

Seek and you will [potentially] find: the impact of plain language summary accessibility on engagement and wider dissemination



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➤ KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Over a 1-year period (July 2020–June 2021), we found that the method/platform used to share a plain language summary (PLS) has the potential to impact engagement and wider dissemination. Journals utilising user-friendly accessible platforms to share PLSs recorded:
 - The highest number of PLS shares on social media platforms (Twitter, news, blogs, Reddit, forums)
 - The greatest proportion of post shares by patients and patient advocacy groups
- These results highlight a need for a standardised approach that improves accessibility and ensures effective PLS engagement with the target audience

Key Findings
and Conclusions



Objectives, Introduction
and Methods



Results



References and
Acknowledgements



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OBJECTIVES

- To assess the impact of PLS accessibility on wider dissemination and sharing



INTRODUCTION

- Easy to understand, PLSs have the potential to help the general public and individuals with limited expert knowledge understand new scientific developments and engage with pharmaceutical research
- The value of including a PLS is now well recognised and there is an increasing trend among journals to not only accept but to actively encourage the submission of PLSs. However, there is significant heterogeneity in how PLSs are made accessible to the reader¹
- The impact of differences in journal approach to accessibility on PLS engagement has not been investigated



METHODS

- 5 journals publishing PLSs were analysed over 1 year (July 2020–June 2021) using a social media, blog, and news monitoring platform (Meltwater, CA, USA)
- Instances of PLS sharing were detected using a Boolean search string that identified any mention of the journal and any term relating to a plain language summary: “journalname”_AND_[“patient summar*”_OR_“patientsummar*”_OR_“Lay summary”_OR_“lay summaries”_OR_“plain language summaries”_OR_“plain language summary”]
- Search result validity was confirmed manually
- The total number of Twitter shares of a PLS by either patients or patient advocate groups was also analysed

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RESULTS

PLS accessibility differed across the journals analysed

- The differences in PLS accessibility evident across the spectrum of journals analysed are shown in **Table 1**
 - The location of the PLS differed by journal and ranged from a dedicated website (Journal A) to a central repository (Journals B, C and D) or published as part of the article (Journal E)

Table 1. Location and accessibility of PLS articles of journals analysed

	Location	Signposted on journal homepage	Clicks required to access PLS	Paywall	Graphical components permitted
Journal A	Dedicated site	Yes	1	No	Yes
Journal B	Repository within the journal site	No*	2	No	Yes
Journal C	Repository within the journal site	Yes	2	No	No
Journal D	Repository within the journal site	No*	3	No	No
Journal E	Within the article	No†	2	Yes	No

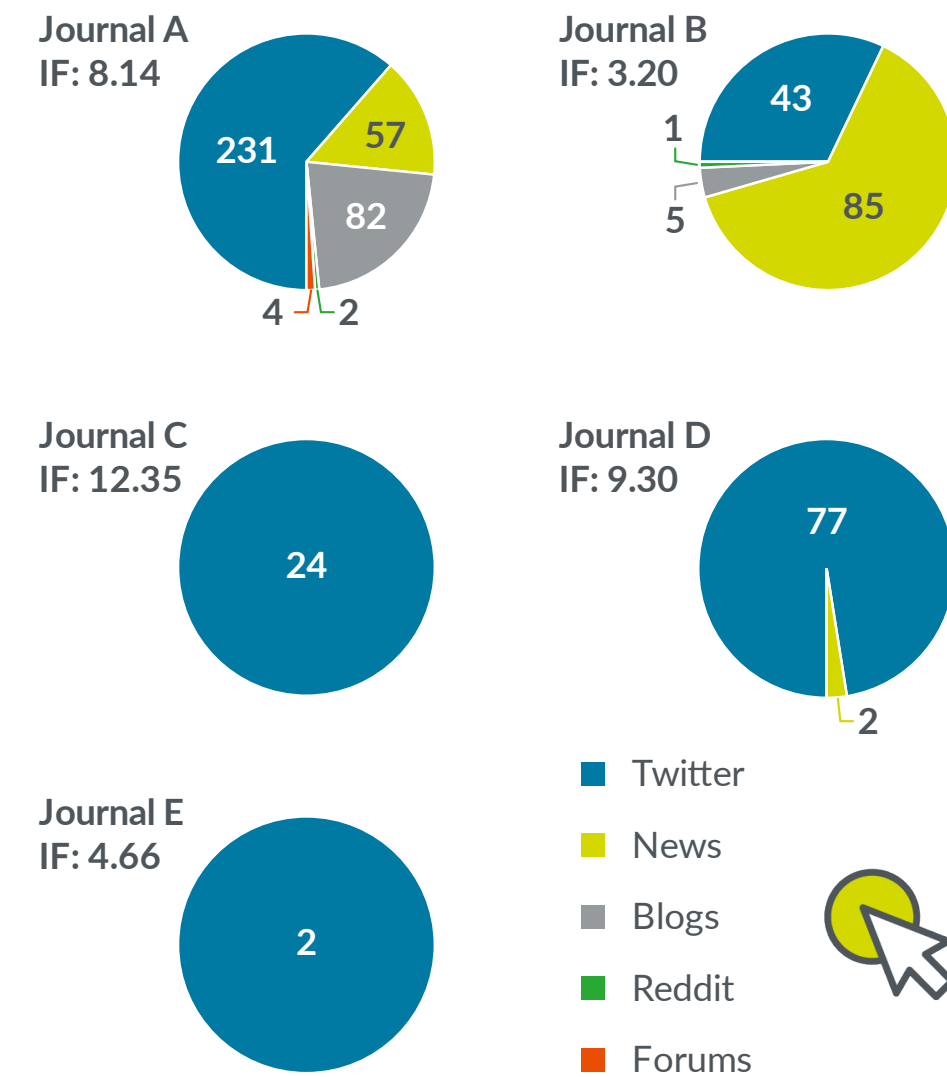
*Journals required the reader to navigate to the PLS via dropdown menus from the journal homepage.

