Reviewer’s report

Title: Understanding Plain English Summaries: A Comparison of two Approaches to Improve the Quality of Plain English Summaries in Research Reports.

Version: 0 Date: 28 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Helen Bulbeck

Reviewer’s report:

A mixed bag of comments! There is a typo on where it refers to 'a Plain English Summaries' - the a is superfluous. There is some correction needed with subject verb agreements. For example it says 'As the writing style for Plain English Abstracts are different' - it should read 'As the writing style for Plain English Abstracts is different...'. and 'the public are being' should be 'the public is being'. These are just two examples. Sorry to be pedantic but this is about writing clear summaries so think should be checked throughout.

Line 47 on page 7 Whilst, CRUK - superfluous comma here. Comma usage is a little random throughout and needs tidying.

Page 8 - the aim is clearly set out. Should this be a separate heading? It is lost at the end of the background section.

Page 9 - consistency needed with Plain English summaries - sometimes referred to as PES, but here it is with random capitalisation.

Also reference could be made to:


This has underpinned NCRI work in this area.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:
1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal