

Checklist for assessing written consumer health information

Consumer, carer and community participation

A tool to aid health services in developing written consumer health information

This checklist is to assist health practitioners who are assessing the quality of written consumer health information.¹ Sections A, B and C are relevant to all such information. Section D is relevant to products, such as pamphlets, that aim to help patients/clients/consumers/residents make decisions about their treatment and ongoing health care.

Section A Presentation

| | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Is the print legible? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is it appropriate for the intended consumer group? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the information presented in sections? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Do the sections have clear headings? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is there suitable spacing between the individual sentences? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is there suitable spacing between sections? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Do the diagrams included provide useful information? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are the diagrams labelled? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are the diagrams of an adequate size? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |

Section B Language

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Is the language and tone used non-judgmental? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the language used likely to be understood by the consumers who use it? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the medical terminology, abbreviations, and jargon explained? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is it written in the second person (for example, 'you' instead of 'the patient')? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the terminology used consistent? (that is, are the same words used to describe the same ideas, procedures or terms?) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does the product avoid the use of global imperatives? (for example, will, should, must) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

¹ Currie K, Spink J and Rajendran M 2000, *Well-written health information: A guide. Communicating with consumers series volume 1*. Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Melbourne, viewed 1 March 2011, <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/consumer/pubs/written.htm>

Section C Content

| | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Is there evidence that consumers were involved in the production of the written consumer health information? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Are the aims or objectives of the product clearly stated? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the intended audience clearly stated in the product? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Does the product meet the specified aims? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is information presented in a sequence that is useful to consumers, that is, is the most useful information presented first? (This may not necessarily be a logical sequence) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the information included in the product current? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the evidence provided in the product referenced? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the information presented in a balanced and non-biased way? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Are there any omissions that the consumer needs to be aware of? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does the product provide information about areas of uncertainties in knowledge? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has information about further sources of support and help been included? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the publisher included on the product? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is the date of publication included? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Does the product contain the name or names of the author/s? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Are the credentials of the authors included? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does the product encourage and support shared decision making or assist consumers to ask questions about their own treatment? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |

The following section is only relevant to written consumer health information that aims to help patients make decisions about their treatment.

Section D Treatment Options and Outcomes

| | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Are all the treatment options included? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is there a description of all the treatment options? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is there an indication of the quality and level of evidence to support these options? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Are treatment outcomes provided, including information about the risks and benefits? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Are the treatment outcomes quantified? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is there a comparative analysis of the treatment choices? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is there a balanced and unbiased description of the treatment options and outcomes? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is there mention of what might happen if the no treatment option is selected? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Is information about the gaps and uncertainties in treatment provided? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsure <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |

Using the checklist to report on standard 3 and indicator 3.1 of *Doing it with us not for us: Strategic direction 2010-13*

Standard 3

Consumers, and, where appropriate, carers are provided with evidence-based, accessible information to support key decision-making along the continuum of care²

Indicator 3.1 Target for all is 85%

Services rated "Yes" on at least 30 items of the *Checklist for Assessing Written Consumer Health Information* (Currie et al 2000); including at least five for section D when using this section.

Numerator: Number of new information resources produced, revised or adopted over last year which met at least 30 of the 40 items on the Checklist for Assessing Written Consumer Health Information; including at least 5 items from section D when using this section)*

Denominator: The total number of new consumer, carer or community information resources produced, revised or adopted in the last year.

**Nb. Reduce the number of items by those relevant to the checklist process to your item of information. For example, if section D is not relevant reduce by nine items (21 of the 31 items). If any of the N/A boxes are ticked reduce by the corresponding number of items.*

² Department of Health 2009, *Doing it with us not for us: Strategic direction 2010-13*. Victorian Government Department of Health, Melbourne. Viewed 1 March 2011, http://www.health.vic.gov.au/consumer/downloads/strategic_direction_2010-13.pdf