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Plain English for Doctors and Other Medical Scientists

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OXFORD

Author Talk

PLAIN
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Non-Vitamin K Antagonist Oral Anticoagulants (Am J Med, 2016)

Non-vitamin K antagonist oral anticoagulants (NOACs), including direct thrombin inhibitor dabigatran and the factor Xa inhibitors rivaroxaban, apixaban, and edoxaban, offer potential advantages over VKA's, owing to their rapid onset and offset of action, predictable pharmacokinetics, and rapid anticoagulant effect, allowing the administration of fixed doses without the need for routine coagulation monitoring, with no interactions with dietary vitamin K intake, and much fewer drug interactions.²

(wSEG= 66/66.0/-54.9/37.3) Note: VKA stands for *vitamin K antagonist*

Watson & Crick - Structure of DNA (Nature, 1953)

We wish to put forward a radically different structure for the salt of deoxyribose nucleic acid. This structure has two helical chains each coiled round the same axis (see diagram). We have made the usual chemical assumptions, namely, that each chain consists of phosphate di-ester groups joining β -D-deoxyribofuranose residues with 3', 5' linkages. The two chains (but not their bases) are related by a dyad perpendicular to the fibre axis. Both chains follow right-handed helices, but owing to the dyad, the sequences of the atoms in the two chains run in opposite directions. Each chain loosely resembles Furberg's model No. 1; that is, the bases are on the inside of the helix and the phosphates on the outside.¹ (wSEG= 118/19.6/52.7/10.0)

Medical Journal Authors

- Who are they?
- Why is plain English important?
- How can we persuade them?

Medicus

Incomprehensibilis:

The condition that affects doctors and other medical scientists and causes them to write dull, lifeless prose that is hard to understand

Symptoms of *Medicus Incomprehensibilis*

Low reading ease	Abstraction	Unclear logic
· long sentence	· abstract language	· long paragraph
· run-on sentence	· formality	· awkwardly organization
· dependent clause	· nominalization	· unclear paragraph topic
· parenthetical	· plural subject	· unclear narrative
· long word	· obscure jargon	pathway
· unnecessary word		· missing steps of
ending		reasoning
· noun string		
· passive voice		

Concept 1: Take charge of your reading ease score

1. Use normal sentence length
2. Prefer the short word
3. Omit needless words

Concept 2: Use Vivid Language

4. Prefer Active Voice
5. Prefer Concrete Language
6. Observe the 1066 Principle

Concept 3: Present logical reasoning clearly

8. Organize narrative in way helpful to readers
9. Choose clear narrative pathway
10. Forge a strong chain of logical reasoning

Exercise:

Revise abstract into concrete

During the past several decades, mean maternal age at delivery of first infant increased steadily to 25.2 years in the United States and 30 years in Germany and Britain in 2009.³ (*WSEG* = 33/33.0/22.0/18.3)

Original

During the past several decades, mean maternal age at delivery of first infant increased steadily to 25.2 years in the United States and 30 years in Germany and Britain in 2009.³

(WSEG = 33/33.0/22.0/18.3)

Revised

How old is a woman when she has her first baby? In 2009, the mean age was 25.2 in the USA and 30 in Germany and Britain. The mean age has increased steadily over the past several decades.

(WSEG = 38/12.6/64.8/7.3)

Original

Non-vitamin K antagonist oral anticoagulants (NOACs), including direct thrombin inhibitor dabigatran and the factor Xa inhibitors rivaroxaban, apixaban, and edoxaban, offer potential advantages over VKA's, owing to their rapid onset and offset of action, predictable pharmacokinetics, and rapid anticoagulant effect, allowing the administration of fixed doses without the need for routine coagulation monitoring, with no interactions with dietary vitamin K intake, and much fewer drug interactions.

(WSEG= 66/66/55/37)

Revised

NOAC is the term for a *Non-vitamin K antagonist oral anti-coagulant*. NOACs include the direct thrombin inhibitor dabigatran and the factor Xa inhibitors rivaroxaban, apixaban, and edoxaban.

In some ways, a NOAC works better than a VKA. A NOAC takes effect and wears off faster and more predictably. And it starts to slow blood clotting right away. This means you can give a patient a fixed dose without the need to monitor their blood coagulation or the amount of vitamin K they get from food. A NOAC also interacts much less with other drugs.

(WSEG=94/13/60/8)

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