

Ease of reading: evaluating clinical data accessibility through the use of graphical abstracts and plain language summaries, a case study of Parkinson's disease publications

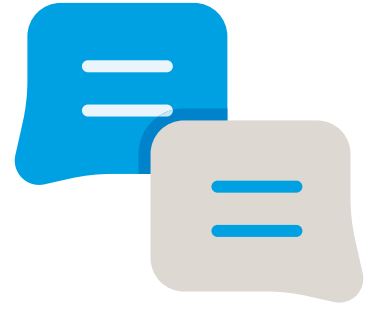
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Publication professionals are uniquely positioned to drive the use of plain-language content (PLC) to promote clinical data transparency and accessibility, accordant with Good Publication Practice (GPP) 2022¹. The dearth of plain language summaries and graphical abstracts in clinical trial publications for Parkinson's disease (PD), a therapeutic area with robust patient engagement, may serve as a sign for the need for greater use of accessible content across all disease areas

Share your thoughts!



Please take a moment to share your experience with publication enhancements and publication metrics. We'd greatly appreciate your feedback which we plan to analyze and continue our research in evaluating use of plain language content.

Introduction

- The use of PLC, such as graphical abstracts (GA) and plain language summaries (PLS), and multichannel media may facilitate clinical data dissemination to patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals (HCPs) alike^{2,3} and has become an increasing focus in medical publications
- In therapeutic areas with robust patient engagement, such as PD,⁴ use of PLS and other types of enhanced content may be particularly important to improve and promote clinical data transparency and accessibility

Objective

- We examined the use of enhanced content and multichannel media in clinical PD publications

Research design & methods

- Using Journal Selector (Sylogent, an Anju Software Company), we identified journals that published PD literature using the major Medical Subject Heading "Parkinson disease" in the period December 1, 2019 to November 30, 2022
- Journals that did not permit the use of PLS or GA were excluded

- For each of the journals identified, we used PubMed and the following parameters to identify those journals that published >40 articles
 - Search terms limited to manuscript Title: "Parkinson"
 - Filters: clinical trials, phase 3, and randomized controlled trial
 - Search period: January 1, 2020 to January 9, 2023
- Articles reporting PD clinical data were manually screened for:
 - Inclusion of GA and PLS (by 2 authors)
 - Freely available articles were screened, including review of the supplementary information to identify 'hidden' PLC
 - Presence/content sharing on social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn)
 - Use of Altmetric Attention Score

Conclusions

- Aligned with current GPP guidelines,¹ journals are poised to foster improved data accessibility through multiple plain-language formats and channels
- Publication professionals can encourage the use of such options to improve data accessibility for patients, caregivers, and HCPs alike
- Barriers to the use of PLC and open-accessibility may include a lack of funding and resources, insufficient planning, or lack of awareness of the benefits of both PLS and GA for improving data transparency

