Speaking their language: Healthcare professionals' use of plain language materials with patients

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Scan the code to access sub-analyses according to HCPs' main point of contact with patients

Conclusions and Call to Action

- In this survey, most HCP respondents reported changing their approach to communicating with patients due to the increasing availability of plain language materials. This indicates that plain language materials are a valuable component of a strategic publication plan to achieve engagement from audiences with differing requirements.
- In contrast to HCP perceptions, less than two-thirds of patients reported being shown plain language materials by HCPs, suggesting that there is a need for increased awareness and enhanced quality of plain language materials.

Healthcare professional (HCP) — Someone who has special training to help people with their health. This can be a doctor, nurse, dentist or pharmacist

Plain language materials — Printed or online information that is written in a simple and clear way, so that non-experts can understand it

Diagnosis — When a healthcare professional determines which disease or condition a patient has

The Problem

It can be challenging for HCPs to share key information about their patients' health in a way that is easy for patients to understand

Plain language materials can make medical information more accessible to patients

We explored when and how HCPs use plain language materials in their interactions with patients, and whether patients find it useful



532 SURVEYED HCPS, with an average of **24 years** of professional experience, told us...



18 SURVEYED PATIENTS AND PATIENT ADVOCATES, with an average of **17 years** of lived experience, told us...



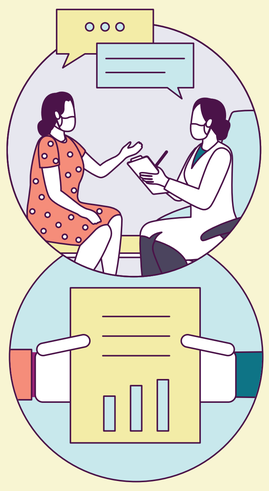
HCPs' main points of contact with patients were...

- Hospital treatment — 52%
- General practice — 31%
- Emergency care — 19%

Patients' main points of contact with HCPs were...

- 61% — General practice
- 44% — Other*
- 33% — Community pharmacy

Healthcare service **other than: general practice, community pharmacy, dental care, eye care, emergency care, hospital treatment, mental health services, planned or elective care, surgery, public health services, community nurse services, sexual health services or child health services*



69% verbally summarise plain language materials in their interactions

46% share physical copies with patients

94% of HCPs reported using plain language materials with patients

General practitioners were more likely than HCPs in hospitals or emergency care to report sharing physical copies with their patients

61% of patients reported being shown plain language materials by HCPs

- **28%** were told about the material and where to find it
- **11%** were shown the material in-person
- **11%** were shared a link to the material online
- **11%** used another method of sharing

HCPs reported that plain language materials are most useful when...

- **37%** Explaining how a disease can impact day-to-day life
- **23%** Discussing changing to a new treatment/needing a new procedure
- **22%** Giving a new diagnosis



No differences in responses were observed by HCPs' main point of contact with patients

Patients reported that plain language materials are most useful when...

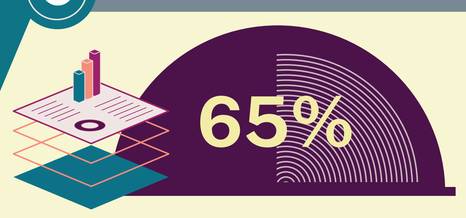
- **56%** Understanding how a disease can impact day-to-day life
- **56%** Discussing changing to a new treatment/needing a new procedure
- **44%** Receiving a new diagnosis



Most HCPs reported making ≥1 change (91% of responses) in their approach to communicating with patients due to the increasing availability of plain language materials



No differences in responses were observed by HCPs' main point of contact with patients



65% of HCPs agreed or strongly agreed that **"Compared to 5 years ago, I've increased my use of plain language materials to support consultations with patients"**

No differences in responses were observed by HCPs' main point of contact with patients

Patients suggested that plain language materials could be made more useful by...



- **44%** Making the materials easier to find, with free access for everyone
- **44%** Using simpler language
- **33%** Making it clear whether the materials are made for HCPs or patients

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