



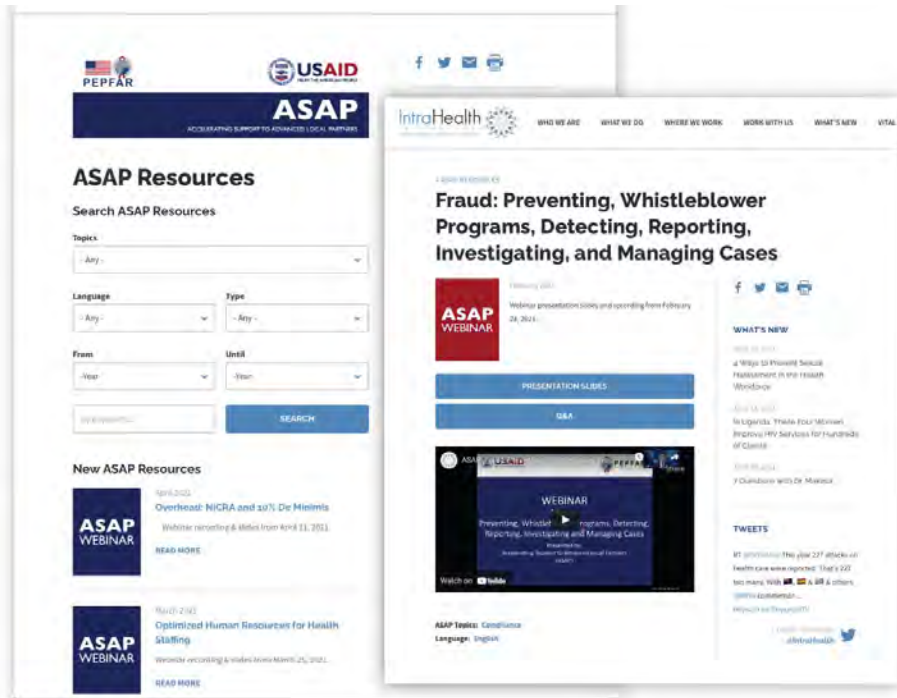
# Accelerating Support to Advanced Local Partners (ASAP) WEBINAR SERIES

# Writing Abstracts

July 8, 2021

# ASAP NOTICES

1. Welcome Local Partners
2. Please use the Q&A box for any questions.
3. We have two polls during the webinar today.
4. The presentation for today's webinar will be emailed to attendees and saved on ASAP's website at **[www.intrahealth.org/asap-resources](http://www.intrahealth.org/asap-resources)**



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ASAP has broadcasted **45 webinars**  
for **more than 9,000 attendees.**

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Find past webinars on ASAP's web page  
**[www.intrahealth.org/asap-resources](http://www.intrahealth.org/asap-resources)**

# UPCOMING WEBINARS

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**July 15**      Advancing HIV Prevention to Achieve Epidemic Control

**July 28**      Communications Strategies

Join us for a  
**WEBINAR**

July 14, 2021

8:00-9:30am EDT

12:00-1:30pm GMT



**Opportunities for local organizations:** how local institutions can contribute to sustainable HIS strengthening to enable countries to lead and finance their HIS



# WRITING ABSTRACTS



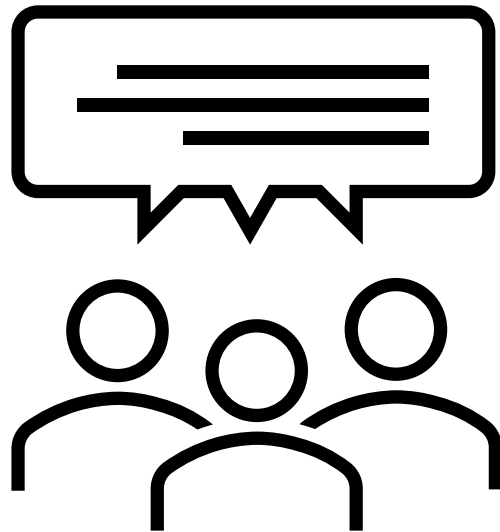
# WHY WRITE AN ABSTRACT?

