

Lay Summary

Researchers are increasingly conscious of the importance of sharing their findings with their peers, colleagues, and specialists in the area and with the non-academic community and the general public. Given that most research is supported by taxpayers, it is only fair that taxpayers (non-scientists or laypeople) understand the study's real-world impact and potential.

It is a common misconception that only researchers are interested in reading academic literature or research papers. Today, a growing number of people (non-researchers) are interested in learning about research-driven advancements and how they affect them.

Communication between scientific and non-scientific populations contributes to the faith in science, reduces disinformation, and inspires future generations. Communication also aids in the formation of knowledgeable decision-makers among the general public. As a result, non-researchers may be better able to distinguish between authentic and not authentic information while evaluating the large amount of scientific data available today. One of the techniques for achieving this goal is lay summaries.

A lay summary is a concise explanation of research presented in non-technical language to help non-scientific audiences understand the research's meaning. Lay summaries improve public comprehension of science, increase research visibility, enhance a researcher's reputation, and justify public research spending.

These are some guidelines for writing a helpful lay summary:

1. Explain why you conducted your research and the implications of your results - what will change (especially in terms of broader society)?
2. Describe how your work contributes to human understanding and relates to everyday experiences.
3. When possible, use plain language, and when a technical term is required, always define it in terms that a general audience can comprehend.
4. Use an acceptable tone. The text should not be designed to entertain the reader.
5. Wherever possible, use real-world examples.
6. When you're satisfied with your summary, have a non-academic acquaintance read it. Inquire if they comprehended it; the number of questions you receive may indicate that more review is required!