

Do healthcare professionals really value plain language summaries?

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Conclusions



In this study, HCPs considered PLS to be the most useful of the three publication enhancement types



Indeed, many HCPs went on to use PLS with their patients, demonstrating a role for PLS in improving understanding and facilitating communication between HCPs and patients

Background and objective

- There is growing interest in developing plain language summaries (PLS) of research publications¹
- PLS present complex scientific information in an easy to understand format to make research more accessible to lay audiences and non-specialist healthcare professionals (HCPs)²
- PLS can help increase understanding of research results and facilitate conversations between HCPs and patients to improve shared decision-making^{2,3}
- Our aim was to understand HCPs interest in, and use of, PLS as publication enhancements

Research design and methods

- We conducted an online survey to evaluate readership of a special issue on type 2 diabetes co-published in December 2020
 - The invitation to take part in the survey was sent to a random, representative sample of HCPs from the readership of the two journals
 - Respondents who completed the survey were entered into a sweepstake to win one of 50 \$25 gift cards
 - The survey included 17 questions to evaluate use of the special issue and of online publication enhancements accompanying each of the five chapters

January–March
8 WEEKS
2021

Readers of two journals in the USA were asked to complete an online survey

How useful were each of the publication enhancements?

PLS

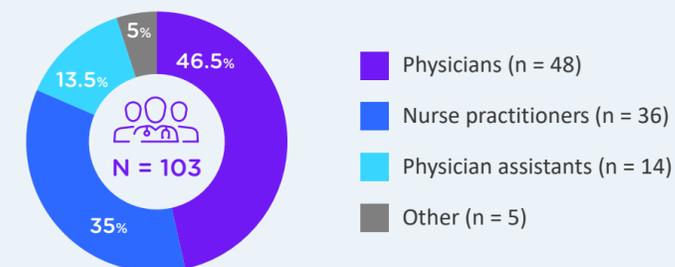
Infographics

Videos

Results

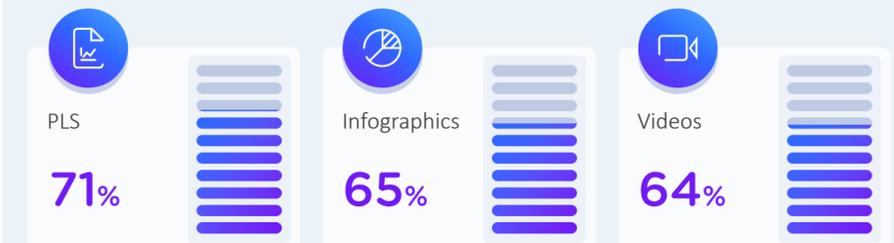
HCPs who responded to the online survey

- Respondents had been in practice for an average of 18 years (post residency)



- Overall, 64% (66/103) of the HCPs viewed at least one of the enhancements

HCPs who rated publication enhancements as "very/extremely useful" (n = 66)



- PLS were considered the most useful enhancement
 - This was consistent across professions (physicians 69%; nurse practitioners and physician assistants 70%)

Around half of the HCPs (20/47) who rated PLS as "very/extremely useful" used them with patients



- These findings reflect the views of the limited number of respondents and the quality of PLS compared with the other enhancements was not assessed

Around 1 in 6 HCPs (8/47) referred patients and families to the online PLS



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References

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