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## 7 GREAT REASONS

- **Raise visibility** of your organization's technical work and capabilities
- **Highlight expertise** at national and international forums
- Position for **new project opportunities**
- Make **better decisions** about projects and investments
- Advance global knowledge base
- Be **known as leaders** in your field
- **Enhance promotion** prospects (add to CV)

# ARE YOU READY TO COMMUNICATE YOUR RESULTS?



Is your project or activity  
**ready to be written up?**

Are you able to answer  
the "**so what**" question?

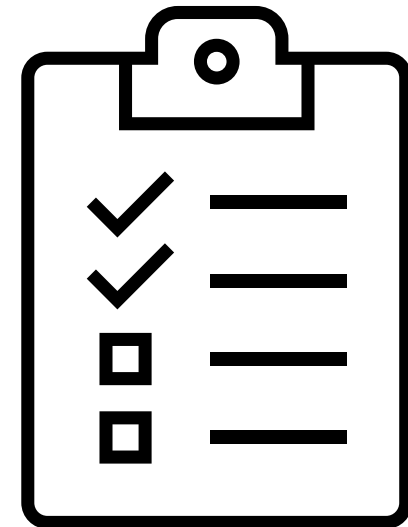
If your abstract is evidence-based,  
**is the data solid?**

**Has the abstract been reviewed** by others  
in the organization?

# DO YOUR HOMEWORK

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- **Look at examples** of successful abstracts.
- **Understand the target themes or topics** and type(s) of abstracts being solicited.
- **Pay careful attention** to submission instructions/guidelines.
- **Use the template provided**, if applicable.





# WHAT TO CONVEY IN YOUR ABSTRACT

**WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM YOU WERE TRYING TO SOLVE?**

**WHAT DID YOU DO?**

**WHAT DID YOU FIND?**

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?** *So what?*

# WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ABSTRACT

**WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM?**



**INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

**WHAT DID YOU DO?**



**METHODS**

**WHAT DID YOU FIND?**



**RESULTS/FINDINGS**

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**



**DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION**

**WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM?**



**INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

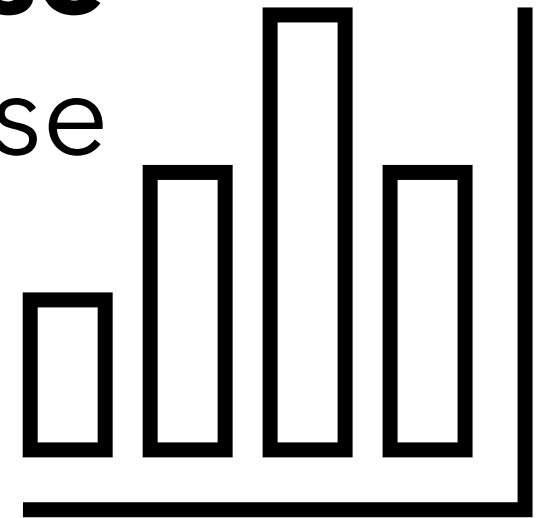
This is the **shortest part of the abstract** (2-3 sentences).

**Answers the following questions:**

- **What is already known about the subject,** related to the topic in question?
- **What is not known about the subject** and hence what the study intended to examine (or what the paper seeks to present)?

# REMEMBER

The reader is **interested in your paper/poster because of its findings** – not because of the introduction.



**WHAT DID YOU DO?**



**METHODS**

**Second-longest section of the abstract.**

Informs the reader of **what you have done and how.**

- What is the **study design and sample size**?
- What is the **setting and population**?
- What **method of inquiry** was used (surveys, observations, focus groups, key informant interviews)?
- What was the **outcome measure** and how was it defined?

