nism for attribution in the scientific literature. To appropriate a database entry without attribution and imply that the data were generated de novo would be plagiarism, but to use data from a public database as the basis for further analysis is entirely appropriate and widely accepted within the academic community.

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Structured Abstracts for Technical Journals

OUR READING OF THOUSANDS OF technical journal abstracts in myriad disciplines shows substantial information nonuniformity in the nonmedical records' abstracts. They can vary in information volume, information categories, and information clarity. Commonly, research purpose, results achieved, and potential applications are not evident.

We do not find these problems in the bulk of the *medical* literature. Most medical journals require that authors address canonical categories in the abstract and full-text article, based on recommendations made over a decade ago (*1*). The experience of the medical community with these structured abstracts has been well documented (*2*). Structured abstracts are slightly longer than unstructured ones, have slightly longer underlying articles, and have more useful information content. They produce no negative impact on creativity or originality and are widely accepted as a positive improvement.

The advantages of structured abstracts are so obvious, we do not understand why they have not been implemented in the nonmedical journals. The costs are minimal and the potential benefits would be substantial. We recommend that all technical journals require the following generic structured abstract categories for both original research and review articles: Background, Objectives, Approach, Results, and Conclusions. Each journal could also establish subcategories to accentuate information of value to its unique discipline, as many medical journals have done.

CREDIT: LARRY MASTER

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CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

NETWATCH: "Latin America Field Guide" (4 May, p. 815). The bird in the photo accompanying the item is a tufted coquette, not a dark-rumped petrel.

REVIEW: "Genealogical and evolutionary inference with the human Y chromosome" by M. P. H. Stumpf and D. B. Goldstein (2 Mar., p. 1740). In column 3, paragraph 2, headed "Ancestral haplotypes and present variation," the last sentence should have read "...nodes 1 through 4 back to the node at time T_3," not "...at time T_2."