

Review of: "A step in the right direction: Billboard-style posters preferred overall at two conferences, but should include more methods and limitations"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

A very relevant topic as scientific poster communications is one of the most important mean to disseminate scientific knowledge, especially brand new information chunks.

The title is currently too long and too generic, especially the main title ("A step in the right direction"). It is also dubious to already evaluate and praise the results too much. It is more about the pros and cons of billboard-styled posters in the end, especially as long-term learning and elaboration effects, effects for conferences with billboard-styled posters as default and information about different levels of user experience and motivation what to do with the posters (reading them, elaborating them or just archiving them) were not addressed.

The abstract make clear what the main topic is and assists in attracting readers to the paper, but it lacks information about the exact outcomes.

Keywords: although health is not the focus of the poster, health communication is already the second term in the list of keywords, which is strange. Better would be to add "billboard-styled posters", "scientific dissemination" and "poster presentation".

Figure 1: type A is very clear, but type B is underspecified—this example stems from the Morrison homepage, but it lacks details on what typically would be presented in the middle part. It should also refer to the original source if used here again.

Hypotheses: the authors start with a very generic introduction which is not perfectly helpful.

Before the real hypotheses are explained (page 4): it should be noted that there are different types of usage of posters, e.g. ON-SITE processing / reading /discussing of posters and post-hoc and archival reasons of poster processing. Such different way of using posters are important to disentangle as the testing of hypotheses for the pros and cons for different usage forms will also differ.

Hypothesis H8: live observations would be mandatory to test H8.

Statistical parameters (such as N) should be italicized, but not Chi—which should be written as a solid Greek character!

One critical limitation is that the authors did not address long-term effects, which they could have addressed easily via Repeated Evaluation Technique (RET) (Carbon & Leder, 2005).—there you can simulate the elaboration and familiarity effects of innovative material (such as the new styled posters) and you can test them easily afterwards. Such a method is inevitable to differentiate between just attentive effects due to newness and really better dissemination types which is the major hypothesis of the current paper.

All statistics should be enriched and complemented by effect sizes.

It would have been important to conduct a power analysis before running the studies as we are now faced with arbitrary and varying sample sizes.

Limitations: it would not only be important to control for the sample size of posters in a room / at a conference site, but also to control for the distribution of different styles of posters.