Regulations for Abstract Submission and Presentation

4th Shelter Medicine Congress
20 and 21 November 2026
University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, Vila Real

1. General provisions

The 4th Shelter Medicine Congress promotes the presentation and discussion of scientific and professional work relevant to Shelter Medicine, the health and welfare of animal populations, and their interaction with communities.

Submissions are accepted from veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses, researchers, lecturers, students, professionals working in official animal collection centres, municipalities and animal protection organisations, and other professionals whose activities fall within the scope of the Congress.

All submitted abstracts will be assessed by the Congress Scientific Committee.

2. Types of submission

Submissions are accepted in the following categories:

i. **Scientific research**
Includes original clinical, epidemiological, population-based, laboratory, behavioural, social or management studies, prospective or retrospective studies, and systematic or *scoping reviews*;

ii. **Clinical case or case series**
For cases of particular relevance to Shelter Medicine, including those of interest because of their originality, diagnostic or therapeutic approach, implications for population management, or contribution to professional practice.

iii. **Professional practice experience or innovation in Shelter Medicine**
Includes projects, programmes, interventions, protocols or organisational models implemented in official animal collection centres, shelters, associations, municipalities, veterinary services or communities, provided that clearly defined

objectives, a clearly described methodology or intervention, and results or indicators enabling the experience to be evaluated are presented.

Submissions consisting solely of opinion, descriptions of projects without results, or narrative reviews without a defined methodology will not be accepted.

3. Thematic areas

At the time of submission, authors must select the thematic area that best fits their work:

- Population management, facilities, housing, hygiene and biosecurity;
- Preventive medicine, infectious diseases and clinical/surgical medicine;
- Animal welfare, behaviour, enrichment and handling;
- Reproduction, neutering, trap-neuter-return (TNR) and management of community animals;
- Epidemiology, public health and *One Health*;
- Adoption, reunification, community programmes and access to veterinary care;
- Management, public policy, legislation, ethics and governance;
- Education, innovation, technology and other areas related to Shelter Medicine.

The Scientific Committee may change the thematic area selected by the authors if it considers another category more appropriate.

4. Presentation format

At the time of submission, the author must indicate one of the following preferences:

- Oral presentation;
- Poster;
- No preference.

The selection indicates the author's preference and is not binding on the Scientific Committee.

The final decision on acceptance and presentation format rests exclusively with the Scientific Committee, taking into account the assessment of the submission, its suitability for the scientific programme, and the availability of rooms and time slots.

A submission entered for oral presentation may instead be accepted as a poster.

5. Abstract preparation

Abstracts must be submitted in **Portuguese and English**, in semantically equivalent versions.

Abstracts must be prepared using the bilingual template corresponding to the relevant submission category and **submitted by email to spmva.geral@gmail.com by the deadline stated in the submission timeline**.

The **email subject line** must follow this format:

"CMA2026 | Abstract submission | Presenting author's surname".

The title of each version must be concise and informative and must not exceed **20 words**.

The body of each version of the abstract must not exceed **300 words**; the title and keywords are not included in this word count.

Each version must include between **3 and 5 keywords**.

Tables, figures, images and bibliographic references are not permitted in the abstract.

Abbreviations should be kept to a minimum and defined at first use.

Wherever possible, generic names should be used for medicines, products and equipment, and promotional or commercial references should be avoided.

The results presented must be sufficiently specific to allow the submission to be assessed. Statements such as 'results will be presented' are not acceptable.

6. Abstract structure

6.1. Scientific research

The abstract must be organised under the following headings:

Introduction and objectives
Materials and methods
Results
Conclusions

6.2. Clinical case or case series

The abstract must be organised under the following headings:

Introduction
Case or case series description
Approach and outcome
Conclusions and relevance to Shelter Medicine

6.3. Professional practice experience or innovation

The abstract must be organised under the following headings:

Context and objective
Intervention/methodology
Results/impact
Conclusions and applicability

7. Authorship

All listed authors must have made a relevant contribution to the work presented and must agree to its submission.

A **presenting author** must be identified and will be responsible for correspondence with the organisers and for presenting the work at the Congress.

Each submission may be presented in person by only one of the authors; all co-authors will nevertheless be listed.

Any change to the presenting author after acceptance must be notified to and authorised by the Scientific Committee.

8. Originality

The authors are responsible for the originality, accuracy and integrity of the submitted content.

Work already published in full in a scientific journal before the submission deadline will generally not be eligible.

Any previous presentation of the results in another setting must be declared at the time of submission and will be considered by the Scientific Committee; it will not necessarily result in automatic exclusion.

