Communicating Expectations: Development of an Abstract Reviewer Rubric

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Problem Statement
While it is the gold standard for evaluating scientific merit, inadequate inter-rater reliability between peer-reviewers has weakened the peer review process (Deveugele & Silverman, 2017).

Numerous concerns have been voiced regarding the reviewing and scoring process and methodology.

Background
Rubrics have been used as a guide to establish and communicate standards to nursing students.

The standards set by rubrics assure educational objectives are met and nursing standards of practice are integrated.

The importance of using rubrics will be emphasized to decrease subjective judgment and increase consistency, which will ultimately increase the quality of abstract submissions.

Purpose
Present how Sigma translated the use of educational rubrics into a tool utilized by peer reviewers for provider-directed, provider-paced educational abstract submissions.

Educational Intervention
Developed by Sigma members of the Conference Planning Task Force in conjunction with and input from actual reviewers.

Rationale:
To provide clarity in role and purpose for submitters
To decrease ambiguity and objectivity for abstract reviewers
To improve transparency within the abstract review process

Process and Outcome
The newly developed abstract rubric was presented to abstract reviewers for a comment period.
Upon final approval by the Conference Planning Task Force members, the educational activity was developed.
Task Force members utilized actual reviews in the educational activity to note subjective differences between reviewers from a single previously reviewed abstract.
The educational activity was disseminated to abstract reviewers via Sigma’s online Learning Management System.
Post educational activity feedback noted high reviewer satisfaction with the new abstract rubric.
Also, abstract submitters noted increased confidence in submitting abstracts to Sigma conferences after rubric implementation as noted on post-event evaluations.

Abstract Reviews from 2015 Conference
Pre-Intervention Review Scores
After a relatively short period, two reviewer cycles, the following outcomes were noted:
Comprehensive scores began to increase.
Compliance with abstract regulation increased.
Quantitative and qualitative data noted an increased usability

Abstract Reviews from 2019 Conference
Post-Intervention Review Scores

Implications for Nursing
The use of an abstract rubric provides for consistency in judging the scientific abstracts, as well as elevating the level and complexity of abstracts submitted (Forsyth, Wright, Scherb, & Gaspar, 2010).

With increased rigor, the substance of provider-directed, provider paced educational activities will also increase. This will further the science of nursing by disseminating nursing practices.

References