Table 1. Readability characteristics (median, 95% confidence interval) of different summary information formats for Cochrane systematic reviews and corresponding translations of plain language summaries (PLS)

Formats of summary information	A – Press release (n=162)	B – Cochrane Clinical Answers (n=35)	C – Scientific abstract (N=158)	D – PLS (n=156)	
Word count	407.5 (388.1-425.9)[BCD]	178 (143.0-208.5)[ACD]	555.5 (495.6-600.8)[ABD]	334.5 (286.0-363.4)[ABC]	P<0.001
Sentence count	17.0 (16.0-18.0)[BC]	8.0 (7.0-10.0)[ACD]	26.0 (24.0-28.0)[ABD]	17.0 (15.0-19.0)[BC]	P<0.001
Words per sentence	23.6 (23.1-24.0)[BCD]	20.4 (15.8-21.1)[AC]	20.8 (20.3-21.4)[ABD]	18.3 (17.7-19.1)[AC]	P<0.001
Syllables per word	1.8 (1.8-1.8)[BCD]	2 (1.9-2.0)[ACD]	1.9 (1.9-1.9)[ABD]	1.8 (1.8-1.8)[ABC]	P<0.001
SMOG index	15.4 (15.1-15.5)[CD]	15.2 (14.8-16.6)[D]	15.6 (15.3-15.9)[AD]	14.7 (14.4-15.0)[ABC]	P<0.001
PLS translations	**E – English (n=156)**	**F – German (n=41)**	**G – French (n=101)**	**H – Croatian (n=156)†**	
Sentence count	17.0 (15.0-19.0)[F]	22.0 (19.5-25.0)[EGH]	15.0 (13.0-17.0)[F]	17.0 (15.0-19.0)[F]	P=0.007
Words per sentence	18.3 (17.7-19.1)[G]	17.9 (16.9-18.7)[G]	21.7 (20.9-22.7)[EFH]	18.1 (17.5-19.0)[G]	P<0.001
Syllables per word	1.8 (1.8-1.8)[FGH]	2.1 (2.1-2.2)[EGH]	1.8 (1.8-1.8)[EFH]	2.5 (2.5-2.5)[EFG]	P<0.001
SMOG index	14.7 (14.4-15.0)[FGH]	12.0 (11.7-12.3)[EGH]	15.3 (14.8-15-5)[EFH]	10.3 (9.9-10.3)[EFG]	P<0.001

* Kruskal Wallis non-parametric test and *post-hoc* Conover Iman test. Subscript letter(s) indicates significant difference from relevant study groups designated with the same letter.

†SMOG index for Croatian language was calculated according to the formula adapted to the Croatian language (Brangan S. Development of SMOG-Cro readability formula for healthcare communication and patient education. Coll Antropol. 2015;39:11-20).