

SOP – Abstract Management for the SOG | SSO Annual Congress

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The SOG | SSO Annual Congress includes an abstract management process that is further detailed in this standard operating procedure (SOP) document.

1. General conditions

Any health care professional (more particularly ophthalmologists, resident doctors, medical practice assistants (MPAs), students, optometrists, and orthoptists) can submit abstracts for the SOG | SSO Annual Congress. The submission process is described below.

Abstracts can either be accepted as oral or poster presentations. Oral presentations related to abstracts (free communications, rapid fire presentations and poster flashes) can be done in English (slides in German, French or English), German (slides in French or English) or French (slides in German or English). The duration of the presentations is adapted annually according to the number of abstracts accepted, with information posted on the website of the annual congress.

Posters must be designed by the authors in English, German or French, and have to be uploaded on the congress website in the participant portal in PDF format. The posters should be in the Format ISO A0 (118.9 cm high and 84.1 cm wide). The poster should contain the following contents:

1. Title, co-authors with affiliations and poster number, plus contact details for corresponding author
2. Background/Aim
3. Methods
4. Results
5. Discussion/Conclusion
6. References
7. Disclosures

The following should **not** be included in the PDF file of the poster:

- Interactive content
- Equations
- Videos
- Navigation
- Blend Mode
- Patterns and gradients
- ICC color profiles
- Protected or non-embedded fonts
- Double pages
- Password security
- Figures not embedded as JPEG, GIF or PNG

The content of the poster should not be more than 3 pages of a PDF file with a font size of 36-38.

No oral presentation or poster template exists – the design is up to the authors.

The abstract management process is re-evaluated on an annual basis as part of the kick-off meeting for the planning of the annual congress.

2. Abstract submission

The abstract submission is organized by IMK AG and opens around 9 months before the start of the SOG | SSO Annual Congress. The opening of the abstract submission is communicated through the SOG | SSO website and email invitations.

Abstracts in one language only (English, German or French) have to be submitted via the annual congress website (website available in German or French), requiring a user account with password protection.

The SOG | SSO Scientific Commission generally suggests the submission of original scientific contributions. With the submission of the abstract, the first author certifies that

- the material submitted has not been published previously,
- investigations on human subjects have been reviewed by the local ethical committee and are in accordance with the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki,
- animal studies comply with the “ARVO Statement for the Use of Animals in Ophthalmic and Vision Research”,
- each co-author is aware of the commercial relationships policy, and
- relevant commercial relationships are disclosed at the end of the abstract.

Abstracts can be submitted for a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3 of the following topics:

- Cataract / Refractive Surgery / Contact Lens
- External Disease / Cornea
- Glaucoma
- Neuroophthalmology / Strabology
- Orbit / Lids / Lacrimal System
- Retina Vitreous
- Uveitis / Intraocular Inflammation
- Others

Regardless of the category, submitted abstracts must have the following structure:

1. Title
 - a. Please do not use capitals only, e.g. use “ERG in Glaucoma” instead of “ERG IN GLAUCOMA”. Use American spelling in English.
2. Content
 - a. Maximum 2,500 characters including spaces with the following structure:
 - i. Purpose
 - ii. Methods
 - iii. Results
 - iv. Conclusion
3. Indication if the abstract is in the category:
 - a. Clinical sciences and case series
 - b. Basic sciences
 - c. Case report
4. Additionally, mention all authors and all affiliations (corresponding company/institution, department, location, and country)
5. Disclosure of Financial Interest and Grants are also required with the following options:
 - Support from a for-profit company or competing company
 - Personal investment in a company or competing company (other than through a mutual or retirement fund)
 - Employment by a company or competing company with business interest in the topic

- Being a consultant of a company or competing company with business interest in the topic
 - Inventor/Developer of the topic or a competing topic
 - Travel reimbursement, gifts or honoraria of over \$3,000 in the last twelve months by a company or competing company involved
 - None: No commercial relationship.
6. Indication if the first and submitting author is a resident doctor, PhD student or student under 40 years old, and therefore falls in the criteria group Young Investigator

Tables and figures cannot be included in the abstracts.

