



WRITING AND REVIEWING PRESS RELEASES: GUIDANCE FOR NUTRITION SCIENTISTS

A handbook by The Federation of European Nutrition Societies

INTRODUCTION

These draft guidelines have been produced by a working group of the Federation of European Nutrition Societies (FENS) which has been charged with establishing guidance and recommendations for European wide implementation to assure and promote public trust in nutrition science.

The priority for this working group was understanding the dissemination flow of nutrition science information from academic institutions out to the public and mainstream media outlets.

Sumner et al. (2014)¹ identified the press release as being one of the key sources of inaccurate nutrition science information, both in terms of exaggerated causal claims and exaggerated inference from animal to human research. Any exaggeration or inaccuracy in the press release is then reflected in the downstream media news stories and articles. The conclusion of this research was that improving the accuracy of the press release represented a key opportunity for reducing misleading nutrition science related news.

A survey performed by this working group in 2021, which was completed by over eighty European nutrition scientists, identified many nutrition scientists either did not have access to or were unaware of any existing guidance within their academic institution for writing or reviewing press releases. Surprisingly, 92% of nutrition scientists had concerns about the content of the press release which were not addressed prior to the press release was made available to the media and subsequently to the public.

Further discussions internally within the working group, identified an absence of national or European guidance for writing press releases for nutrition science research. Some institutions had guidance but these were for internal use only.

The press release process is dynamic, and the drafts will circulate between the press office and the research team prior to release. The press office release processes are outside the scope of this working group, which can only focus on nutrition scientists, but it was felt that there was a clear requirement for additional resources for nutrition scientists to help them with writing and reviewing press releases and managing the interaction with their press office.

The objective of this working group was therefore to create detailed guidance for writing and reviewing press releases to support and guide nutrition scientists with improving the quality and clarity of their press releases.

1. Sumner P, Vivian-Griffiths S, Boivin J, Williams A, Venetis C A, Davies A et al. The association between exaggeration in health-related science news and academic press releases: retrospective observational study *BMJ* 2014; 349 :g7015 doi:10.1136/bmj.g7015.

AIMS OF THESE GUIDELINES

The aims of these guidelines are fourfold:

- 1 To have standardised and accessible guidance for writing nutrition science press releases.
- 2 To provide nutrition scientists with a comprehensive overview of the key information to include in a press release when writing a press release themselves (Section 1).
- 3 To ensure nutrition scientists recognise their responsibility in ensuring their nutrition research is clearly and accurately represented in any press release.
- 4 To encourage nutrition scientists to thoroughly review any press releases that are not written by the research team prior to publishing, given the potential for any exaggerations in the press release to contribute to misleading nutrition health claims (Section 2).

Additional recommendations include that all co-authors of the study are informed and/or read the press release prior to publication.

Section 1. Writing a press release - guidance for nutrition scientists

SECTION	EVALUATION
CORRECT COMMUNICATION	<p>Aim that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The message is not published in media before the results are published, which must be timed with the researchers (named as contacts).• At least one scientific colleague (not co-author of research) reads and comments on the communication to ensure that the press release communicates the academic message credibly and accurately.• At least two of the authors of the research article are involved in ongoing communication.
RELEVANCE TO THE AUDIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know your audience and keep in mind what information they will be looking for while reading your press release.• Describe what part(s) of your study is/are relevant to the public.
TITLE AND HEADLINE	<p>As the title and headline provide an important first impression, mediation is needed to ensure that they accurately describe the content of the article without exaggeration, while still catching the attention of the reader.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The title should be direct and describe the topic clearly in less than 10 words.• It should not contain jargon or unnecessary adjectives.• It should not over-sell the news and only state what can be truly concluded from the study.• The headline, which can be longer, should complement the title and add additional details (such as study type and conclusion).
GENERAL PICTURE	<p>Provide a short abstract in about 1-2 sentences. Aim to contain at least the first four of the five W's (who, what, where, when and why):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the population of your study (number of subjects and special characteristics such as age, sex, health status, etc.).• What was studied (intervention/observation study).• Where the study was done (place and name of university/affiliation).• When and for how long the study lasted (length of intervention).• What were the study objectives and why (and to whom specifically) it matters (more)?• Link to the original scientific article. <p>In case not all five Ws are covered in the first paragraph, they must be clarified in the subsequent ones.</p>

SECTION	EVALUATION
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**BROADER
CONTEXT**

Provision of increasing detail and background information to what has been described in the first paragraph, preferably 2-3 paragraphs. It should contain:

