Language Scientific Puts Readability at the Center of Plain Language Summary Translation

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Clinical trial results can be publicly available without being easy for patients to understand. Research reports use terminology and statistical conventions intended for scientists, clinicians, and regulators. Plain language summaries make findings more accessible by describing what a study investigated, what researchers found, and what those results mean without requiring a medical background.

That purpose becomes harder to fulfill when a summary is translated. A document that reads clearly in its original language may become difficult to follow in another, even when its medical terms are technically correct. For Language Scientific, a US-based specialist in medical and scientific translation, readability needs attention throughout the process, not just before publication.

Accessible reporting is also a regulatory consideration. Under Regulation (EU) No 536/2014, clinical trial sponsors must submit a summary of results accompanied by a version understandable to laypersons, regardless of the study's outcome. Annex V identifies required information, including the trial's purpose, participant population, results, and adverse reactions.

Meeting those requirements calls for careful choices about what to simplify. An improvement observed in one participant group shouldn't be presented as a benefit established for everyone receiving the treatment. Nor should a simpler description of an adverse reaction distort its frequency or severity. The language can become more approachable without changing what the evidence supports.

Translation brings different decisions. A familiar expression in the source language may have no equally accessible equivalent elsewhere, and a word-for-word rendering can obscure an otherwise straightforward explanation. Medical linguists need to understand the research well enough to protect its meaning while using terminology and sentence structures that non-specialist readers can follow.

Readability assessment helps identify passages that remain too technical, but scores developed for one language may not work reliably in another. Word familiarity, local conventions, and cultural context shape

comprehension. Charts and infographics need attention as well: translated labels must match the data, while changes in text length or layout can make visuals harder to interpret.

For sponsors preparing summaries in multiple languages, these aren't solely editorial concerns. As with other clinical trial translation services, scientific reviewers need to establish an accurate source, and translators need context to resolve ambiguous terms. If findings or wording change later, updates must be carried through the affected versions to avoid inconsistencies or last-minute rework.

Timing adds pressure. Under the EU Clinical Trials Regulation, results summaries are generally due within one year after a trial ends in all Member States concerned, subject to specified exceptions. Planning translation and review early gives teams room to manage revisions before submission.

Language Scientific provides plain language summary translation services for clinical trial reporting and scientific publications, including regulatory lay summaries, text-based summaries, and graphical formats. Its approach brings together medical and scientific subject matter expertise, cultural adaptation, readability review, and formatting support.

The intended publication also shapes the work. Regulatory lay summaries follow applicable trial disclosure rules, while plain language summaries accompanying journal articles may have different editorial and presentation requirements. These differences influence how each document is prepared, translated, and reviewed.

Whatever the format, readability needs to carry through to the finished translation. Patients and other non-specialist readers should be able to understand the findings and their limitations without having to decipher the technical language of the original research.

About Language Scientific:

Language Scientific, Inc. is a US-based globalization company specializing in clinical, medical, scientific and technical language and linguistic validation services and solutions with a record of more than 25 years of excellence in over 215 languages. Language Scientific serves more than 1,500 clients in the pharmaceutical, clinical, and medical device industries, from Fortune 500 companies to small emerging companies. The company's specialization, focus, innovation and customer-centered attitude have earned the trust of many of the world?s leading life sciences companies.

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