†Not all journal articles included a PLS; no signposting was provided to direct the reader to those that included a PLS.

Impact of accessibility on PLS sharing

- Journals utilising user-friendly (eg, a dedicated platform or blog) accessible platforms to share PLSs were shared across a broader range of outlets (**Figure 1A**) and were associated with a greater number of total shares (**Figure 1B**)
 - The impact factor (IF) of the journal did not correlate with the number of PLS shares

Figure 1A. PLS shares across each platform analysed

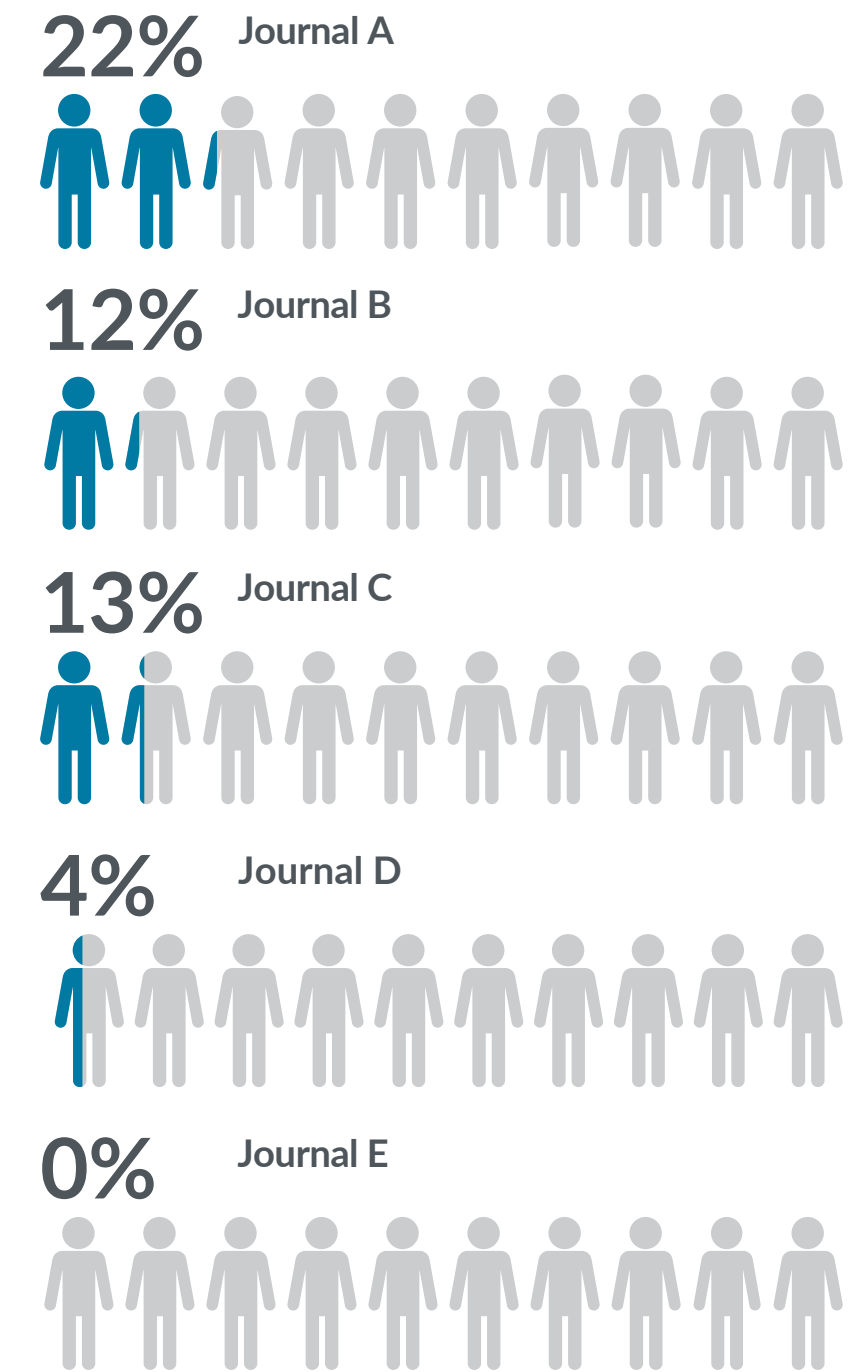


The pie charts show the type of outlet/platform the PLS was shared on (Twitter, news, blogs, Reddit, or forums). Journal lettering corresponds to the lettering in **Table 1**.

Easily accessed PLSs are more likely to be shared or seen by patients

- Improved accessibility was associated with a greater proportion of PLS Twitter shares by patients or patient advocates (**Figure 2**)

Figure 2. The proportion of Twitter posts attributable to either patients or patient advocate groups for each journal



RESULTS

Figure 1B. The number of PLS shares for each journal analysed



Journal A IF: 8.14
➡ Total shares: 376

Journal B IF: 3.20
➡ Total shares: 134

Journal C IF: 12.35
➡ Total shares: 24

Journal D IF: 9.30
➡ Total shares: 79

Journal E IF: 4.66
➡ Total shares: 2



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REFERENCE

1. FitzGibbon H, et al. *Health Sci Rep.* 2020;3(3):e175.



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