

11

Writing Introductions, Conclusions, and Abstracts

SOLUTIONS

1. For a scientific paper about AIDS knowledge:
 - a. Outline of introduction to study of AIDS knowledge by language in the United States
 - I. (Paragraph on why AIDS is of concern) Introductory sentence: “AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) is a leading cause of death in the United States.”
 - II. (Paragraph on why it is important to assess AIDS knowledge) Introductory sentences: “In the absence of a vaccine against AIDS, prevention must rely on individual behavior to avoid spread of the disease. It is unlikely that appropriate behavioral change will occur without knowledge about AIDS and how it is transmitted; hence it is important to assess levels of AIDS knowledge in the general population.”
 - III. (Paragraph on why language is an important possible mechanism related to AIDS knowledge) Introductory sentence: “Language can affect AIDS knowledge either through linguistic barriers or cultural differences.”
 - b. Kinds of numeric information to incorporate, and useful quantitative comparisons for an introduction to the AIDS knowledge paper.

For paragraph I, statistics on levels and trends in AIDS prevalence and mortality in the United States, using percentage change to quantify trends over time in AIDS prevalence and mortality rates, and rank as a cause of death to indicate overall importance.

For paragraph II, evidence on how knowledge about AIDS or other similar diseases such as STDs translates into changes in preventive behaviors.

For paragraph III, statistics on how AIDS prevalence and mortality vary by language ethnic group, with supplementary evidence by race or socioeconomic status if statistics by language are not available. Use ratios or percentage difference to contrast rates across groups. Information on the number of persons, percentage share, and trends in number and share of major language groups in the U.S.
3. Outline of conclusion to study of AIDS knowledge by language in the United States
 - a. Summarize the main numeric results.
 - I. Summary of differences in AIDS knowledge by language group using GEE technique (English speakers did best, Spanish/Span-

- ish did worst; example of size of differences for a representative AIDS topic)
- II. Synthesis of which AIDS topics were best understood, least well understood using GEE approach (reporting % of respondents who answered questions correctly within broad conceptual groupings of AIDS knowledge topics, generalized across language groups where possible)
 - III. Description of how these knowledge patterns correspond to which topics are most important for people to understand (e.g., correct information about likely means of transmission is more essential than correct information about unlikely means of transmission)
- b. Discuss only statistically significant differences across language groups or AIDS knowledge topics. For topics where language differences in knowledge were not statistically significant, describe overall knowledge levels only, not differences across groups.
 - c. To show how these results might be used to evaluate or influence health education programs, include statistics from other studies about
 - i. the availability of education materials that emphasize the most important AIDS transmission topics
 - ii. the association between AIDS knowledge and preventive behaviors
 - iii. availability of AIDS education materials in Spanish and other non-English languages
5. Research implications of the findings in table 6C (Mensch et al. 2003). “This study has shown that method of data collection has a substantial effect on reported levels of sensitive behaviors among adolescents. Teens were more likely to report normative behaviors such as having a boyfriend or girlfriend if questioned in person than using audio computer-aided self-interview (ACASI) techniques. For sensitive (stigmatized) behaviors such as having been coerced into sex, however, ACASI yielded higher rates than in-person interviews.
- “These results have several implications for future research on similar topics and populations. First, the method of data collection should be chosen to maximize the chances of subjects reporting their true behavior instead of responding in ways that conform to perceived social norms about acceptability of that behavior. Second, results should not be compared across sources that used different methods of data collection, because apparent differences (or lack of differences) across groups could be attributable to reporting biases rather than differences in actual behavior.”