- The purpose of the study, why and to whom does it specifically matter (more).
- The title and author of the paper.
- The most important findings and conclusions (possible quotes from the author) and which conclusions have NOT been found or cannot be made.
- What was known about the topic already and what this new study adds to it, links to other evidence/statistics – whether findings deviate from general consensus or not.
- Implications of uncertainties (related to methods, research design, data, theoretical suppositions etc.) for research findings.
- The originator of knowledge communicated (i.e., knowledge not produced by the researchers themselves).
- Perspectives of ethical, political and/or scientific nature and whether it is based on the researcher’s general knowledge of wider field or an opinion which is not related to researcher’s own field of research (possible recommendations).
- The funding of the study.
- Potential conflicts of interest for authors mentioned in the press release and key conflicts of interest for other contributors to the research article.

AFFILIATION

A brief summary about your university/affiliation and who is issuing the press release in 1-2 sentences. It should contain:

- Name and contact information (email and mobile telephone number) of the research institution and/or other relevant (external) sources that have appropriate expertise.
- A direct link to the research article (or the abstract/infographic) behind the press release.
- In case available and relevant: links to websites, social media and/or videos for further information.
- Traditional endings: -END-, -30- or #####.

SECTION

EVALUATION

LANGUAGE

Language should be to the point and understandable for everyone; an accurate translation of science to the consumer.

- Avoid long sentences; use up to 8-15 words.
- Use the present or future tense (active verbs).
- Don't use jargon, clichés or scientific/technical language; the scientific message must be clarified and (sometimes) simplified.
- Spell out acronyms when used for the first time but use them to a minimum.
- Make sure not to mislead readers by overstating - the content should reflect accurately what was found in the study. Results and/or conclusions should not seem more impactful than they truly are.
- Only use superlatives (e.g., biggest, highest etc.) if they are really justified.
- Distinguish between findings and interpretation/extrapolation: do not suggest advice if there is none.
- Potential conflicts of interest for authors mentioned in the press release and key conflicts of interest for other contributors to the research article.
- Be clear about the evidence when reporting a link between two things.
- Ensure the article has been checked for spelling and grammar.

LINKS AND VISUALS

They can be used to reflect and/or add to the story in a visually attractive way. When used properly, they help to guide the reader through the press release. It is recommended to always use a photo that helps visualize the story.

- When available, relevant quotes can be used to bring forward the main message.
- Add links for background and/or contact information.
- Use bullet style when reporting a list of findings.
- Use the design to bring forward the key points and make it easier to read.

Further resources:

Pearson, E. (2016, December). Selling a Story: How to Write a Successful Press Release. BBC Sky at Night Magazine, pp. 10-12

Stein, K. (2016). How to Write an Influential Press Release. In M. Gasman, *Academics Going Public - How to Write and Speak Beyond Academe* (pp. 105-119). New York: Taylor & Francis

Nicoll, L. (2015). How to Write a Press Release. *Nurse Author & Editor*, 1-9

Writing a press release - example 1

“An anti-inflammatory diet may be your best bet for cognitive health – three times greater risk of dementia linked to diet low in fruits, vegetables, beans, tea” by American Academy of Neurology (AAN)

Newswise – MINNEAPOLIS – As people age, inflammation within their immune system increases, damaging cells. A new study shows that people who consumed an anti-inflammatory diet that includes more fruits, vegetables, beans, and tea or coffee, had a lower risk of developing dementia later in life.

The research is published in the November 10, 2021, online issue of *Neurology*[®], the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. “There may be some potent nutritional tools in your home to help fight the inflammation that could contribute to brain aging,” said study author Nikolaos Scarmeas, MD, PhD, of National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in Greece, and a Fellow of the American Academy of Neurology. “Diet is a lifestyle factor you can modify, and it might play a role in combating inflammation, one of the biological pathways contributing to risk for dementia and cognitive impairment later in life.”

The study looked at 1,059 people in Greece with an average age of 73 who did not have dementia. Each person answered a food frequency questionnaire that is commonly used to determine the inflammatory potential of a person’s diet. The questionnaire sought information on the main food groups consumed during the previous month, including dairy products, cereals, fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, legumes, which include beans, lentils, and peas, added fats, alcoholic beverages, stimulants, and sweets. A possible dietary inflammatory score can range from -8.87 to 7.98, with higher scores indicating a more inflammatory diet, which includes fewer servings of fruits, vegetables, beans and tea or coffee.

