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## DEGRADING QUALITY OF ABSTRACTS AND PRESENTATIONS AT SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES

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### DEGRADING QUALITY OF ABSTRACTS AND PRESENTATIONS AT SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES

The quality of abstracts and presentations at many scientific conferences calls for immediate attention and upgrade. Scientists who value quality would easily pick out how many scientific societies/associations might have been putting more interest on the quantity (numbers) rather than the quality of both the abstracts they accept and the presentations made at the scientific sections of their conferences. Similar concern about such low abstracts qualities can be inferred (indirectly) from the publications by Scherer et al. [1], Pless and Rivara [2], Gandhi and Gilbert [3], etc. These poor research, abstracts, and presentation qualities essentially prevent majority of those studies from being finally published in peer review journals [4].

Many conferences' organizing committees (COCs) do not even maintain the formats of abstracts, let alone the quality of the studies being presented in the abstracts. Some abstracts would be too long; some would be structured, others would not; worst still, some abstracts would be so irrelevant to the theme of the conference; many others would be full of errors that would normally have been corrected (or the abstracts would have been rejected) if, at least, the abstracts were truly reviewed.

The menace of these extremely poor quality would be that many students who attend such conferences with the hope of learning may eventually learn very little or even nothing; so others who are attending such type of conference for the first time might be tempted to believe that scientific conferences are always that worse. Another problem from such pitiable quality of abstracts and presentations is that participants who did just fairly well in their presentations might start to believe that they had performed excellently well, since sense of satisfaction is often relative.

Putting an end to this falling quality would depend on an understanding of the sources of the problems. In reality, some COCs give little or no review to the abstracts they receive prior to finally accepting such abstracts; some would receive abstracts even up to the last minute the abstracts are supposed

to be sent to the press, giving them extremely small (or, sometimes, no) time for review. A number of COCs who claim to review the abstracts do not blind the reviewers and often give an unimaginably large room for bias. Worst still, many of these "unworthy" abstracts and studies would be presented at such conferences with minimal (or even, no) criticism: perhaps because the chairmen and the moderators of the sections are biased, and/or because the time allocated for questioning and deliberation on each presentation is often too small.

Scientific communities should fight these low and falling standards of the A to Z of conferences activities. To achieve this, it may be important that COCs pay a lot of attention to (1) thoroughly reviewing abstracts prior to accepting; (2) double-blinding the review process; (3) requesting the assistance of some international experts in the review process; (4) inviting international (or, at least, third-party) experts as moderators or chairmen of scientific sections; and (5) giving more time for deliberation and questioning at scientific sections. Or else, the quality of abstracts and presentations at many scientific conferences (as well as the goals of such conferences) would keep going down the drain.

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**SALAWU Emmanuel O** is an actively developing young scientist, who believes that education, research, and presentations and publications of research work must always be of high quality. He earned his 5-year bachelor degree in Physiology at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Nigeria; and he is currently a post-graduate student at the School of Public Health, SRM University, India. He has more than a dozen of scientific publications in biomedical journals and had held many academics positions in the past. He plans to become an eminent professor and a prominent researcher in the near future. In fact, he had previously worked as a temporary member of staff at Faculty of Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria. He currently works on bio-statistical models that are capable of predicting pregnancy, delivery, post-delivery, complications, and attempts to rank the associated factors in the order of importance.



**SALAWU Ayoola T** is an innovative young Agricultural Engineer, who hates seeing farmers suffering unreasonably. He believes that through farm mechanization, and fabrication of unavailable machines, food production can be made a lot easier and more rewarding. He had his 5-year bachelor degree in Agricultural Engineering at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Nigeria; and had previously worked (temporarily) with the Teaching Service of Kano State, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Osun State, Nigeria. He is, at present, a post-graduate student of Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria; and currently works on fabrication of various threshers (especially soya beans thresher) looking at the possibility of powering the threshers with various power sources – especially with power sources affordable to peasant farmers.