Vivli

CENTER FOR GLOBAL CLINICAL RESEARCH DATA

Lay Summary

Release 4.1 31 October 2026

What is a Lay Summary?

- The **Lay Summary** is a plain language summary of your project that has been written for members of the public, rather than researchers or professionals.
- The lay summary should be brief (ideally 200-300 words, and not more than 500).

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

What information should be included?

- ✓ **The project background**

  Brief explanation of the disease condition and treatment in lay terms and how many patients/members of the public are potentially affected.

- ✓ Necessity of the research
- ✓ How the research will be conducted

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

What information should be included?

- ✓ The project background
- ✓ **Necessity of the research**
  - **How will the research add to medical science or patient care?**
- ✓ How the research will be conducted

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

What information should be included?

- ✓ The project background
- ✓ Necessity of the research
- ✓ **How the research will be conducted**

  What design and methods have you chosen and why? (in brief)

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

Tips for writing a lay summary

- **Organization**

  Lay things out in a logical order. Put the most important information at the beginning and include background information (when necessary) toward the end.

- Present only necessary information
- Use common, everyday words
- Use simplified terms and definitions
- Use the active voice

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

Example – how to organize your lay summary

Epilepsy is a common neurological condition, believed to account for 1% of the total global burden of disease. People with epilepsy experience recurrent, unprovoked seizures caused by abnormal electrical discharges from the brain. There are two types of epileptic seizures which will be studied within this updated review, focal seizures that start in one area of the brain, and generalised onset tonic-clonic seizures that start in both cerebral hemispheres simultaneously. It is believed that with effective drug treatment, up to 70% of individuals with active epilepsy have the potential to become seizure free and go into long-term remission of seizures shortly after starting therapy with a single antiepileptic drug (AED monotherapy). Currently in the UK, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines for adults and children recommend carbamazepine or lamotrigine as the first treatment options to try for individuals with newly diagnosed focal seizures and sodium valproate for individuals with newly diagnosed generalised tonic-clonic seizures. However, a range of other AEDs are available.

The choice of the first antiepileptic drug for an individual with newly diagnosed seizures is of great importance and should be made taking into account high-quality evidence of how effective the drugs are at controlling seizures and whether they are associated with side effects. It is also important that drugs appropriate for different seizure types are compared to each other.

Our previous Cochrane review results supported current NICE guidelines, and also demonstrated that newer AED levetiracetam may be a good alternative treatment. New studies comparing AEDs have been published since our previous review was published in 2017. Therefore we will update our previous review with new evidence. NICE guidelines within the UK are in the process of being updated. The results of our updated review will provide up to date and high quality evidence to directly inform these guidelines within the UK for future individuals with newly diagnosed seizures and will provide wider evidence to inform a choice for decision makers, clinicians or individuals with epilepsy between appropriate drugs available for the initial treatment of epilepsy.

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

Vivli

Example – how to organize your lay summary

Epilepsy is a common neurological condition, believed to account for 1% of the total global burden of disease. People with epilepsy experience recurrent, unprovoked seizures caused by abnormal electrical discharges from the brain. There are two types of epileptic seizures which will be studied within this updated review, focal seizures that start in one area of the brain, and generalised onset tonic-clonic seizures that start in both cerebral hemispheres simultaneously. It is believed that with effective drug treatment, up to 70% of individuals with active epilepsy have the potential to become seizure free and go into long-term remission of seizures shortly after starting therapy with a single antiepileptic drug (AED monotherapy). Currently in the UK, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines for adults and children recommend carbamazepine or lamotrigine as the first treatment options to try for individuals with newly diagnosed focal seizures and sodium valproate for individuals with newly diagnosed generalised tonic-clonic seizures. However, a range of other AEDs are available.

Paragraph 1 provides a brief explanation of the disease condition and treatment in lay terms and how many patients are potentially affected.

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

Example – how to organize your lay summary

The choice of the first antiepileptic drug for an individual with newly diagnosed seizures is of great importance and should be made taking into account high-quality evidence of how effective the drugs are at controlling seizures and whether they are associated with side effects. It is also important that drugs appropriate for different seizure types are compared to each other.

Paragraph 2 explains the necessity of the research and how the research will impact medical science or patient care.

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

Vivli

Example – how to organize your lay summary

Our previous Cochrane review results supported current NICE guidelines, and also demonstrated that newer AED levetiracetam may be a good alternative treatment. New studies comparing AEDs have been published since our previous review was published in 2017. Therefore, we will update our previous review with new evidence. NICE guidelines within the UK are in the process of being updated. The results of our updated review will provide up to date and high-quality evidence to directly inform these guidelines within the UK for future individuals with newly diagnosed seizures and will provide wider evidence to inform a choice for decision makers, clinicians or individuals with epilepsy between appropriate drugs available for the initial treatment of epilepsy.

Paragraph 3 briefly outlines **how** the research will be conducted and explains the reasons **why** the design and methods were selected.

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

Vivli

Tips for writing a lay summary

- Organization
- **Present only necessary information**

  Determine key concepts and messages based on the knowledge of the intended audience and prioritize those in your summary.
- Use common, everyday words
- Use simplified terms and definitions
- Use the active voice

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

Tips for writing a lay summary

- Organization
- Present only necessary information
- **Use common, everyday words**

  Ensure as many people as possible can read and understand the material. Use common, everyday words and avoid large blocks of text.
- Use simplified terms and definitions
- Use the active voice

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

Tips for writing a lay summary

- Organization
- Present only necessary information
- Use common, everyday words
- **Use simplified terms and definitions**

  Don’t assume your readers have knowledge of the subject. Avoid using technical or field-specific language and clearly explain any necessary terms.
- Use the active voice

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

Tips for writing a lay summary

- Organization
- Present only necessary information
- Use common, everyday words
- Use simplified terms and definitions
- **Use the active voice**

  Active voice makes it clear who is supposed to do what. It eliminates ambiguity about responsibilities.

CONFIDENTIAL - Not for distribution

Examples

You may view example lay summaries from our approved requests here:

https://vivli.org/approved-research-proposals/

The request used in these slides can be viewed here:

https://vivli.org/antiepileptic-drug-monotherapy-for-epilepsy-an-updated-cochrane-review-and-individual-participant-data-network-meta-analysis/

Vivli