Scarmeas notes that multiple nutrients in all foods contribute to the inflammatory nature of a person’s diet. Researchers divided the participants into three equal groups: those with the lowest dietary inflammatory scores, medium scores, and highest scores. Those in the group with the lowest scores of -1.76 and lower, indicating a more anti-inflammatory diet, ate an average per week of 20 servings of fruit, 19 of vegetables, four of beans or other legumes and 11 of coffee or tea per week. Those in the group with the highest scores, 0.21 and above, indicating a more inflammatory diet, ate an average per week of nine servings of fruit, 10 of vegetables, two of legumes and nine of coffee or tea.

Researchers followed up with each person for an average of three years. Over the course of the study, 62 people, or 6%, developed dementia. The people who developed dementia had average scores of -0.06, compared to average scores of -0.70 for those who did not develop dementia. After adjusting for age, sex and education, researchers found that each one-point increase in dietary inflammatory score was associated with a 21% increase in dementia risk.

Compared to the lowest third of participants who consumed the least inflammatory diet, those in the top third were three times more likely to develop dementia. “Our results are getting us closer to characterizing and measuring the inflammatory potential of people’s diets,” Scarmeas said. “That in turn could help inform more tailored and precise dietary recommendations and other strategies to maintain cognitive health.”

The study was an observational one, not a clinical trial. It does not prove that eating an anti-inflammatory diet prevents brain aging and dementia, it only shows an association. An additional limitation is the short follow-up time of three years. Longer studies are needed to confirm and replicate these findings.

The study was supported by the Alzheimer’s Association, the European Social Fund, and the Greek Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity. Learn more about dementia at BrainandLife.org, home of the American Academy of Neurology’s free patient and caregiver magazine focused on the intersection of neurologic disease and brain health. Follow Brain & Life® on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. When posting to social media channels about this research, we encourage you to use the hashtags #Neurology and #AANscience.

The American Academy of Neurology is the world’s largest association of neurologists and neuroscience professionals, with over 36,000 members. The AAN is dedicated to promoting the highest quality patient-centered neurologic care. A neurologist is a doctor with specialized training in diagnosing, treating, and managing disorders of the brain and nervous system such as Alzheimer’s disease, stroke, migraine, multiple sclerosis, concussion, Parkinson’s disease, and epilepsy.

For more information about the American Academy of Neurology, visit AAN.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Writing a press release - assessment of example 1

SECTION	EVALUATION
TITLE AND HEADLINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Exaggerated title; should be phrased differently to reflect the results more accurately. Suggestion: "Diet rich in plantbased foods might lower the risk of dementia".
GENERAL PICTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Explains details on intervention/observation too late (only after describing results).✗ No information provided on when the study was performed.
BROADER CONTEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ The title is lacking.✗ Describes in too much detail the methodological features.✗ The description of findings is too elaborated and does not explain clearly what conclusions can be made.✗ Confusing narrative: there are strong statements in the beginning, while the end reveals that it's solely an association and longer follow-up is needed.✗ Conflicts of interest are not mentioned.
AFFILIATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Contact information is not provided.✗ Social media websites are exaggeratedly mentioned; the press release is used as an advertisement which could bother the reader.✗ Traditional ending can be added.
LANGUAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ The association found should be more accurately/truly explained from the beginning as it is the most important issue in this press release.✗ Overall, the press release is too lengthy. Methods and findings are discussed in too much detail and should be more to the point. Moreover, what is described does not reflect accurately what was done in the study and what can and cannot be concluded from it. Links with other evidence are lacking.
VISUALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Photo is lacking.✗ Bullet style would help in a clear presentation of results.

Section 2.

Reviewing a press release: guidance for nutrition scientists

REVIEWING A PRESS RELEASE - QUICK GUIDE

The checklist has been developed to enable nutrition scientists to perform a thorough review of press releases written by a third party (such as their own press office) before it is published.

- 1 Does the title accurately reflect the research findings/discussion?
- 2 Does the first paragraph contain at least the first four of the five W's (who, what, where, when, and why) and the study characteristics (population, intervention, duration, the study objective, etc.)?
- 3 Does the subsequent paragraph clearly identify increasing details about the study (study methods, study purpose, conflicts of interest, etc.)?
- 4 Have the (key) study findings been translated and integrated with what is already known and with what they add? What is the general consensus on this matter and what is the public health nutrition relevance to this matter? Does the press release clearly highlight causal vs correlated findings?
- 5 Does the press release clearly underline what cannot be concluded from the research study?
- 6 Does it contain all the necessary details regarding the university/affiliation (contact information, a direct link to the research article)?
- 7 Is the language understandable to all?
- 8 Does the press release include visual aids, such as infographics, diagrams and charts? (If appropriate)

To confirm the usefulness of the checklist for reviewing a press release, please read the sample press release and then its discussion using the checklist above.

