

Simple and accessible English

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General guidance

Cochrane Reviews should be written in clear, simple English so that they can be understood by the broad and international readership of Cochrane. Simplicity and clarity are vital to [readability](#). Complex or ambiguous expressions should be avoided or reformulated to promote readability (see examples below). Where a simple English phrase can be used, do not use non-English expressions; for example use 'conversely', 'inversely', or 'the other way round', rather than 'vice versa'.

Words and expressions to avoid.

This table lists selected examples of complex expressions to avoid, and acceptable reformulations

Avoid	Preferred
herein	in
the majority of	most
in the majority of instances	usually
ab initio	from the start
as per	according to
per	by
e.g. Results not reported per intervention group	e.g. Results not reported by intervention group
There has been a close to two-fold increase in the incidence of infection.	The number of infections nearly doubled.
not only do	also
in the vast majority of the trials	in most of the trials
There was a loss of participants, with the main reason being death of the patient.	There was a loss of participants mainly due to deaths.
There were eight studies that compared different types of antibiotics.	Eight studies compared different types of antibiotics.

PLEACS

[Plain language summaries](#) fulfil an important function in Cochrane Reviews. Aimed at a broad readership, they convey the review question and the findings in terms that are accessible to consumers and non-expert readers. The Plain Language Expectations for Authors of Cochrane Summaries (PLEACS) initiative provides guidance about writing simple, accessible English. See [Standards for the reporting of Plain Language Summaries in new Cochrane Intervention Reviews \(PLEACS\)](#).

Additional resources

The following sections of the Style Manual provide further guidance on ways to promote simple and accessible English:

- [Active and passive voice](#)
- [Adjectives as nouns](#)
- [Tautology](#)
- [Verbs: single or plural](#)

In addition, many other resources provide examples of how to restructure sentences that may help authors promote plain English and improve readability. Examples include the [Plain English Campaign](#) or [Wikipedia's list of plain English words or phrases](#).

