Abstract

Abstract: a short summary of a scientific article — ideally meant to inform, too often designed to sell.

In theory, an abstract should:

Concisely present the purpose, methods, results, and conclusions of a study.

In practice, it frequently becomes:

A marketing tool that oversimplifies findings, hides limitations, and exaggerates impact to catch attention.

Common problems with abstracts

- Overuse of confident, vague language ("breakthrough", "novel", "promising")
- Lack of detail on sample size, methodology, or limitations
- Disconnection from the actual results buried in the full text
- Written to impress reviewers or funders not to inform clinicians

Why this matters

- Abstracts are often the **only part** most readers see
- Misleading abstracts propagate hype and citation inflation
- Clinical decisions based on abstracts alone can be misguided

A bad abstract sells a story. A good one exposes the evidence.

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