Successful submission is confirmed by e-mail to the authors. Shortly before the deadline, all abstracts in draft form are checked by IMK AG and authors of not fully submitted abstracts in the system are contacted. With the submission, authors agree that their abstract can be published in the abstract book (the congress edition of the ophta magazine) and on the website of the annual congress in the public domain.

The deadline for the abstract submission is around 5 months prior to the start of the annual meeting. Around 1-2 weeks prior to the deadline, an extension of the deadline of maximum 2-3 weeks is decided by the president of the SOG | SSO Scientific Commission. The deadline and extension of the deadline are communicated via the annual congress website and mailings. Submissions after the deadline are not accepted.

Abstracts can be withdrawn at any time by notifying IMK AG via abstracts@imk.ch.

3. Abstract evaluation

Right after the end of the abstract submission deadline, abstracts are forwarded to the members of the SOG | SSO Scientific Commission responsible for the specific topic fields the abstracts were submitted in. Authors are anonymized. The abstract evaluation window is around 4 weeks for the members. Members do not evaluate abstracts which they co-author. The distribution of the abstracts to the members is done by IMK AG.

With the abstract evaluation, jury members provide for each abstract a score between 0 (no points can be given) to 6 (very good), if the abstract should generally be accepted or rejected, if the abstract should be an oral or poster presentation, and also any comments to the abstract.

4. Final abstract decision and inclusion in the scientific program

After the abstract evaluation deadline, IMK AG collects all evaluations in an Excel sheet, including all evaluation fields. Abstracts will be ranked across all topic fields according to the average score from best (top) to worst (bottom). Abstracts submitted by a young investigator and/or first and presenting author based outside of Switzerland are marked accordingly.

This file is sent to the president of the SOG | SSO Scientific Commission within 2 days after the abstract evaluation deadline, for the final decisions for each abstract, including:

- Accept or reject
- Accept as free paper in a plenary symposium, free paper in an abstract session, rapid fire, poster with poster flash, or poster presentation
- Inclusion of free papers and rapid fire presentations in the sessions, and timely sorting within the sessions
- Titles of the free paper sessions, and suggestions of chairs for these sessions

The main factors for the decision if accept or reject are the evaluations for this field by the evaluators and also relevant comments, e.g. "already published". The main factors for the decision if an abstract is accepted as oral presentation within a plenary symposium or a free paper session, as rapid fire presentation, as poster with poster flash presentation, or as poster are in the following order of priority: 1) average score, 2) relevant comments by the evaluators, 3) suggestions by the evaluators if oral or poster presentation, 4) topic of the abstract, 5) number of abstracts highly rated by the same first author, and 6) geographical distribution of the authorship group to create a balance between the different parts of Switzerland. The authors of the abstracts accepted to be presented in a specific plenary symposium will be informed individually via e-mail about the decision.

Additionally, a first author can only have one oral presentation within one topic field. All other abstracts of the same first author in the same topic field would be rapid fire presentations or posters. If the first author submitted abstracts in different topic fields, he/she could have oral presentations in different topic fields.

The abstract decision and inclusion in the scientific program are normally done within 1-2 weeks.

Based on the results of the distribution, IMK AG sends the abstract notifications to the submitting authors and adds the abstracts on the annual congress website either to the interactive program for free papers, rapid fire and poster flash presentations, or the poster list for posters (with or without poster flash presentation). Also, the abstracts are added to the congress edition of the ophta magazine.

5. Abstract awards

A total of six poster awards exists, connected to the SOG | SSO Annual Congress:

- Best poster in category "Clinical sciences and case series" for all submissions (prize money of CHF 1'000)
- Best poster in category "Basic sciences" for all submissions (prize money of CHF 1'000)
- Best poster in category "Case report" for all submission (prize money of CHF 1'000)
- Young Investigator Award for the best poster in category "Clinical sciences and case series" (prize money of CHF 1'000)
- Young Investigator Award for the best poster in category "Basic sciences" (prize money of CHF 1'000)
- Young Investigator Award for the best poster in category "Case report" (prize money of CHF 1'000)

The awards with prize moneys are mentioned on the website of the annual congress.

