong as the abstracts submitted.

We welcome you to submit an abstract if you:

- are involved in delivering innovative harm reduction services
- have some new and ground-breaking research to report on
- have an example of an effective or successful advocacy campaign
- wish to discuss or debate a particular area of harm reduction policy

Conversely, we would discourage you from submitting an abstract just to apply for funding to attend the conference, or if your research or practice has already been extensively covered at previous IHRA conferences.

### Preferred Topics

In keeping with the title for the conference, and in order to keep the event both contemporary and relevant, we have created a list of topics on which we would be particularly keen to receive abstracts. This list is not exhaustive, but reflects the topics and debates we would particularly like to see reflected in the 2008 conference programme:

1. Gender and harm reduction
2. Hepatitis
3. Hidden or forgotten harms of drug use (such as affected families, children of drug users, tuberculosis, nutrition, violence or dental health)
4. Alcohol harm reduction or responsible hospitality
5. Tobacco (or nicotine) harm reduction
6. Innovative harm reduction approaches, research and debate
7. Harms of incarceration (and how to prevent these)
8. Harm reduction in the context of social inclusion, access to and quality of health systems, and poverty alleviation
9. Harm reduction education and training
10. Harm reduction in resource-poor settings
11. Harm reduction and criminal justice approaches
12. Unintended consequences or failings of harm reduction approaches (and the lessons that we can learn from these)



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Each year the IHRA conferences also aim to reflect local issues and experiences for the host city, nation, region and culture. The 2008 conference in Barcelona offers a unique chance to showcase harm reduction from Spain, France, Portugal, Italy and countries in Latin America – and we would particularly welcome submissions from these countries.

**Please note that, to make the conference as inclusive as possible, there is a rule of 'one oral presentation per person'**

### Writing the Abstract

There is no prescriptive format for abstracts, however, you may wish to follow one of the following layouts to structure your ideas in the best possible way:

#### Research Abstracts

1. Background and Objectives (including a brief overview of the aim, hypothesis and the problem being investigated)
2. Methods Used (or the approach taken – try to ensure that the language used is accessible for a non-academic audience)
3. Study Results (a summary of your main findings – again, try not ensure the language remains accessible for non-researchers)
4. Conclusions (including the main study findings and discussion about the study including, wherever possible, lessons that delegates can take away with them and recommendations for harm reduction practice, advocacy, policy or future research)

#### Practice Abstracts

1. Issue (describe the identified problem or need that your service or intervention originally set out to tackle)
2. Setting (provide some information on things such as the geographical location for the project, the target audience or the scale of drug use)
3. Project (describe your project or intervention. What did you do? How did you do it? What made you decide to do it this way?)
4. Outcomes (describe the impact or results of your project or intervention. How many people did you reach or help? What barriers did you face? What would you do differently if you could start again? What lessons did you learn? What lessons could the delegates learn?)

#### Advocacy Abstracts

1. Issue (describe the problem or need that you were aiming to tackle, and what exactly you were advocating for)



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2. Setting (describe your target audience and any other relevant information such as scale of local drug use)
3. Process (describe your actions. What did you do? How did you do it? What made you decide to do it this way?)
4. Outcomes (describe the impact or results of your advocacy efforts. Even if you were unsuccessful - what barriers did you face and how could these be overcome? What would you do differently if you could start again? What lessons did you learn? What lessons could the delegates learn?)

### Policy Abstracts

1. Issue (outline the subject that you wish to explore and the evidence of need or problems)
2. Key Arguments (outline your key perspectives and arguments)
3. Implications (outline the impact that these arguments have for existing or changing policies. What lessons could the delegates learn from your presentation?).

**All abstracts must be submitted in English**

**All abstracts have a 300-word limit**

### General Suggestions

When submitting an abstract, try to include as much information as possible, be concise and avoid statements such as “work in progress” or “results will be discussed” wherever possible. If the results are unknown at this stage, give some indication on what they are expected to be and what the implications may be of these expected results.

Crucially, try to ensure that the abstract is easy to read and understand for the reviewer. He or she is your key audience for this process and may not be familiar with your field of work and/or may not have English as a first language. Try to make your abstract as easy as possible to comprehend – both in terms of the layout and the language that you use (for example, avoid acronyms, slang or unfamiliar terminology wherever possible).

In order to structure your abstract, you may find it useful to list your main points in bullet-points before then converting these into connecting sentences.

### Choosing a Title

If your abstract is chosen, the title will eventually appear in the conference programme, the conference booklet and the conference website. It is crucial,



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therefore, that it is as descriptive as possible (without being too long). It should provide a one-line summary of what your abstract is about – enough to inform your audience (whether it is a member of the IPAG or a delegate at the conference) what they are about to hear or read. Try to avoid non-descriptive, catchphrase-style titles (such as “Avoiding Disaster” or “Victory in Asia”).

### What Happens Next?

#### 1. Seek feedback

Once you have written your abstract, show it to some of your colleagues or friends to see if they can understand it easily and to check the language and content. Correcting mistakes at this stage increases the chances of your abstract being selected for the conference. If you cannot find anybody to review your abstract for you, IHRA may be able to put you in touch with someone who can help (please contact [info@ihra.net](mailto:info@ihra.net)).

#### 2. Submit the abstract

Once it is ready, you can submit your abstract online via the Harm Reduction 2008 website – [www.IHRAconferences.net](http://www.IHRAconferences.net). The deadline for submission is 14<sup>th</sup> November 2007, but it is strongly recommended that you do not leave it until the last minute to submit your abstract to allow for possible technical problems etc. The deadline cannot be extended under any circumstances.

When submitting an abstract, you will be asked to choose a track that best describes your work (out of research, practice, advocacy and policy). If your abstract does not clearly fit into one of these four tracks, please try to choose the most appropriate.

#### 3. The programme is created

Following the review process undertaken by the IPAG, the EPC will meet in December and finalise the programme using the submitted abstracts and the scores that they have been given by the reviewers.

#### 4. Authors notified

All abstract authors will be notified by email by the end of December whether their abstract has been accepted for an oral presentation, accepted for a poster presentation, or not accepted. Unfortunately, with over 1,000 abstracts submitted every year, it is not possible to provide individual feedback as to why an abstract was or was not accepted. If your abstract was accepted, you have until January 9<sup>th</sup> 2008 to confirm your participation, and until February 28<sup>th</sup> 2008 to pay (or arrange payment for) the conference registration fee.





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### Further Information

We hope that this guide encourages you to submit an abstract for our conference and helps to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. For further information, please visit the conference website ([www.IHRAconferences.net](http://www.IHRAconferences.net)) or contact the conference team:



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