**WHAT DID YOU FIND?**



**RESULTS/FINDINGS**

The **longest and most important** part of an abstract.

- **Give the main results**, not just in subjective terms.  
*"We found approach X to be superior to approach Y."*
- Data from which the conclusions will be drawn should be **reported in as much detail** as space allows.

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**



**DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION**

**Contains the most important take-home message** of the study (2-3 sentences).

Authors may be able to express an opinion about the theoretical or practical implications of the findings.

**Caution:** Do not claim more than the data demonstrates.

# GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

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## **WITH A GREAT TITLE**

- Title should be obvious, short and related to the other sections in the abstract.
- Make it interesting enough to lure them to read the abstract.
- It is necessary in some studies that the study design be evident in the title.



# FOR EXAMPLE

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"HIV testing and counseling among students."



"Data on prevalence of HIV testing and counseling among students."



"Prevalence of HIV testing and counseling and associated factors among secondary school students in Botswana."

# USING KEY WORDS

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## CHOOSE WISELY

- Choose between **3** and **10** words
- Key words are usually **used by conference organizers and indexing databases**

**TIP:** Review key words from abstracts with a similar topic.

# LET'S GET STARTED

## REVIEW

Review the specific guidelines and instructions for an abstract

## READ

Read through published abstracts.

## THINK

Think about your target audience.

## WRITE

Write the title and select key words. (First or last?)

## DRAFT

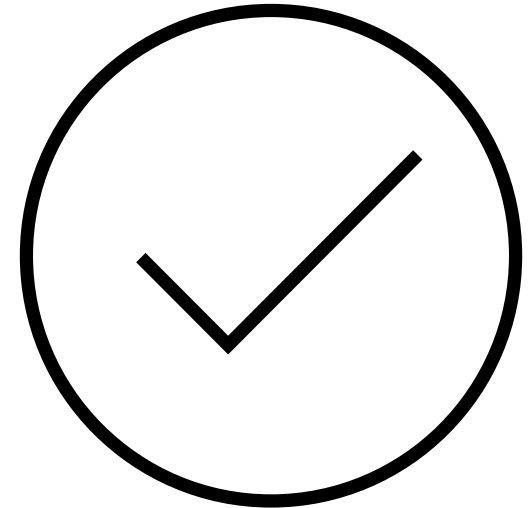
Draft your Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion/Conclusion (I-M-R-a-D)

# NEXT STEPS

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## REVIEW, PROOFREAD, EDIT

- Proofread carefully.
- Revise, as necessary.



**TIP:** Have other people read your abstract for content, style, grammar, and spelling before you submit.

# HELPFUL HINTS

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- **Use active voice** and simple sentences.  
*“We studied 20 HIV positive patients.”* is much better than *“Twenty HIV-positive patients were studied.”*
- Check **word count**.
- **Spell out abbreviations** on first use.
- Avoid citations, footnotes, and external quotes.

# REVIEW YOUR OWN ABSTRACT

---

- **Use active voice** and simple sentences.  
*"We studied 20 HIV positive patients."* is much better than *"Twenty HIV-positive patients were studied."*
- Check **word count**.
- **Spell out abbreviations** on first use.
- Avoid citations, footnotes, and external quotes.

# THE REVIEW PROCESS

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- The scientific committee of a conference oversees the peer review process.
- **Reviewers use score sheets** to assess abstracts within pre-determined criteria.
- Reviewers are looking for general **quality, sound methodology, relevance or originality, importance or general interest**, and whether an abstract should be an oral or a poster.

# WHY ABSTRACTS GET REJECTED

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## LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES

- **Methods are unclear** or not sound
- Topic is **not relevant to the conference**
- **Lack of originality**
- **Findings are not presented** or too preliminary
- **Conclusions are not linked to the data**



# WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ABSTRACT

**COMPLETE**



COVER THE MAJOR PARTS OF YOUR STUDY.

