

What's in a name? A crib sheet for plain language documents

PLS stands for plain language summaries

PLS are lay abstracts or summary infographics of peer-reviewed journal publications that are usually hosted by the journal, sometimes as supplementary materials, and can be indexed on PubMed (if submitted with correct formatting). Ideally, PLS should be open access. PLS of congress posters can also be developed, often accessed by QR codes on the primary poster. A summary may not necessarily be associated with a specific clinical trial, and can be utilized by authors from pharma, academia and charitable funders alike. PLS are usually intended for a wide audience that includes patients, among other non-specialist readers such as patient advocates, caregivers, time-poor healthcare professionals and policymakers.

Click here for an [example](#)

'Plain language summary' is our preferred term for clarity and consistency, but there is a lack of alignment on the terminology elsewhere. Therefore, other names you may see include:

- publication plain language summary (PPLS)
- lay person summary
- publication lay summary
- patient lay summary.

For more information and guidance on PLS, see the:

- [Open Pharma recommendations for plain language summaries of peer-reviewed medical journal publications preprint](#)
- [Patient Focused Medicines Development's guide for multistakeholder cocreation of PLS.](#)

TRS stands for trial results summaries

TRS are regulatory documents mandated by EU Clinical Trial Regulation (CTR No536/2014 Annex V) that must be produced for every clinical trial conducted at least in part in the EU. TRS are subject to the same posting deadlines as clinicaltrials.gov results, in line with the US Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007. Essentially, these are summaries of individual clinical study reports that do not provide any interpretation of the results. The EU will have a central repository, the Clinical Trial Information System (CTIS), which is expected to be launched in January 2022, but for now TRS are frequently hosted on TrialScope's trials.summaries.com portal or on sponsors' own websites. TRS are often also posted in print to clinical trial participants. Thus, the target audience for these documents is intended to be the participants of the trials, but also include the wider lay public.

Click here for an [example](#)

'Trial results summary' is our preferred term for clarity and consistency, but there is a lack of alignment on the terminology elsewhere. Therefore, other names you may see include:

- lay or laypersons summary (LS)
- lay language summary (LLS)
- clinical trial summary (CTS)
- regulatory summary
- patient summary.

For more information and guidance on TRS, see the:

- [EU CTR No536/2014 Annex V regulation](#)
- [accompanying guidance document](#)
- [European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations \(EFPIA\) and European Forum for Good Clinical Practice \(EFGCP\) Good Lay Summary Guidance,](#)
- [overview by Barnes and Patrick, 2019](#)

PLSP stands for plain language summary of a publication

PLSPs are a new deliverable type that are published by the Future Science Group journals, first published in 2020. These are peer-reviewed publications within their own right, usually secondary publications as per ICMJE guidance, with their own DOIs and citations. PLSPs are essentially entire manuscripts written in plain language and frequently typeset with imagery and infographics that are based on a previously published primary manuscript.

Click here for an [example](#)

Plain language summary of a publication is our preferred term for clarity and consistency, but other names you may see elsewhere include:

- plain language manuscript (PLM).

For more information and guidance on PLSPs, see:

- [Future Science Group's dedicated website.](#)

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