

Supplementary materials A

Questionnaire on knowledge of the use of plain language in the healthcare facilities

Dear Colleagues,

We are reaching out to you to ask for your participation in a questionnaire survey conducted under the auspices of the Department of Health Sciences at the Faculty [REDACTED]. The aim of this survey is to assess the knowledge and ability of healthcare professionals to recognise and apply the principles of plain language (also known as lay language).

Instructions for respondents

Please answer all questions.

The questionnaire is divided into four sections:

A (Knowledge)

B (Recognition)

C (Application)

D (Self-efficacy)

It will take you about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

I agree to participate in the questionnaire survey and to the processing of anonymous data collected as part of the study.

Section A – Knowledge – 6 items

(Score: 1 = correct, 0 = incorrect)

1. Plain language means removing all technical terms, even when a precise medical term is needed. (True / **False**)
 2. Using short sentences (one idea per sentence) generally helps patients understand health information. (**True** / False)
 3. Passive voice is usually preferable to active voice when writing patient instructions. (True / **False**)
 4. There are specialised scales for assessing the readability of a text. (**True** / False)
 5. Organising information with headings and a logical sequence is part of plain-language practice. (**True** / False)
 6. Explaining the reason (“why”) for an action helps patient comprehension as much as giving the action itself. (**True** / False)
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Section B – Recognition – 6 items

(Each item: show a short sample sentence or short paragraph; respondent selects **Plain language / Not plain language / Unsure.**)

1. “The patient should administer 1 tablet orally twice daily to achieve therapeutic plasma levels.” – Plain / **Not plain** / Unsure
 2. “Call our office if you notice bleeding, dizziness, or any signs that are unusual following the procedure.” – **Plain** / Not plain / Unsure
 3. “A CT scan can detect many abnormalities; your clinician will review the images.” – Plain / **Not plain** / Unsure
 4. Short discharge instruction: “Take your prescribed pain medicine only as directed; do not drive if you feel sleepy.” – **Plain** / Not plain / Unsure
 5. Paragraph: “Hypertension is typically asymptomatic; lifestyle modification may reduce cardiovascular risk.” – Plain / **Not plain** / Unsure
 6. Short instruction with numbers: “If fever > 38°C for more than 48 hours, call the clinic.” – **Plain** / Not plain / Unsure
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Section C – Application – 4 items

(Each correct = 1 point)

1. Which change is the best plain-language revision of “administer 1 tablet orally twice daily”?
A) “Take one pill by mouth two times a day.”
B) “Give medication every 12 hours.”
C) “The medication is taken twice a day.”
D) “Take tablet on schedule.”
 2. Which is a plain-language way to help a patient remember a step?
A) Use long explanations with technical reasons.
B) Use a numbered list and short command sentences.
C) Put all instructions in one paragraph to avoid repetition.
D) Use medical acronyms because they are precise.
 3. Best approach when a technical term cannot be avoided:
A) Keep the term and never explain it.
B) Replace with lay terms even if imprecise.
C) Define the technical term briefly, then give a lay example.
D) Remove the sentence entirely.
 4. Which element is **not** usually part of a plain-language checklist?
A) Use of active verbs and short sentences.
B) Use of information hierarchy (headings, bullet lists).
C) Inclusion of every possible scientific reference.
D) Using common everyday words.
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Section D – Self-efficacy (Likert 1–5) – 4 items

(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree)

1. I know how to replace medical jargon with everyday words. (1–5)
 2. I can organise discharge instructions, so patients understand the first time. (1–5)
 3. I feel confident teaching colleagues how to write in plain language. (1–5)
 4. I am aware of tools (e.g., readability formula, PEMAT, DISCERN, plain-language checklists) to evaluate patient materials. (1–5)
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Demographic data

Please specify your gender:

Female

Male

Not specified

Please specify your age (in whole years, as a number):

Highest level of education attained:

Secondary

College / Higher Vocational School

University / Bachelor's Degree

University / Master Degree

University / Doctorate

Other

Please indicate the length of your professional experience (in whole years, as a number)

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Please indicate position:

Nurses

Other non-medical health care professionals

Physicians

Please indicate workplace / clinical setting:

Inpatient-Acute

Inpatient-Chronic

Prehospital/Outpatient

Healthcare Administrative staff