**CONCISE**



NO UNNECESSARY WORDS.

**CLEAR**



READABLE AND WELL ORGANIZED, WITH LITTLE JARGON.

**COHESIVE**



THE SECTIONS FLOW SMOOTHLY AND ARE LOGICAL.

# TECHNICAL WRITING



# TECHNICAL WRITING

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## COMMON ISSUES

- Long sentences
- Incorrect punctuation
- Inconsistent capitalization or over-use of capital letters
- Acronyms not spelled out on first use
- Spelling errors
- Incorrect sentence structure

# PUNCTUATION TIPS

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- Complete sentences end in period, question mark, or exclamation mark.
- Whether you use single or double spaces after all punctuation marks, make sure it is consistent.
- Commas are used to separate ideas.
- Use commas in numbers of 1,000 and greater.
- Footnotes should be at the end of a sentence, outside of the period with no space.

# USING LISTS

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- Use a bulleted list when the list includes three or more items
- Introduce list with a complete sentence followed with a colon
- Capitalize the first item in each bullet

# CAPITALIZATION

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**BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVER-CAPITALIZE.**

The following require capitalization:

- First word in a title
- First word after a colon
- Figure and table references
- Formal names of governments, agencies and organizations

# CAPITALIZATION

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**BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVER-CAPITALIZE.**

- Capitalize district or region only when it directly follows the proper name. Use lowercase when it appears alone.  
*Examples: Mbale District is in Uganda. Luangwa is a small district in Zambia.*
- Capitalize only the official name/title of a group, organization, or location.  
*Example: In Rwanda we visited Shyira Hospital. In Uganda we went to the referral hospital in Lira.*
- Capitalize the name of a department.  
*Example: The Finance Department implemented a new procedure.*
- Don't capitalize names of cadres or types of health facilities. *Examples: nurses, auxiliary nurse midwife, pharmacists, medical officer, community health center, district hospital.*

# USING THE APPROPRIATE TERMS: HIV

<b>TERMINOLOGY</b>	<b>PREFERRED LANGUAGE</b>
High(er)-risk group; vulnerable group	Key population(s)
Hotspots	Location of local epidemic
Positives; HIV victim; HIV positive (fe)male	People/children living with HIV
Prostitute	Sex worker
Target population	Key population
Driver [of acquiring HIV]	Use the actual term (i.e., poverty)
Drug users	People who inject drugs
Target [MSM]	Engage [MSM]

**Use UNAIDS Terminology Guidelines:**

[http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2015/2015\\_terminology\\_guidelines](http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2015/2015_terminology_guidelines)

\*Sourced guidance from UNAIDS



# THE BASICS

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- Avoid using passive voice: *"We concluded..." instead of "It can be concluded that..."*
- Cut out unnecessary adjectives (e.g., ~~advanced~~ notice)
- Avoid double negatives: "Malaria is not uncommon"
- Short sentences (average 20 words, never longer than 50 words).

# KEEP A CONSISTENT ORDER

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- Ideas must be **well organized**
- **Each paragraph** captures just **one topic**
- **Each sentence** has just **one idea**
- Explicit **relationship must exist between sentences**
- Explicit **relationship** must also exist **between paragraphs and between sections**

# STYLE AND LANGUAGE

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- Complex language not needed
- Write numbers from 0 to 10 in words
  - One, two, three.... after
  - 10, 11, 12,....
- Do not use contractions in professional writing (*don't, couldn't, shouldn't*)
- Maintain similar language throughout

# STYLE AND LANGUAGE

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- **Either/or, neither/nor:** Best together, not one without the other (and never either/nor or neither/or).
- **'Respectively' is an adverb.** It means "in the order given" and should only be used if your sentence would be unclear without it.
- For men, the proportion of hospital admissions rose from 1.8% in 1998 to 8.1% a decade later; for women, those figures were 7.5% and 16.3%, respectively.