Submissions that constitute direct advertising of products, services, companies or organisations will not be accepted.

9. Ethics, animal welfare and data protection

All work must comply with the legislation and ethical principles applicable to animal welfare and the use of animals, as well as applicable data protection requirements.

Where required by the nature of the work, approval by the competent ethics committee or body must be stated, including the relevant reference or approval number.

For work carried out in veterinary practice, shelter activities or population-level interventions, authors must confirm that the procedures described formed part of justified care or practice and that all applicable institutional authorisations or consents were obtained.

The Scientific Committee may request additional documentation concerning the ethical aspects of the work.

Ethical or animal-welfare concerns that are not adequately justified may result in rejection of the submission, irrespective of its scientific quality.

10. Conflicts of interest and funding

At the time of submission, authors must declare:

- any conflicts of interest;
- sources of funding or other support for the work;
- the absence of conflicts of interest or funding, where applicable.

Funding does not constitute grounds for exclusion, provided that it is properly declared and does not compromise the scientific independence of the work.

11. Assessment process

Each abstract will be assessed by **two members or reviewers appointed by the Scientific Committee**, with every effort made to avoid conflicts of interest.

Whenever permitted by the submission system, assessment will be conducted without access to the identities of the authors or their institutions.

The following criteria will be considered:

- relevance to Shelter Medicine;
- scientific or technical merit;
- methodological appropriateness and rigour;
- quality and consistency of the results;
- originality;
- relevance and applicability of the results;
- clarity and quality of the abstract.

Ethical compliance and adherence to the submission requirements are conditions of eligibility.

Where there is a substantial discrepancy between assessments or disagreement regarding the acceptance decision, the abstract may be referred to a third reviewer.

The final decision rests with the Scientific Committee and may take one of the following forms:

Accepted for oral presentation;
Accepted for poster presentation;

Conditionally accepted, subject to revisions;

Not accepted.

The decisions of the Scientific Committee are final.

12. Oral presentations

Oral presentations may be delivered in Portuguese or English. The chosen language must be communicated to the organisers in advance and will be identified in the scientific programme. Visual aids may be prepared in the language of the presentation or in English.

The oral presentation session will comprise up to four submissions selected by the Scientific Committee on the basis of the assessment conducted, their suitability for the scientific programme and thematic diversity.

Each oral presentation will be allocated a maximum of **10 minutes for the presentation**, followed by **3 minutes for discussion and questions**.

Authors must strictly observe the allocated time.

Presentations must be prepared in PowerPoint (.pptx) or PDF format and use a 16:9 aspect ratio.

A declaration of any conflicts of interest and sources of funding must be included at the beginning or end of the presentation.

13. Poster presentations

Posters may be prepared in Portuguese or English. The title and a brief summary of the main conclusions must also be provided in the other official language of the Congress.

Posters must be presented in portrait **A0 format - 841 × 1189 mm**.

The content should favour concise visual communication of the objectives, methodology, main results and conclusions.

Each poster must clearly identify the title, authors and their affiliations.

Any conflicts of interest and sources of funding must also be stated.

The presenting author must remain beside the poster during the period specifically designated in the programme for discussion of the submissions.

A digital version in PDF format may be requested in advance for inclusion in the Congress's digital channels or documentation.

14. Congress registration

Acceptance of an abstract entails a commitment to present it in person at the Congress.

The presenting author of each submission accepted for oral or poster presentation will be exempt from payment of the Congress registration fee. The exemption applies to one author only per submission.

If the author eligible for the exemption has already registered and paid the registration fee before notification of the decision, the organisers will refund the amount paid for Congress registration.

The exemption applies exclusively to Congress registration. Participation in the TNR training course and/or the Congress dinner is subject to payment of the applicable fees.

Despite the fee exemption, the presenting author must complete the registration process by the deadline specified by the organisers. Failure to register by the stipulated deadline may result in the submission being withdrawn from the scientific programme.

15. Publication

The abstract book of the 4th Shelter Medicine Congress, comprising the abstracts accepted and presented at the Congress, will be published in the Revista Portuguesa de Ciências Veterinárias, the journal of the Portuguese Society of Veterinary Sciences (SPCV).

Submission of an abstract implies the authors' consent to its inclusion and publication in the abstract book, the programme, the website, or other official Congress channels, while retaining intellectual authorship of the work.

Accepted abstracts may undergo limited editorial revision to standardise layout, spelling or terminology, without altering their scientific content.

16. Final provisions

Submission of an abstract constitutes acknowledgement and full acceptance of these Regulations.

Any matters not covered by these Regulations will be considered and decided by the Scientific Committee of the 4th Shelter Medicine Congress.