2. Reviewing a press release - guidance for nutrition scientists

SECTION	EVALUATION	
<p>Title and headline</p> <p>Do the title and headline accurately reflect the findings discussion?</p> <p>The title and/or headline should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study population (humans/animals); • Type of study; • If it's causative or associative; • The type of finding. 	0	Not achieved = The title and headline do not accurately reflect the research findings/ discussion.
	1	Partially achieved = The title and headline reflect the research findings, but not the discussion.
	2	Fully achieved = The title and headline accurately reflect the research findings/ discussion.
<p>First paragraph</p> <p>Does the first paragraph contain at least the first four of the five W's and the study characteristics?</p> <p>The first paragraph should include at least the first four W's (who, what, where, when, and why):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study's population. • Intervention/observation of the study. • Place and name of university/affiliation. • Length of intervention (duration). • The objectives of the study. 	0	Not achieved = The first paragraph does not contain them.
	1	Partially achieved = The first paragraph contains most of them.
	2	Fully achieved = The first paragraph does not contain them.
<p>Subsequent paragraph</p> <p>Does the subsequent paragraph clearly identify the study's increasing details (study purpose, conflicts of interest, etc.)?</p> <p>The subsequent paragraph should include the study's increasing details as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most important findings and conclusions; • Purpose of the study; • Implications of uncertainties (related to methods, research design, data, theoretical suppositions, etc.); • Potential conflicts of interest of the authors. 	0	Not achieved = The subsequent paragraph does not identify the study's increasing details.
	1	Partially achieved = The subsequent paragraph identifies some of the study increasing details.
	2	Fully achieved = The subsequent paragraph completely identifies the study increasing details.

SECTION	EVALUATION	
<p>Broader context</p> <p>Have the study findings been put into context in terms of previous evidence in the field and existing relevant public health nutrition guidelines?</p> <p>The study findings have been put into context, for instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the findings are preliminary and nonconclusive, has that been made that clear? • If the findings differ from previous studies, is this indicated and explained? • Has it been described what the general consensus/previous evidence says on this matter? • Has it been clarified to whom the findings apply? • Is a text box or a paragraph included detailing the current dietary guidelines/recommendations? <p>Does the study include an accompanying editorial to help put the findings into context? If so, is the editorial content included in the press release?</p>	0	Not achieved = The study findings have not been put into context.
	1	Partially achieved = Some study findings have been put into context.
	2	Fully achieved = All important study findings have been put into context.
<p>Conclusions</p> <p>Does the press release clearly underline what cannot be concluded from the research study? Does it also explain why this cannot be concluded?</p>	0	Not achieved = The press release does not identify this.
	1	Partially achieved = The press release identifies what cannot be concluded, but without explanation.
	2	Fully achieved = The press release clearly identifies what cannot be concluded.
<p>Final paragraph</p> <p>Does the final paragraph contain all the necessary details regarding university/affiliation?</p> <p>The final paragraph should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and contact information (email and mobile phone number) of the author and/or other relevant external sources; • Direct link to the research article (or abstract/infographic) behind the press release; • If available and relevant: links to websites, social media, and/or videos for more information. 	0	Not achieved = The final paragraph does not contain the necessary details.
	1	Partially achieved = The final paragraph contains only some necessary details.
	2	Fully achieved = The final paragraph provide all necessary details clearly.

SECTION	EVALUATION	
<p>Use of appropriate language style Is the language understandable to all and there are basics in grammar, sentence, and paragraph mechanics?</p> <p>The spelling, punctuation & grammar should be consistent, and the language understandable to both nutrition scientists and lay people.</p>	0	Not achieved = Language is not always understandable and spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar are inconsistent.
	1	Partially achieved = Language is understandable, but spelling, punctuation and/or grammar is inconsistent .
	2	Fully achieved = The language is understandable, and spelling, punctuation, and grammar are consistent.
<p>Use of appropriate presentation style</p> <p>Does the press release include visual aids, such as infographics, diagrams and charts? (If appropriate)</p>		Yes.
		No.
		Not relevant.
<p>Other points for consideration Have the study or findings been peer-reviewed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the study been peer-reviewed by independent scientists and/or published in a peer-reviewed journal? • If a study has not been peer-reviewed (e.g., a paper presented at a meeting or conference), are the findings so important that they should be communicated to the public before peer review. 		Yes = The study or findings have been peer-reviewed.
		No = The study or findings have not been peer-reviewed.
<p>Final review - signs of the press release</p> <p>Would you be comfortable to sign off the press release as full, clear and accurate representation of the nutrition research study?</p>		Yes.
		No.
<p>FINAL SCORE</p> <p>Add the values from your answers to calculate the final score. Add 2 points for each “yes” and 0 points for “no”.</p>	> 12	Accepted quality.
	< 12	Improvements are recommended.