# AVOID COMMON MISTAKES

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- **Punctuation goes inside quotes**, e.g., "I love working here," he said, or "Working here is the best."
- The Latin abbreviation "i.e." means "that is"; the abbreviation "e.g." means "for example."
- Both **"i.e." and "e.g." should be followed by a comma** (i.e., like this) and should be combined with "etc."

# SPELLING EXERCISE

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Eye halve a spelling checker,  
It came with my pea sea.  
It plainly marks for my revue  
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word,  
And weight four it two say  
Weather eye am wrong oar write;  
It shows me straight a weigh!

PUT YOUR

**WORDS**

A yellow measuring tape is wrapped horizontally around the word 'WORDS'. The tape shows markings from 4 to 12 inches. The word 'WORDS' is in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. The tape is positioned between the top and bottom halves of the word.

ON A DIET

## Wordy and Redundant

## Word Diet

At the present time

now

Absolutely essential

essential

honest truth

truth

despite the fact of

because

make a correction

correct

as long as

if

any particular type of

any

large in size

large

past history

history

will be able to

can

while it is true that

although

utilize

use



## Wordy and Redundant

## Word Diet

a very limited number of

few

Absolutely essential

essential

Free gift

gift

altogether

together

make a correction

correct

as long as

if

any particular type of

any

large in size

large

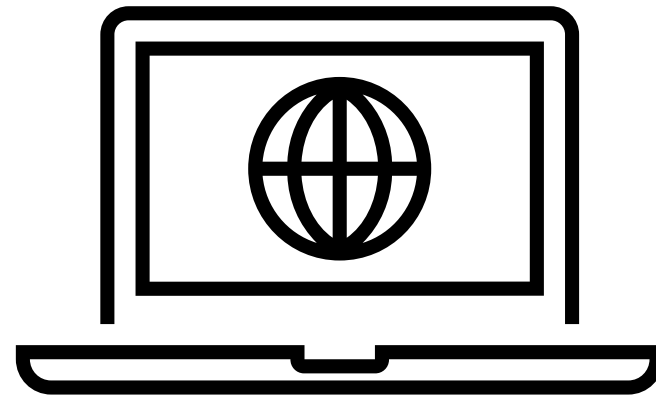
one of the same

the same

Summarize briefly

summarize

There are many resources that provide technical and editorial help to new authors, especially from low-middle income countries.



# EQUATOR

The EQUATOR Network is a new initiative that seeks to improve the quality of scientific publications by promoting transparent and accurate reporting of health research.

The screenshot shows the EQUATOR Network website homepage. The header includes the EQUATOR Network logo and the tagline "Enhancing the QUALITY and Transparency Of health Research". A navigation menu lists: Home, Library, Toolkits, Courses & events, News, Blog, Librarian Network, About us, and Contact. Below the header is a green banner with the text "Your one-stop-shop for writing and publishing high-impact health research" and a list of services: find reporting guidelines, improve your writing, join our courses, run your own training course, enhance your peer review, and implement guidelines.

The main content area is divided into three columns:

- Library for health research reporting:** A section with a search icon and text: "The Library contains a comprehensive searchable database of reporting guidelines and also links to other resources relevant to research reporting." It includes links for "Search for reporting guidelines", "Not sure which reporting guideline to use?", "Reporting guidelines under development", and "Visit the library for more resources".
- Reporting guidelines for main study types:** A table listing various study types and their corresponding reporting guidelines. A link "See all 401 reporting guidelines" is provided at the bottom.
- EQUATOR Oncology:** A blue box with an image of a person at a computer and text: "Resources supporting complete, accurate and transparent research." It includes the EQUATOR Oncology logo and a link "Visit EQUATOR Oncology".

