

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

San Diego, CA • March 4-7, 2026

Scientific Research Abstract Peer Review Criteria

Content Focus: Scientific Research abstracts must focus on **original science** reflecting systematic investigation aimed at generating knowledge to advance the science of hospice and palliative care. Presenting original research at Annual Assembly aims to foster bidirectional communication between scientific and clinical communities.

Scientific research abstracts for the Annual Assembly undergo a rigorous double-blind peer review to ensure high-quality, relevant, and evidence-based contributions to hospice and palliative care. Reviewers assess abstracts on multiple criteria including background, objectives, methodology, results, clarity, and relevance to the field, while maintaining fairness and avoiding conflicts of interest.

Annual Assembly Scientific Research submitted abstracts are managed under a double-blind peer review process. Both the reviewer and abstract authors' names and institutions are blinded throughout the review and selection process.

Accepted abstracts must meet the ACCME definition of accredited continuing education and serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and/or professional performance and relationships used to provide services for patients, the public, or the palliative and/or hospice profession.

The Co-Chairs of the State of the Science Symposium and the Annual Assembly Planning Committee determine the final presentation format (oral or poster) and assign session dates and times, based on reviewer input and the successful mitigation of any conflicts of interest, as applicable.

General Guidance for Peer Reviewers:

Accepted content is aimed to advance research, clinical best practices, and practice-related guidance in the delivery of quality serious illness care. To that end, content should be:

- A. evidence-based
- B. designed for relevance to practice

Reviewer Abstract Scoring:

- Questions 1–7 contribute to the **Overall Abstract Result (OAR)**.
- Maximum possible OAR score = **35 points**.
- This score is used as the primary basis for abstract selection.
- Questions 8-9 are not included in the overall abstract results (OAR) and intended for shaping the structure and flow of the Annual Assembly by informing placement of accepted content.

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- Use the full scoring scale (1 = low to 5 = high) to ensure a broad distribution of scores across all reviewed abstracts.
- For any rating of high or low scores, please provide a rationale in the comments section. Comments should be supportive, constructive and specific, aiding the planning committee in abstract selection and providing meaningful feedback for authors seeking to improve future submissions. Scoring comments will be de-identified before being shared as feedback.

Bias and/or COI Question:

Are you listed as an author, or do you have a risk of bias or other conflict of interest in reviewing this abstract submission?

Yes, please reassign

If yes, do not proceed. This abstract will be reassigned to a non-conflicted reviewer. Thank you.

No, I do not have a risk of bias or conflict of interest

Abstract Content Scientific Research Abstract Scoring Rubrics

1. The background of the study/work is well described and justifies the rationale/significance of the work

Scoring tips:

1. Background does not provide information that informed the study/work
2. Background is limited or is poorly articulated
3. Background is somewhat well articulated
4. Background is well articulated
5. Background is exemplary in clearly outlining the imperative for the study to be presented at a national/international level

2. The objectives of the study/work are clearly and succinctly stated

Scoring tips:

1. Objective is not articulated
2. Objective is poorly articulated
3. Objective is somewhat articulated
4. Objective is clearly articulated
5. Objective is exemplary in its clarity and clear relationship to the background and the study

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3. Study design/methodology is rigorous and appropriate to answer the study/work question

Scoring tips:

1. Study design and methods are not articulated
2. Study design and methods are not congruent with the question posed and/or are ambiguous
3. Study design and methods align somewhat with the objective, though some elements require clarification or stronger justification
4. Study design and methods are generally well described
5. Study design and methods are exceptionally well described with clarity and a clear relationship to the study objectives

4. The results are sound, appropriate, responsive to the stated objectives, and sufficiently described with relevant data presented to support the conclusions.

*Reviewer Note: Science and research submissions require results for acceptance.

