Author response to: Comment on: Randomized controlled trial of plain English and visual abstracts for dissemination surgical research via social media

Editor
The correspondence by Pringle and colleagues was received with much interest. We agree that more consideration as to how we translate the context, limitations and impact of research studies in visual or adjunctive formats is needed. This must be considered prior to academic publishers committing to investing in these formats going forward.

On the other hand, adjunctive formats of information delivery have the potential to be powerful tools to convey information to broad audiences. This has already been demonstrated with the use of visual abstracts in surgical research. Such formats are not simply limited to pictures and captions, but rather the image design, colour palate and format of delivery can provide psychological cues to facilitate understanding. Indeed, the limitations described by the authors are similarly shared by traditional text-based abstracts, which are often limited to 250 words.

At present, visual abstracts offer novel opportunities for information delivery. Arguably, they may offer superior opportunities if their potential is harnessed appropriately in the future.


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DOI: 10.1002/bjs.11466