

# Fate of Abstracts Presented at the 2009 American Transplant Congress

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**INTRODUCTION:** Oral and poster presentations at major meetings serve to rapidly present and share study results with the scientific community. On the other hand, full-text publication of abstracts in peer-reviewed journals provides dissemination of knowledge. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the publication rate of abstracts presented at the 2009 American Transplant Congress (ATC), to assess the factors influencing publication and determine the impact factor of these journals.

**METHODS:** All abstracts presented at the 2009 ATC were included in the study. A Pubmed-Medline search was performed to identify a matching journal article. Topics, country of origin, study type, study center and publication year were tabulated. Journals and impact factors of publication were noted.

**RESULTS:** Out of 1938 oral and posters abstracts presented, 103 (16.6%) of oral abstracts and 141 poster abstracts (10.9%) were published as full-text articles. Publication rates according to topics of the meeting and country of origin did demonstrate statistical significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ). Single-centered studies had higher publication rates 70.87% (73/103) than multi-centered studies among oral abstracts. Abstracts from multi-centered studies had higher publication rates among poster abstracts (68.09% vs 31.91%), and the journals they were published in had higher impact factors than single center studies (4.578 vs 3.897). The median impact factor of the journals was 4.2 (4.8 for oral presentations and 3.627 for poster presentations) that went on to be published as full text manuscripts. When comparing multi-center and single institutions, the difference between 12 month and 24 month publication rates was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.5443$  and  $0.1134$ ). However, oral and poster abstracts published by study center (multi/single) did demonstrate a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.0001$ ); comparing the type of study, there was also a statistically significant difference between the oral and poster abstract ( $p < 0.0001$ ).

**CONCLUSION:** The publication rate for abstracts of this 2009 ATC was lower than rates from other fields of medicine. Factors leading to failure require elucidation. Encouraging authors to submit their presentations for full-text publication might improve the rate of publication. Authors should be wary of accepting oral and poster abstracts as dogma; authors should refrain from citing them in publications especially if they are from outside United States and are about liver and kidney transplantation. (J Surg 71:674-679. © 2014 Association of Program Directors in Surgery. Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.)

**KEY WORDS:** transplant research, abdominal transplantation, journal publications

**COMPETENCIES:** Medical Knowledge, Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

## INTRODUCTION

Original research data are traditionally brought to the attention of the scientific community in the following 2 ways: presentation at annual meetings and publication in scientific journals.<sup>1-3</sup> Abstract presentations at large meetings provide a forum for the communication and discussion of new results before full publication. Presented abstracts summarize current research and cannot contain details of the study. Although some journals publish the abstracts of society meetings, in the proceedings, there are only brief summaries of the studies.<sup>4</sup>

Publication in a peer-reviewed journal has been accepted as the end point of a research study. The selection of presented studies at a scientific meeting is based on a review of submitted abstracts, but those abstracts are usually no more than incomplete summaries. Subsequent publication takes a long time because of the complete manuscript preparation, extensive analysis of results, detailed reviewing process, and revision in response to reviews. Published reports indexed in databases, such as PubMed, provide widespread dissemination of results and represent the important avenue by which many researchers attain new information.<sup>1,3-5</sup> For this reason, the publication of abstracts in peer-reviewed journals is important.

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Publication rates of meeting abstracts have been researched in different medical specialties, such as orthopedics, urology, anesthesia, surgery, pediatrics, oncology, emergency medicine, radiology, and ophthalmology. It has been reported that the subsequent rate of the publication of meeting abstracts as full-text articles ranged between 11% and 78%.<sup>6</sup>

In this study, we examined abstracts presented as both oral and poster presentations from the 2009 American Transplant Congress (ATC), held in Boston, MA, and examined how many were published as full-text articles. We analyzed the rate at which these abstracts were published as full-text articles, the time to publication, the factors affecting the publication, and the impact factor of journals that published these articles.

The ATC is the premier educational event in the field of basic and clinical transplantation. The ATC is the largest international transplant meeting which has more than 10,000 attendees from across the globe; it offers the widest range of educational opportunities, providing transplant professionals a learning environment designed to address their professional practice gaps through a variety of learning formats that encourage the exchange of new scientific concepts, emerging technologies, and medical advances. Attendees engage in interactive discussions, case presentations, workshops, and other activities designed to improve competence and both professional and patient outcomes.<sup>7</sup>

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Overall, 1938 abstracts were identified from the 2009 ATC. This meeting contains 1938 abstracts—641 oral and 1297 poster abstracts; all abstracts were reviewed by a single reviewer. The meeting abstracts were examined with respect to research type, country of origin, number of institutions involved, and author institutional affiliation. Abstracts with at least 1 investigator affiliated with a university department were defined as university affiliation. Abstracts were categorized based on meeting sections as defined in the ATC program. Some categories were combined. The country of origin was defined as the country with which the first author was listed.

A computerized PubMed search was performed in 2013 to identify resulting full-text article publications of the meeting oral and poster presentations. This allowed 4 years to full-text publication of the presented abstracts. The observers conducted the PubMed/Medline search by using the first author's family name and the title of the presentation. If no corresponding article was found, another search was performed by substituting the second author for the lead author. If at this second search they did not identify any publications, the search was repeated by using the last author's family name and initial(s). Original full-text articles corresponding to the abstracts were selected. The concordance between the abstract and the published article was verified. The articles differing in the number of subjects or

**TABLE 1.** Rate of Poster Presentation Publications, Type of Study Published, and Number Published in AJT

Rate of Publication (%)				
Poster Presentations		Oral Presentations		
10.9%		16.6%		
Type of Study	Oral Abstract	Poster Abstract	p-Value	
Randomized prospective trial multicenter	18	6	<0.0001	
Randomized prospective trial single center	9	7		
Prospective nonrandomized multicenter	15	5		
Prospective nonrandomized single center	13	23		
Retrospective study	22	51		
Case report	2	3		
Case series	5	1		
Basic science	19	45		
Total	103	141		
Number Presented		Number Published		Number Published in AJT
Poster presentations	1297	141 (10.9%)	14 (10%)	
Oral presentations	641	103 (16.6%)	29 (29%)	
Total	1938	244	43	
Multiple/Single Center	Abstract Oral Abstract	Poster Abstract	Total	p-Value
Multiple	30 (12.30%)	96 (39.34%)	126 (51.64%)	<0.0001
Single	73 (29.92%)	45 (18.44%)	118 (48.36%)	
Total	103 (42.21%)	141 (57.79%)	244 (100%)	

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