Plain language summaries: What are they and why should you include them?

- Plain language titles (approx. 50 words) and plain language summaries (approx. 300 words) are descriptions of the paper that are easily understandable, and will be viewed by researchers and clinicians, as well as the general public plus the media. They therefore increase the accessibility and reach of your research.

- A plain language summary (PLS) is composed of a title and abstract. The PLS should be included in your article after the scientific abstract and before the introduction.

When should I start preparing/submit a PLS?

- The plain language summary must be peer reviewed with your article, so you must submit your PLS along with the first draft of your paper or with the revised submission so that it can undergo peer-review.

- You must make sure that your SAGE Editor is aware that you plan to submit a PLS prior to article acceptance.

Where will the published PLS appear?

- The published PLS will appear underneath the scientific abstract and before your introduction. As an example, see here: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/20420986211052344

Tips on writing a PLS

- The PLS should be a true reflection of the research presented, written in an engaging and accessible way, without exaggeration. Both merits and limitations should be discussed. However, patronizing language should not be used and the PLS should not be a ‘dumbed down’ version of your study.
• When writing a PLS, please follow these guidelines:
  - Avoid jargon, use everyday English terms to convey your message. If you need to use technical terminology or abbreviations, please explain the term when introduced.
  - Define the who, what, why, when, where and how of the research. Provide answers to the following questions:
    • Why was this study done?
    • What did the researchers do?
    • What did the researchers find?
    • What do the findings mean?
  - Use short, clear sentences, short paragraphs, and bullet points.
  - Use an active voice rather than a passive voice. For example: ‘We reported several side effects’ instead of ‘Several side effects were reported by us’.
  - Use absolute numbers instead of statistics and percentages.
  - Ensure that your conclusion/take-home message is clear.
  - Ask patients/carers/non-academics to read your PLS to provide feedback and to ensure that everything is clear.

Using SAGE Author Services for creation of a PLS:
• You may wish to utilise a professional vendor to create a PLS. SAGE is partnered with an external professional vendor if you wish to use them: [https://languageservices.sagepub.com/en/services/plain-language-summary.html](https://languageservices.sagepub.com/en/services/plain-language-summary.html)
• An example PLS created by the SAGE Author Services professional vendor can be found here: [https://languageservices.sagepub.com/en/services/plain-language-summary.html](https://languageservices.sagepub.com/en/services/plain-language-summary.html)
• Once you have requested a PLS via SAGE Author Services, the professional vendor will send you a 1st draft within 5-7 days, and requested revisions can then be incorporated.
• Please note: SAGE will peer-review all PLSs, so these must be requested from SAGE Author Services prior to acceptance of your paper if you wish the PLS to be published alongside the article. We do not accept PLSs created post-publication as these cannot be peer reviewed.

• Please also note: The fee to create a PLS using our professional vendor will be payable even if your paper is not accepted for publication, so it is advisable not to embark on the creation of a PLS using this service until you have confirmation that your paper will be accepted following minor final revisions. As mentioned above, please make sure your SAGE Editor knows that you intend to create a PLS prior to article acceptance.