Reviewing a press release - example 2

Which grains you eat can impact your risk of getting heart disease earlier?

Study of Iranian population found eating refined grains was associated with increased risk of premature heart disease and whole grains consumption with reduced risk.

3-Oct-2022 2:45 PM EDT, by American College of Cardiology (ACC)

Newswise — In one of the first studies to examine the relationship between different types of grain intake and premature coronary artery disease in the Middle East, researchers found a higher intake of refined grain was associated with an increased risk of premature coronary artery disease in an Iranian population, while eating whole grains was associated with reduced risk. The study will be presented at the American College of Cardiology (ACC) Middle East 2022 together with the 13th Emirates Cardiac Society Congress, taking place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, October 7-9, 2022.

According to the researchers, previous epidemiological studies have reported an association between different types of grain intake with the risk of coronary artery disease. The current study evaluated the association between refined and whole grains consumption and risk of PCAD in an Iranian population.

Premature coronary artery disease (PCAD) refers to atherosclerotic narrowing of coronary arteries in males under 55 years old or in females under 65 years old. It is often asymptomatic early in the course of the disease but may lead to chest pain (angina) and/or heart attack with progressive development of narrowing (stenosis) or plaque rupture of the arterial wall. Risk factors for PCAD include smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes.

“There are many factors involved in why people may be consuming more refined grains as opposed to whole grains and these cases differ between people, but some of the most important factors to consider include the economy and income, job, education, culture, age and other similar factors,” said Mohammad Amin Khajavi Gaskarej, MD, of the Isfahan Cardiovascular Research Center and Cardiovascular Research Institute at Isfahan University of Medical Sciences in Isfahan, Iran, and the study’s lead author. “A diet that includes consuming a high amount of unhealthy and refined grains can be considered similar to consuming a diet containing a lot of unhealthy sugars and oils.”

Whole grains are defined as containing the entire grain, while refined grains have been milled—ground into flour or meal—to improve shelf life but they lose important nutrients in the process. The 2019 ACC/American Heart Association Guideline on the Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease recommends a diet that emphasizes the intake of vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains and fish to decrease heart disease risk factors.

The study recruited 2099 individuals with PCAD from hospitals with catheterization labs in different cities and ethnicities throughout Iran who underwent coronary angiography (women aged ≤ 70 and men ≤ 60). In total, 1,168 patients with normal coronary arteries were included in the control group, while 1,369 patients with CAD with obstruction equal or above 75% in at least a single coronary artery or $\geq 50\%$ in the left main coronary artery made up the case group.

Participants were given a food frequency questionnaire for dietary assessments to evaluate dietary behaviors and evaluate the association between whole grain and refined grain intake and the risk of PCAD in individuals without a prior diagnoses of heart disease. After adjusting for confounders, a higher intake of refined grains was associated with an increased risk of PCAD, while whole grain intake was inversely related to reduced risk of PCAD.

“As more studies demonstrate an increase in refined grains consumption globally, as well as the impact on overall health, it is important that we find ways to encourage and educate people on the benefits of whole grain consumption,” Khajavi Gaskarei said. “Tactics to consider include teaching improved dietary choices in schools and other public places in simple language the general population can understand, as well as on television programs and by continuing to do high level research that is presented at medical conferences and published in medical journals. Clinicians must also be having these conversations with each other and their patients.”

Learn more about ACC Middle East 2022 Together with the 13th Emirates Cardiac Society Congress at [ACC.org/MiddleEast2022](https://www.acc.org/MiddleEast2022).

Source:

<https://www.newswise.com/articles/which-grains-you-eat-can-impact-your-risk-of-getting-heart-disease-earlier> (Accessed October 9, 2022).

Disclaimer:

The present analysis is meant as an exercise only and does not intend to critique the work of the authors. It does not take into consideration the target audience and overall goals of the original piece.