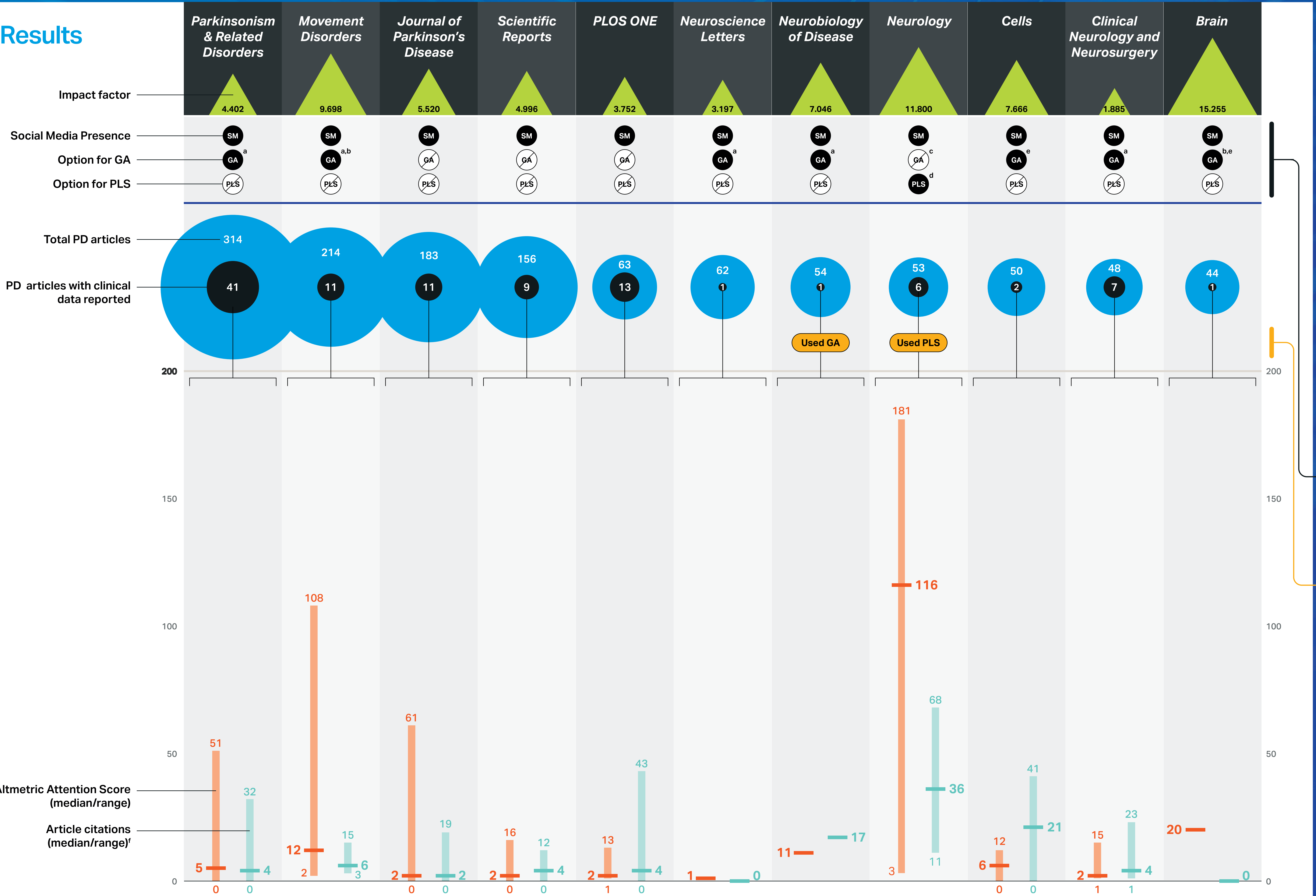
Discussion

- Because our analysis was conducted only in articles in PD, the results should not be extrapolated to other therapeutic areas
- Since the direction to include PLC is new to GPP guidelines, first appearing in the 2022 update¹, a similar analysis at a later time may yield different results
 - Given this, our results may serve as a baseline for future investigations, including assessment of the impact of GPP 2022 on use of PLC
- Adoption of GA and PLS appears to be in its nascent stage but can be improved through concerted efforts of authors, pharmaceutical companies, and publication planning agencies

Recommendations

- Encourage the selection of target journals that offer GA and PLS, utilizing tools such as the Medical Publishing Insights and Practices Enhanced Publications Options Navigator (MPIP EPON)⁵
- Become familiar with plain language guidelines, such as those available from the Plain Language Action and Information Network⁶
- Test the readability of your text using tools such as the Flesch-Kincaid grade level⁷
- Pharmaceutical companies should work to foster accessibility of PLC on medical information/ pharmaceutical company websites, as appropriate

Results



All 11 journals identified had a social media presence, 7/11 offered GA, and 1/11 offered PLS

Across 103 identified articles, only 1 GA and 6 PLS were identified