



Original Abstracts from the 2023 European Meeting of ISMPP

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Accessibility of scientific information for non-English speakers: using browser-based tools to translate plain language summaries (PLS) and abstracts

Claire Beeby^a, Victoria Tomlinson^a, Eleanor Raynsford^b and Charles Pollitt^b

^aOxford PharmaGenesis, London, UK; ^bIpsen, Slough, UK

Objective: Even though just 17% of the world's population is English-speaking, most scientific publications are published in English¹. This analysis aimed to compare the quality of PLS vs abstract translation by browser-based translation software.

Research design and methods: Five pharma-sponsored publications with accompanying PLS were selected. PLS and abstracts were translated into French, German, Slovenian and Mandarin using Google Translate. Four bilingual reviewers with scientific background assessed translation quality using survey questions covering appropriateness of word/phrase selection, grammar, and clarity.

Results: Inappropriate word insertion (0.2% vs 0.1% words), omission (0.2% vs 0.2%) and misspelling rates (0.05% vs 0.02%) were low in PLS and abstract translations respectively, and most errors had little impact on meaning. PLS vs abstracts had lower proportions of non-translated and mistranslated words (both comparisons 0.6% vs 1.0%). Fewer incorrect phrase translations occurred in PLS vs abstracts (0.35 vs 0.41 errors/100 words). PLS vs abstracts had similar rates of grammatical/syntax errors but a lower proportion with potential for misinterpretation (17.2% vs 40%). On a 5-point scale, PLS scored favourably vs abstracts for overall accuracy (4.6 vs 4.30; 5 = highest accuracy) and likelihood of misinterpretation (4.55 vs 4.25; 5 = lowest likelihood).

Conclusions: Translations of both PLS and abstracts were accurate and readable, though PLSs scored higher than abstracts across most measures, possibly owing to inclusion of complex sentences, abbreviations and scientific terminology within the abstracts. Browser-based tools allow easy translation of scientific information for non-English language access, although discoverability of medical publications for non-English speakers remains a challenge to be addressed.

KEYWORDS

Abstracts; plain language summaries (PLS); tools

Reference

- [1] Bahji A, Acion L, Laslett AM, et al. Nordisk Alkohol Nark. 2022. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1455072522110227>

Accuracy of article tagging across major biomedical databases: a pilot study

Joseph Cutteridge^a and Kim Wager^b

^aYork and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, York, UK; ^bOxford PharmaGenesis, Oxford, UK

Objective: Many literature databases tag articles to aid the categorization of publications. The accuracy of article tagging is especially important for synthetic research, whereby search results may be filtered by their classification tags. However, the accuracy of article tagging across major databases is unknown.

Research design and methods: Article metadata were extracted from five major biomedical databases (PubMed, Embase, Dimensions, OpenAlex and BASE) using the search term "neuronal ceroid lipofuscinoses". Data were compared against a manually assigned ground truth tag based on the abstract; if unclear, the full paper was reviewed.

Results: BASE data were excluded because no DOI was provided, preventing accurate data merging. Dimensions and OpenAlex were excluded because article tagging only differentiated between articles and book chapters, not article type. Of the 1281 articles analysed, PubMed tagging matched the ground truth in 93% of cases, versus 68% for Embase (p value < .0001). Embase tagging was less accurate than PubMed for two key reasons: Embase failed to tag case reports as entities distinct from original research articles (n = 203), and Embase incorrectly tagged many full-length research articles as conference papers (n = 103). Together these two factors accounted for 77% of all Embase mismatches.

Conclusions: PubMed tags published articles with greater accuracy than Embase. Other databases provide insufficient metadata or article tagging data to enable comparative analysis.

KEYWORDS

Benchmarking; original research; literature search