Structure of a 10-minute Oral Scientific Presentation

- Title
- Background
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Acknowledgments
- Question and answer period
Title Slide (10-15 sec)

- Title should include
  - Subject
  - Location
  - Time period
- Your name
- Your affiliation
- Appropriate logos
- Say “Good morning / afternoon / evening”
Advanced Meds 490 Oral Presentations

USC undergraduate student
KSOM, Department of Life
Mentor: Dr. Know Everything
Background (1-2 min)

- Usually a few slides
- Engage audience
- Set stage for outbreak investigation
- Provide rationale for planned study
- Essential information (only) about project
- Establish relevance to health
- Include a slide describing study objectives
Methods (1-2 min)

- Usually a few slides
- Describe study design(s)
- Describe study groups and why selected
- Say what laboratory tests were used
Results (3-4 min)

- Usually several slides
- Emphasize most important findings
- Describe characteristics of study participants, animal cohort, etc
- Include descriptive results and analytic results
- Use mixture of text, tables, figures, photos as appropriate to your data
Discussion (2-3 min)

• Interpretation of findings
  – Don’t repeat results
  – Prioritize findings from most to least important
  – Link findings to study objectives
  – Put findings into context with previous studies

• Limitations slide (only the important ones)

• Conclusions slide(s) based on your findings

• Recommendations slide(s)
  – Directions for future studies
Acknowledgments (10-15 sec)

• Recognize coauthors and contributors
• Same logos as on title slide
• Your last words = “Thank You”
Creating Effective Slides
Effective Slides…

• Are uncluttered, clear, visible
• Don’t distract the audience
• Use informative titles
  – “Characteristics of Study Participants”
  – “Risk Factors for Illness”
  – Not “Results 1, “Results 2”
• Use bolded, sans serif font (Arial, Tahoma)
• Have simple, high-contrast, consistent color schemes
Color-Blind “Friendly” Presentations

• Avoid red-green color combinations
• If must use red, use yellowish red (R=255 / G=82 / B=0) instead of pure red
• Avoid red characters / lines on dark background
• Make text and lines as big or thick as practical
• Use high-contrast color scheme
Recommended Fonts and Sizes

• Sans serif font, all titles and text bolded

• For Arial (bolded):
  – Titles 36 pt
  – Main bullets 28 pt
  – Sub-bullets 28 pt if room, otherwise 24 pt
  – Avoid sub-sub bullets (re-format)

• Keep text / title size consistent across slides
  – Stop PowerPoint from changing text size as you type
  – Go to Tools, AutoCorrect
  – Uncheck “Autofit body/title text to placeholder”
Effective Text Slides

• Order of slide text matches order of script
• Key words only, not complete sentences
• 8–10 lines maximum
• Bulleted text better than numbered items in most cases
• Parallel structure (all verbs, all nouns, etc)
Things to Avoid

- Visual clutter from too many colors
- Unbolded, serif font like Times New Roman
- **ALL CAPS (HARD ON THE EYES)**
- Pseudo-3D charts and graphs
- Animation (no flying objects; slide builds=OK)
- Clip art that serves no purpose
- Unnecessary grid lines in figures
- Necessary lines that are too thin
- All PowerPoint design templates
Photos and Clip Art — Tips

• Should serve a purpose
• No copyrighted materials without permission
• No photos of identifiable people unless release
• No photos of your kids or your pets
• Clip art cautions
  – Simplest is most effective
  – Check in Slide Show to make sure it is not animated
Tips on Delivering Oral Presentations
Preparation Tips

• Use script, flesh out bullet points into sentences
• Practice is the key to making sure it doesn’t sound scripted
• Print your script in large enough type (14-16 pt)
  – Check script size in Notes Master or Notes view
  – Print one slide and accompanying script per page
• Time your presentation
• If you used “Rehearse slide timings” feature, go to Slide Show, Set Up Show, and uncheck “Advance slides using timings if present”
Delivery Tips

- Get there early
- Don’t start speaking until ready
- Speak slowly and with sufficient volume
- Don’t turn your back on your audience
- Check that the correct slide is projecting
- Use microphone correctly
- Be careful with humor
- Explain charts / graphs before giving point
- Explain associations clearly
- Pause before advancing to next slide
Reasons Not to Use a Laser Pointer

• Have to turn away from audience to use it
• Some projection screens absorb the laser, so audience in room cannot see it
• Color-blind people can’t see it (red)
• Can become a crutch
• If your hands are shaking, pointer will show it
• Alternatives:
  – Building “pointers” into slides
  – Using computer cursor (arrow)
Don’t fumble for extra slides
Don’t be defensive even if question hostile
Don’t ask “Did that answer your question?”
Don’t thank the questioner for the question
Don’t rate the question
Don’t back away from the podium as if poison
Don’t hang on to podium as if life-preserver
Take-Home Messages

• Decide type of data and the point you want to convey, then choose the visual accordingly (text, table, graph, chart, etc.)

• Well organized, practiced presentation with clear, effective slides (when used) reinforces your message and helps you communicate effectively

• Good science is more important than glitz
THANK YOU!