

Writing Killer (or at least Dangerous) Specific Aims
Sleep Medicine T32
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Why?

- Specific Aims are what you “shop around’ internally and externally
- Critical for sharpening your question, methods, outcomes
- Easy to revise
- Outline for remainder of the application

What? (In general)

- The most important page of the application
- The application in miniature
- Often the first, best impression a reviewer will have of the entire application

What? (In specific)

- Section 1
 - Wide-angle statement of the problem you are addressing; public health significance
 - What we know
 - What we don’t know: Critical gap
 - What we NEED to know...
 -which is precisely what we plan to do
- Section 2
 - “In order to address this critical problem, we propose to...”
 - Key methods and outcomes
 - Broad/general aim
- Specific Aims
 - Usually 2-4
 - “To examine/determine/evaluate...”
 - State specific outcomes
 - Hypotheses: Specific, refutable.

- Beware pseudo-hypotheses
- Exploratory aims: Pros and cons
- “Contingent” aims: Typically a greater concern with more basic than more clinical applications
- Final paragraph: Impact, innovation, future directions

Also

- Revise, revise, revise
- Show it around, get feedback
- Other things to work on concurrently
 - Model
 - Study flow
 - Assessments, measurements