Scoring tips:

1. Results are poorly described, lacking relevant data to support study conclusions
2. Results provide insufficient description of relevant data to support the conclusions
3. Results are somewhat described but lack some clarity or justification to fully support conclusions
4. Results are sound, appropriate, and have sufficient relevant data presented to support the conclusions
5. Results are exceptionally clear with well-described data that strongly support the conclusions

5. The abstract is clear, well-organized, adheres to the submission guidelines, ordered, and concise without ambiguities

Scoring tips:

1. Abstract is highly disorganized, missing critical information, difficult to understand, improperly formatted
2. Abstract clarity and organization could be improved
3. Abstract is somewhat clear and organized but still contains ambiguities
4. Abstract is clear and adheres to guidelines
5. Abstract is exceptionally clear; provides a clear and appropriately detailed description of the study

6. The study/work is relevant or valuable for professionals in the field of hospice and/or palliative care

Scoring tips:

1. The study does not appear relevant or valuable for HPC professionals

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2. The study is only minimally relevant or valuable for HPC professionals
3. The study is somewhat relevant or valuable for HPC professionals
4. The study is relevant or valuable for HPC professionals
5. The study is highly relevant or valuable for HPC professionals and is likely to change policy, research or practice

7. Overall Merit: The abstract is high quality, important to the field, and should be presented because it is likely to significantly impact future palliative and/or hospice research and practice.

Scoring tips:

1. Low Impact - abstract is low quality, lacks relevance, and should not be presented
2. Low Impact - abstract has limited quality or importance, unlikely to contribute meaningfully to the field
3. Moderate Impact - abstract is acceptable but average
4. High Impact - abstract is good quality and important; it should be presented and is likely to add value to the field.
5. High Impact - abstract is excellent, highly significant, and should be presented because it is likely to strongly influence future research or practice

Additional Criteria – While not factored into the abstract’s overall abstract results (OAR), these criteria play a key role in shaping the structure and flow of the Annual Assembly by informing the placement of accepted content.

8. The study sample includes diverse representation with a focus on minoritized and marginalized populations; and/or the research question centers on health equity; and/or the study design is anchored in principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI).

Reviewer Response:

Please indicate **Yes, No, or Unsure**, and provide brief comments if applicable.

9. The study involved an interprofessional and/or multidisciplinary approach, with respect to study design, implementation, analysis, and/or dissemination of data, with the goal of advancing the science of hospice and palliative care research and/or improving quality of care.

Reviewer Response:

Please indicate **Yes, No, or Unsure**, and provide brief comments if applicable.

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Final Notes for Reviewers

- Be objective and unbiased—if a conflict of interest exists, do not proceed with the review.
- Ensure fairness and consistency in scoring across all abstracts.
- Use constructive feedback to guide authors in improving their work.
- All feedback will remain anonymous when shared with authors.

By following these best practices, we ensure a rigorous, high-quality selection process that promotes the advancement of hospice and palliative care education, practice, and professional development. Thank you for your contributions.

Abstract Reviewer Reference Information Scientific Research Submission Guidelines

Content Focus: Scientific Research abstracts must focus on **original science** reflecting systematic investigation aimed at generating knowledge to advance the science of hospice and palliative care. Presenting original research at Annual Assembly aims to foster bidirectional communication between scientific and clinical communities.

Date & Location: March 5-7th, 2026, at the San Diego Convention Center. Original Scientific Research presented throughout 2026 Annual Assembly of Hospice and Palliative Care.

Examples of Research:

- Observational studies
- Health services research
- Clinical trials
- Implementation science
- Qualitative studies

Key Qualities of Strong Abstracts:

- Clear research question addressing knowledge gaps
- Methodological rigor
- Meaningful results and conclusions based on findings addressing knowledge gaps
- Interdisciplinary relevance

The study is significant/relevant to advancing knowledge, clinical practice or research design in the field of hospice and/or palliative care



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Scientific Research Sub-Categories:

- Basic/bench science
- Qualitative science
- Observational science
- Health services science
- Clinical trials science
- Dissemination/implementation science

Submission Note: Abstracts submitted through the Scientific Research Call **must include results** to be considered.

Who Should Submit: Investigators, research teams, clinicians, trainees, and scholars across all disciplines. Ideal for those contributing to the evidence base, informing policy/practice, and translating research into impact

Target Audience: Research scientists, early-career investigators, educators, policy advocates, clinicians, and trainees. Especially relevant for those focused on research design, critical appraisal, data application, and evidence-based practice

Format: In-person only; no virtual option available

Sample Abstract Structure:

- **Title:** Clear and descriptive
- **Background/Rationale:** Define the issue or gap and its importance
- **Objectives/Purpose:** State the aim or research question
- **Methods/Approach:** Summarize design and methodology
- **Results:** Present relevant data to support conclusions
- **Conclusion/Implications** (optional but encouraged): Reflect on significance to practice, education, policy, or research.