

Cross-publisher agreement on the defining principles of plain language summaries of publications (PLSPs)

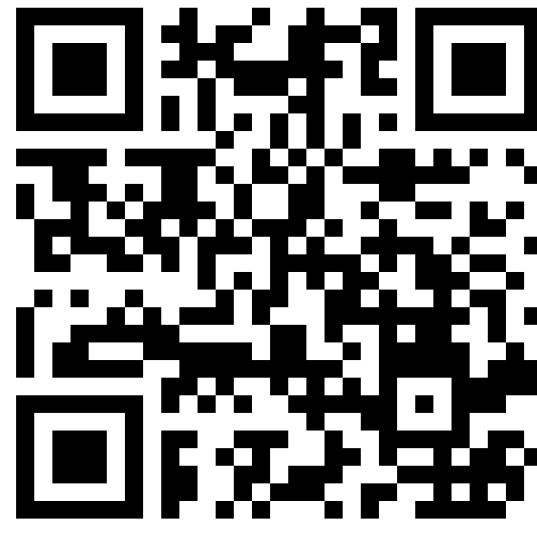
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WHY WAS THIS NEEDED?

- Plain language summaries of publications (PLSPs) are standalone articles that present research in a way that is easily understood by a broad range of readers, including non-specialist audiences.^{1,2}
- The number of PLSPs produced has increased markedly since they were first published in 2020.
- However, there is no established definition for this article type.
- We aimed to identify the principles that define PLSPs as an article type to encourage standardization.

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WHAT DID WE DO?

AIMS

- We wanted to:
 - review existing PLSP guidance across publishers to identify areas of commonality and difference
 - seek convergence on any points of divergence across publisher guidelines
 - reach cross-publisher agreement on the principles that underpin PLSPs as a distinct article type.

METHODS



ICMJE, International Committee of Medical Journal Editors; PLSP, plain language summary of publication; STM, International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers.

WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE?

- We aligned existing PLSP guidance across publishers and produced a standard definition and key principles (**below**) that demonstrate cross-publisher agreement on the characteristics that define PLSPs.



Plain language summaries of publications (PLSPs) are **standalone summaries** of **peer-reviewed articles** written according to **plain language principles** and published in **peer-reviewed journals**. PLSPs are designed to meet the needs of **diverse audiences**, including different groups of readers to those of the original article and time-poor individuals. As peer-reviewed standalone articles with a **unique DOI**, PLSPs differ from other types of research summaries, such as text and graphical plain language summaries published within a peer-reviewed article and lay summaries of clinical trial results developed for regulatory purposes.



CONTENT PRINCIPLES

PLSPs must:

- ✓ include an abstract or summary
- ✓ follow plain language principles and include a combination of text and graphical elements
- ✓ have a title that makes it clear that it is a summary article written in plain language
- ✓ include a clear/prominent link/reference to the original article(s) being summarized
- ✓ be peer reviewed, ideally by at least one person representing the target audience(s).

PROCESS PRINCIPLES

When developing PLSPs, authors should:

- ✓ seek support and/or permission from the rights holder of the original article(s)
- ✓ consider including at least one author from the original article(s)
- ✓ follow journal/publisher guidelines and policies (e.g. authorship criteria, disclosures, acknowledgements, use of AI).

When producing PLSPs, publishers should:

- ✓ publish PLSPs as standalone articles with their own unique DOI
- ✓ ensure PLSPs are published open access (e.g. under a Creative Commons licence).

AI, artificial intelligence; DOI, digital object identifier; PLSP, plain language summary of publication.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- All publishers that offer PLSPs agree on a set of principles that define them as a discrete article type.
- Publishers should consider these principles when introducing PLSPs to their journals to encourage standardization.
- Indexing services (e.g. PubMed) should support discoverability by creating a PLSP article-type category.

WHAT NEXT?

- We will use the PLSP definition and key principles to develop outputs that:
 - demonstrate to indexing services that PLSPs require an article-type category
 - support journals that plan to launch this type of content in the future
 - assist pharma companies and medical writers when developing PLSPs.

REFERENCES

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DISCLOSURES

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