Title: Open Pharma recommendations for plain language summaries of peer-reviewed medical journal publications

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Title: Open Pharma recommendations for plain language summaries of peer-reviewed medical journal publications**Abstract (198 words):**

Plain language summaries of peer-reviewed publications are intended for everyone engaging with medical research, such as patients, patient advocates, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and policymakers. These summaries encourage discussions around medical research and aid fully informed and shared decision-making. The broad range of stakeholders involved in pharmaceutical research now puts the pharmaceutical industry in a unique position to make the medical publishing model more open. We believe that the next step of openness is to create a more accessible and inclusive environment through the routine development of plain language summaries of peer-reviewed medical journal publications.

There are many formats of plain language summaries, but plain text is the most discoverable through indexing in directories such as PubMed. Standardizing the minimum steps for the development and sharing of index-friendly plain language summaries can help promote the quality and credibility of these lay communications. The aim of a minimum standard is to build a universal foundation that encourages the accessibility, discoverability, and inclusivity of plain language summaries. This standard can then serve as a basis for summaries written for a more specific target audience or that include graphically and digitally enhanced formats that increase understanding and engagement, which we strongly encourage.

Plain Language Summary (214/250 words):

Articles published in medical journals are written using technical language. Plain language summaries are short summaries of these articles, written in everyday language that is easy to understand by anyone interested in medical research. This can include patients, patient advocates, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and policymakers. Sharing research through

plain language summaries makes medical information more accessible and inclusive.

However, few medical research articles include plain language summaries. The pharmaceutical industry has an opportunity to improve everyone's understanding of medical research by regularly developing plain language summaries of their articles.

Plain language summaries can come in many different formats such as infographics and videos. However, text-only summaries are the easiest to find on internet search engines and research websites such as PubMed. Currently, there is not much guidance available to help researchers and medical journal publishers develop plain language summaries for their articles. In this article, 'Open Pharma recommendations for plain language summaries of peer-reviewed medical journal publications', we suggest a set of simple rules to make and to share text-only plain language summaries that we believe should be done for all medical research articles as a minimum. Once these have been met, we encourage researchers to also consider making and sharing infographics and video summaries to help people to understand their research even more.

Body:

Plain language summaries of peer-reviewed publications are intended for everyone engaging with medical research, such as patients, patient advocates, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and policymakers. These summaries encourage discussions around medical research and aid fully informed and shared decision-making. The broad range of stakeholders involved in pharmaceutical research now puts the pharmaceutical industry in a unique position to make the medical publishing model more open. We believe that the next step of openness is to create a more accessible and inclusive environment through the routine development of plain language summaries of peer-reviewed medical journal publications.

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Open Pharma believes that, as a minimum standard, plain language summaries of peer-reviewed medical journal publications should be in the style of an abstract, understandable and readable, free of technical jargon, unbiased, non-promotional, and easily accessed. As a minimum standard, we recommend that these plain language summaries are:

- targeted toward a broad, inclusive and non-technical or time-poor audience

- written in easily understandable, unbiased language that is free of expert or technical jargon and accessible to readers who may have a different first language to that of the summary
- text based and concise (of 250 words or fewer) – this allows for indexing in directories such as PubMed and facilitates straightforward translation
- explicitly linked to the source publication and relevant clinical trial identifiers, with brief reference to the existing evidence
- consistent with the same overall conclusions as the scientific publication abstract
- developed alongside the main content of the manuscript, in line with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' authorship criteria
- ideally reviewed by a non-expert during development
- fully peer reviewed alongside the main content
- made available to read free of charge alongside the scientific publication abstract
- tagged with appropriate metadata and keywords to improve discoverability in search engines, directories, and indexes.

A full report of the developmental discussions that guided these recommendations is available in the supplementary materials.

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