Only posters submitted in PDF format via the annual congress website and related to an accepted abstract as a poster presentation (with or without poster flash presentation), until a deadline communicated to the submitting authors of all abstracts via mailings and via the annual congress website, normally 5 weeks prior to the annual congress, can be considered for the abstract awards. The submitted posters until that deadline from the three categories "Clinical sciences and case series", "Basic sciences" and "Case report" are sent to selected members of the SOG | SSO Scientific Commission for these categories for a separate evaluation specific to the posters. For the evaluation, an evaluation Excel file for each category is created, including all submitted posters with their poster ID, title and presenting author. The evaluators then judge each submitted poster in the specific category based on the following criteria:

- Originality /content (rating from 1 (worst) to 6 (best), with 1 increments)
- Importance / newsworthiness (rating from 1 (worst) to 6 (best), with 1 increments)
- Attractive presentation (rating from 1 (worst) to 6 (best), with 1 increments)

- Remarks (for example: Conflict of interest as co-author)

The number of points from all three criteria are averaged for each poster, for each evaluator, and then the overall score of the poster is based on the average of these average scores from all evaluators.

The three best scored posters from the three categories, and the three best scored posters from first and submitting authors in the criteria group Young Investigator for the three categories are then shared with all SOG | SSO Scientific Commission members and discussed in the meeting of the SOG | SSO Scientific Commission during the SOG | SSO Annual Congress to decide on a winner for each award.

The main factors for the decision for each winner are in the following order of priority: 1) average score, 2) relevant comments by the evaluators, 3) topic of the abstract (newsworthiness), and 4) geographical distribution of the authorship group to create a balance between the different parts of Switzerland. If the winning poster for a category from all submissions comes from a young investigator, the Young Investigator Award for this category can be, but must not be, awarded to the second-best poster by a young investigator for this particular category.

The Scientific Commission members can also decide to not award an abstract award in one of the categories mentioned above if they deem all posters submitted in the category too lowly rated to receive the award.

The winners are fixed in the meeting minutes of the on-site meeting of the SOG | SSO Scientific Commission. The awardees are immediately contacted by IMK AG after the meeting and invited to join the networking event free-of-charge on the evening of the same day, where the award ceremony is conducted. The award ceremony is run by the president of the SOG | SSO Scientific Commission.

After the end of the annual congress, IMK AG contacts the awardees via email to receive their banking information for transferring the award amount via bank transfer.

6. Travel stipends

Up to two travel stipends with a fix sum of CHF 1'500.- can be awarded if a first and submitting author of an accepted abstract is based outside of Switzerland. No age limitation or requirement for being a resident doctor or student exist for the travel stipend awarding. The decision on the awarding of one or two travel stipends is made by the president of the SOG | SSO Scientific Commission based on the abstract evaluations. Generally, an abstract by an author that could be awarded the travel stipend should have an average score of at least 5 out of 6.

The winners are informed about the awarding of the travel stipend via e-mail, with the amount being paid to the winners via bank transfer after the end of the SOG | SSO Annual Congress. They have to conduct a normal registration with payment and pay for their travels and accommodation prior and during the annual congress.

7. Manuscript in the SOG | SSO Annual Congress edition of KliMo

Authors of all accepted abstracts at an SOG | SSO Annual Congress, as well as all invited presenters during the same annual congress, are invited to submit a scientific manuscript related to their abstract / presentation to be included in the SOG | SSO Annual Congress edition of the scientific journal *Klinische Monatsblätter (KliMo)*. Submission is normally possible from early June in the year of the annual congress, and open until a deadline communicated via the annual congress website and mailings to the submitting abstract authors and invited presenters.

Manuscripts have to be submitted via this [portal](#). General author guidelines can be found [here](#), and the specific author guidelines for the submission for the SOG | SSO Annual Congress edition can be found [here](#).

The manuscripts are checked by the editorial office if they are related to the SOG | SSO Annual Congress abstracts or presentations, and if they fulfil the author guidelines. If approved, the editor-in-chief invites reviewers for the peer-review process, followed by potential revisions and re-reviews until accepted or rejected. All accepted manuscripts are then included in the congress edition, normally published in April of the following year.

Authors of the submitted manuscripts can also be involved as reviewers by the editor-in-chief for further manuscripts submitted to the congress edition of KliMo.