At the bottom, there are three sections:

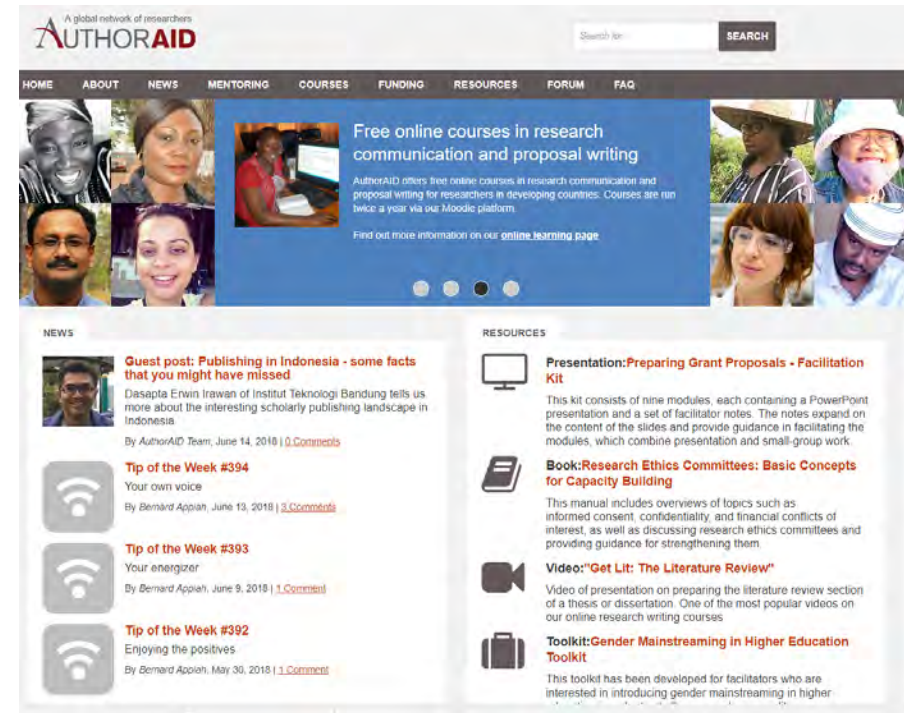
- Toolkits:** A red box with the text "Find practical help and resources to support you in:" and links for "Writing research", "Using guidelines in your journal", and "Peer reviewing research".
- EQUATOR highlights:** A blue box with two news items:
  - 3/04/2018 - Fond farewells - Celebrating Iveta Simera's decade with the EQUATOR Network:** A text snippet mentioning Iveta Simera's move from her post as founding Deputy Director of the UK EQUATOR Centre to the Global Health Network.
  - 12/01/2018 - EQUATOR 2017 highlights:** A text snippet mentioning the 2017 EQUATOR Centre Year and the Council of Science Editors (CSE) Award for Meritorious.
- News:** An orange box with three news items:
  - Doug Altman, 12 July 1948 - 3 June 2018:** A text snippet dated 4/06/2018.
  - The Nutritools website: promoting quality in dietary assessment data in epidemiological and clinical studies:** A text snippet dated 6/03/2018.
  - EQUATOR Network publishes review of reporting guidelines for cancer research:** A text snippet dated 23/02/2018.

www.equator-network.org

# AUTHORAID

Junior scientists get a mentor (often a retired academic) who guides them through the writing process.

[www.authoraaid.info/about/](http://www.authoraaid.info/about/)



The screenshot shows the AuthorAid website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the AuthorAid logo and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there is a main banner area with a blue background and a white text box. The text in the banner reads: "Free online courses in research communication and proposal writing". Below this text, there is a smaller text box that says: "AuthorAid offers free online courses in research communication and proposal writing for researchers in developing countries. Courses are run twice a year via our Moodle platform. Find out more information on our [online learning page](#)".

