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|  | **SUNY Downstate Medical Center**  **University Hospital of Brooklyn**  **College of Medicine**  **College of Health Related Professions**  **College of Nursing**  **School of Graduate Studies**  **Graduate Program in Public Health** | Lay-person summary |
| For more information about the lay-person summary, please contact the IRB at 718-613-8480 or [IRB@downstate.edu](mailto:IRB@downstate.edu) | | |

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# Introduction

On many of the SUNY DMC IRB applications forms, we require a lay-person summary which is different from a scientific abstract. This document will outline the key differences between the two. Both scientists and non-scientists reviews these documents, hence, both should have a good understanding of your project to better evaluate it.

## Scientific Abstract

A scientific abstract is usually included with your proposal that is submitted to the Scientific Review Committee (SRC), scientific or medical journal for publication, or in an application for funding. It will be written to address other scientists and doctors; therefore it should be written at a graduate level. Only obscure terms should be defined. Research methodology should be well outlined and include the various study groups/arms, sample sizes, medications doses, etc. The study goals/aims should be clearly defined. References should be included for all claims made in the abstract.

## Lay-Person Summary

A lay-person summary is submitted as part of your IRB application. It explains the nature of the study in matter that any average person can understand, therefore it should be written between a 6th and 8th grade reading level. It can be a little higher if all scientific and medical terms are explained. If the disease or condition is well-known in the community such as asthma, it does not require explanation. References are not required.

It is advisable to describe the study in general teams and not focus on the specifics. The reviewers can refer to the protocol or scientific abstract for more detail.

### Checking Reading Grade Level

Please check the reading level of your lay-person summary using the Flesh–Kincaid Grade Level metric available in Microsoft Word. To turn this feature on, use the following instructions:

* Open Microsoft Word.
* Click “File” and select “Options”
* A new window will pop-up. Select “Proofing” on the left side if this window.
* Then click “Show readability statistics”

Now, when you spell or grammar check a document, you will get readability statistics including the Flesh–Kincaid Grade Level metric. When you see this metric, it usually has a number before and after a decimal point such as 9.3. The number before the decimal point refers to the grade level.

The number afterwards refers to the portion of the academic year. Thus, for a value of 9.3 the document is at a 9th grade reading level approximately at the first third of the school year. If the Flesh–Kincaid Grade Level of your abstract is above a 12, it is at an undergraduate or graduate level.

## Examples

### Scientific Abstract

This is an example of an abstract written at an undergraduate reading level:

Around 2.8-4.8 in 1,000 children suffer from high-functioning autistic spectrum disorder also known as high-functioning autism (HFA) (Shtayerman, 2007). These children are at an increased risk of co-morbid psychiatric disorders such as mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and suicidal ideation during the transition from teenager to young adult (Gillan & Standen, 2007; Haskins & Silva, 2006; Jennes-Coussens, Magill-Evans, & Koning, 2004; Shtayerman, 2007). This is partially due to lack of services for this particular group. Because they are high-functioning, these individuals have an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) that is normal (70 or above), and are disqualified from receiving services for the mentally disabled that they require (Haskins & Silva, 2006; Hillier, Fish, Cloppert, & Beversdorf, 2007; Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative, 2011; Muller, Schuler, Burton, & Yates, 2003). These psychiatric co-morbidities may also lead to a lack of independence related to issues of job retention, and a lower quality of life. Most of the current policies for this group are directed against discrimination such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. While this allows for job placement, in many instances employers do not make the required accommodations to help these individuals keep their jobs. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states “[e]veryone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.” For this feasibility study, 100 individuals with high-functioning autistic spectrum disorder will be studied. Factors to be considered on the survey include but are not limited to: the number of accommodations, types of accommodations, quality of life, job satisfaction, and other psychiatric conditions.

References

Gillan, A. & Standen, P.J. (2007). Levels of anxiety and sources of stress in adults with autism. Journal of Intellectual Disabilities. 11(4), 359-370.

Haskins, B.G., & Silva, J.A. (2006). Asperger’s disorder and criminal behavior: forensic-psychiatric considerations. The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law. 34, 374-384.

Hillier, A., Fish, T., Cloppert, P., & Beversdorf, D. Q. (2007). Outcomes of a social and vocational skills support group for adolescents and young adults on the autism spectrum. Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 22(2), 107.

Jennes-Coussens, M., Magill-Evans, J., & Koning, C. (2006). The quality of life of young men with Asperger syndrome: A brief report. Autism. 10(4), 403-414.

Minnesota Employment Policy Initiative. (2011). Policy brief on Employment of Minnesotans with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Retrieved from http://www.mn-epi.org/docs/FinalPolicyBriefonEmploymentandAutismSpectrumDisorder.pdf

Müller, E., Schuler, A., Burton, B. A., & Yates, G. B. (2003). Meeting the vocational support needs of individuals with Asperger syndrome and other autism spectrum disabilities. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 18(3), 163.

Shtayermman, O. (2007). Peer victimization in adolescents and young adults diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome: A link to depressive symptomatology, anxiety symptomatology and suicidal ideation. Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing, 30(3), 87-107

### Lay-Person Summary.

This is an example of a summary at a 9th grade reading level:

Around 4 in 1,000 children suffer from a type of mild type of autism (a mental illness), called high-functioning autism (HFA). These children can lead regular lives, but might seem “a little off” due to poor social skills. These children are at a higher risk of depression during the change from teenager to young adult. This might be because of a lack of services for this group. Because they are high-functioning, might score as normal on certain tests and cannot receive support for the mentally disabled. Having multiple mental illnesses may also cause a lack of independence. For example, as young adults, they might have to live with their parents longer because they cannot stay in one job. Most of the current laws for this group are directed against discrimination. While this helps in getting a job, in many cases employers do not make the required works adjustments to help these workers keep their jobs. To understand the current protection against unemployment for these workers, this study will look at 100 surveys from these workers that ask about their workplace needs and are they being met.

# References

* N/A

# Authors

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# Review and Approval History

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| **Date**  **Reviewed & Approved** | **Revision Required** | | **Responsible Staff Name and Title** |
| Yes | No |
| 5/12/17 | X |  | Kevin L. Nellis, MS, CIP  Executive Director, Human Research Protections and Quality Assurance |
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