A Short Guide for Making Academic Posters

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Why we make posters...

- Offers others a summarized and visual version of your work
- Forces us to evaluate what is important
- Builds public speaking experience gently
- Gives us a chance to be artistic
Poster Content Basics

- **Abstract**: Probably shouldn’t have one, but....
  - Some people *really* like them
- **Introduction**: Why should people care? [200 words]
  - Give the context of the research
  - Pitch an interesting idea or question
  - Briefly describe your setup
- **Methods**: How did you do it? [200 words]
  - Describe model, method, or experiment
  - Be sure to use figures as much as possible
- **Results & Discussion**: What did you learn? [200 words]
  - State whether your stuff worked or not
  - Use figures and tables to summarize
- **Conclusion**: Recap the poster [100 words]
- **Citations & Acknowledgments**: Cite and thank people

Total words less than 800, but aim for 500
INTRODUCTION:
The current obesity epidemic started in the early 1960s with the invention and proliferation of elastane and related stretchy fibers, which released wearers from the rigid constraints of clothes and permitted monthly weight gain without the need to buy new outfits. Indeed, exercise today for hundreds of millions of people involve only the act of wearing stretching pants in public, presumably because the constrictive pressure forces fat molecules to adopt a more compact tertiary structure (Xavier 1965).

Luckily, at the same time that fabrics became stretchy, the race to the moon between the United States and Russia yielded a useful fact: gravity in outer space is minimal to nonexistent. When gravity is zero, objects cease to have weight. Indeed, early astronauts and cosmonauts had to secure themselves to their ships with seat belts and sticky boots. The potential application to weight loss was noted immediately, but at the time travel to space was prohibitively expensive and thus the issue was not seriously pursued. Now, however, multiple companies are developing cheap extra-orbital travel options for normal consumers, and potential travelers are also creating new ways to pay for products and services that they cannot actually afford. Together, these factors open the possibility that moving to space could cure overweight syndrome quickly and permanently for a large number of humans.

We studied this potential by following weight gain in Guinea pigs, known on Earth as fond of ad libitum feeding. Guinea pigs were long envisioned to be the “Guinea pigs” of space research, too, so they seemed like the obvious choice. Studies on humans are of course desirable, but we feel this current study will be critical in acquiring the attention of granting agencies.

RESULTS:
Mean weight of pigs in space was 0.0000 +/- 0.0002 g. Some individuals weighed less than zero, some more, but these variations were due to reaction to the duct tape, we believe, which caused them to be alarmed push briefly against the force plate in the balance. Individuals on the Earth, the control cohort, gained about 240 g/month (p = 0.0002). Males and females gained a similar amount of weight on Earth (no main effect of sex), and size at any point during the study was related to starting size (which was used as a covariate in the ANCOVA).

CONCLUSIONS:
Our view that weight and weight gain would be zero in space was confirmed. Although we have not replicated this experiment on larger animals or primates, we are confident that our result would be mirrored in other model organisms. We are currently in the process of obtaining necessary human trial permissions, and should have our planned experiment initiated within 80 years, pending expedited review by local and Federal IRBs.

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LITERATURE CITED:
Some General Guidelines

- Use simple, clear titles formatted in sentence case
- Use lists of sentences rather than paragraphs
- Use sans-serif font for titles, serif font for body (easier to read)
- Textboxes should be be 40-70 characters wide
- Be aware of colorblind colors
- All figures and tables should have informative titles and legends
- When possible, make your own figures
- Format the citations carefully and correctly
- Posters should be approximately 36" x 48" (3ft x 4ft)
- Everything on the poster should be readable from 6ft away
Poster Making Software

- **Powerpoint**: fairly easy to use, lacking in usefulness
  - Set your pagesize as the final desired poster size
  - Output to PDF for examining and printing purposes

- **\LaTeX**: Can be difficult to use, but returns consistently nice results
  - Start with a good template, don’t make your own

- **Inkscape**: Very hard to use, but unlimited potential
  - Not for the faint of heart
  - Can be extremely creative and visually appealing

- **Scribus**: This was designed for making posters
  - Not as good as Adobe Indesign, but does same stuff
  - Large learning curve
  - Successful results will look professional
Any Questions?