Below the banner, there are two columns of content. The left column is titled "NEWS" and contains three items:

- Guest post: Publishing in Indonesia - some facts that you might have missed**  
Dasapta Erwin Irawan of Institut Teknologi Bandung tells us more about the interesting scholarly publishing landscape in Indonesia.  
By AuthorAid Team, June 14, 2018 | [0 Comments](#)
- Tip of the Week #394**  
Your own voice  
By Bernard Appiah, June 13, 2018 | [3 Comments](#)
- Tip of the Week #393**  
Your energizer  
By Bernard Appiah, June 9, 2018 | [1 Comment](#)
- Tip of the Week #392**  
Enjoying the positives  
By Bernard Appiah, May 30, 2018 | [1 Comment](#)

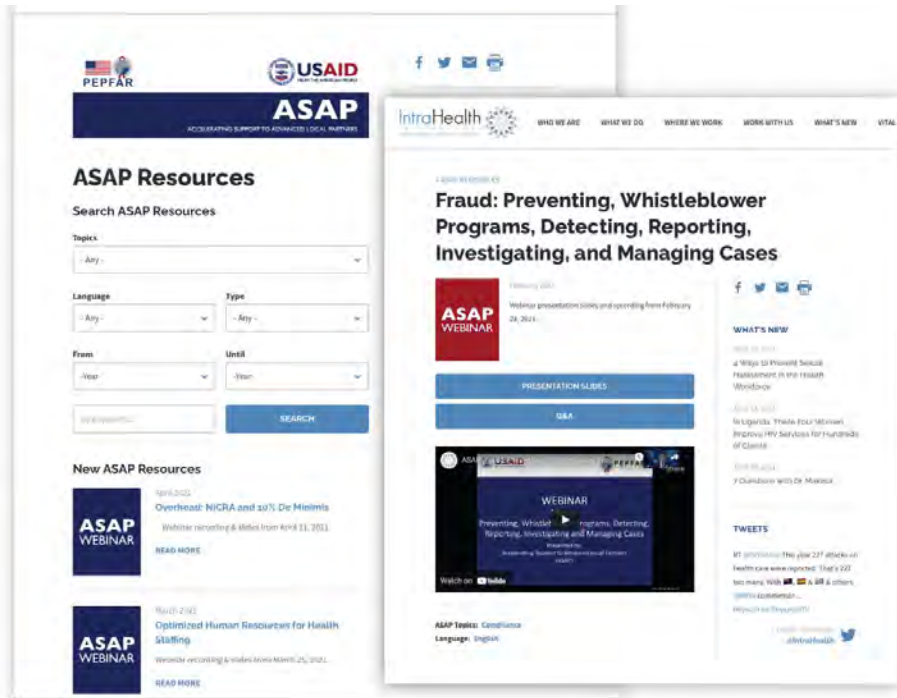
The right column is titled "RESOURCES" and contains three items:

- Presentation: Preparing Grant Proposals - Facilitation Kit**  
This kit consists of nine modules, each containing a PowerPoint presentation and a set of facilitator notes. The notes expand on the content of the slides and provide guidance in facilitating the modules, which combine presentation and small-group work.
- Book: Research Ethics Committees: Basic Concepts for Capacity Building**  
This manual includes overviews of topics such as informed consent, confidentiality, and financial conflicts of interest, as well as discussing research ethics committees and providing guidance for strengthening them.
- Video: "Get Lit: The Literature Review"**  
Video of presentation on preparing the literature review section of a thesis or dissertation. One of the most popular videos on our online research writing courses.
- Toolkit: Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education Toolkit**  
This toolkit has been developed for facilitators who are interested in introducing gender mainstreaming in higher education.

# IN SUMMARY

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- State the issue to be discussed, give a brief background to the issue, describe briefly what you are doing/have done about it, and why is it important.
- Practice, practice, practice – writing an abstract is not easy, but is a key part of our work and career.



# ON DEMAND WEBINARS

The ASAP website hosts many recorded webinars and resources. Visit us at: [www.intrahealth.org/asap-resources](http://www.intrahealth.org/asap-resources)

# QUESTIONS?

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THANK YOU  
FOR ATTENDING.

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