Reviewing a press release - assessment of example 2

SECTION	SCORE	EVALUATION
Title and headline Do the title and/or headline accurately reflect the findings/discussion?	1	Study population and type of study are not mentioned.
First paragraph Does the first paragraph contain at least the first four of the five W's and the study characteristics?	1	Population is partially defined, the type and length of the study are not stated.
Subsequent paragraph Does the subsequent paragraph clearly identify the study's increasing details (study purpose, conflicts of interest, etc.)?	0	It contains none of them.
Broader context Have the study findings been put into context in terms of previous evidence in the field and existing relevant public health nutrition guidelines?	1	Refers to previous studies without referencing them in the release and does not thoroughly explain the existing association for wholegrain consumption and heart disease.
Conclusions Does the press release clearly underline what cannot be concluded from the research study? Does it also explain why this cannot be concluded?	1	Does not provide a clear statement on what can be concluded and what cannot be based on this research.
Final paragraph Does the final paragraph contain all the necessary details regarding university/affiliation?	2	
Use of appropriate language style Is the language understandable to all and there are basics in grammar, sentence, and paragraph mechanics?	1	Significant use of jargon and technical terms that may not be understood by the lay audience.
Use of appropriate presentation style Does the press release include visual aids, such as infographics, diagrams and charts? (If appropriate)	No	
Peer-reviewing acknowledgement	No	
Final review - signs of the press release Would you be comfortable to sign off the press release as full, clear and accurate representation of the nutrition research study?	No	Press release can be improved: a lot of repetition of the objectives, , unorthodox sequence of paragraphs
FINAL SCORE (Based on a maximum of 20 points)	7	Improvements are recommended.

REVIEWING PRESS RELEASES: GUIDANCE FOR NUTRITION SCIENTISTS



EVALUATION CHECKLIST

- Does the title accurately reflect the research findings/discussion?
- Does the first paragraph contain at least the first four of the five W's (who, what, where, when, and why) and the study characteristics (population, intervention, duration, the study objective, etc.)?
- Does the subsequent paragraph clearly identify increasing details about the study (study methods, study purpose, conflicts of interest, etc.)?
- Have the (key) study findings been translated and integrated with what is already known and with what they add? What is the general consensus on this matter and what is the public health nutrition relevance on this matter? Does the press release clearly highlight causal vs correlated findings?
- Does the press release clearly underline what cannot be concluded from the research study?
- Does it contain all the necessary details regarding the university/affiliation (contact information, a direct link to the research article)?
- Is the language understandable to all?
- Does the press release include visual aids, such as infographics, diagrams and charts? (If appropriate)

REVIEWING A PRESS RELEASE - ASSESSMENT TABLE

SECTION	SCORE*	EVALUATION
<p>Title and headline</p> <p>Do the title and/or headline accurately reflect the findings/discussion?</p>		
<p>First paragraph</p> <p>Does the first paragraph contain at least the first four of the five W's and the study characteristics?</p>		
<p>Subsequent paragraph</p> <p>Does the subsequent paragraph clearly identify the study's increasing details (study purpose, conflicts of interest, etc.)?</p>		
<p>Broader context</p> <p>Have the study findings been put into context in terms of previous evidence in the field and existing relevant public health nutrition guidelines?</p>		
<p>Conclusions</p> <p>Does the press release clearly underline what cannot be concluded from the research study? Does it also explain why this cannot be concluded?</p>		
<p>Final paragraph</p> <p>Does the final paragraph contain all the necessary details regarding the university/affiliation?</p>		
<p>Use of appropriate language style</p> <p>Is the language understandable to all and there are basics in grammar, sentence, and paragraph mechanics?</p>		
<p>Use of appropriate presentation style (Y/N)</p> <p>Does the press release include visual aids, such as infographics, diagrams and charts? (If appropriate)</p>		
<p>Peer-reviewing acknowledgment (Y/N)</p>		
<p>Final review - signs of the press release (Y/N)</p> <p>Would you be comfortable signing off the press release as a full, clear and accurate representation of the nutrition research study?</p>		
<p>FINAL SCORE (based on a maximum of 20 points)</p>		

* Score = 0-2; YES = 2; NO = 0.

WRITING PRESS RELEASES: GUIDANCE FOR NUTRITION SCIENTISTS



EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Communication

- Is the title direct, clear and relevant and states what can be concluded from the study?
- Is the general language of the press release clear and understandable for a broad audience?
- Does it detail the most important findings and conclusions as well as which conclusions have NOT been found or cannot be made?

Relevance

- Does it summarise what was known about the topic already and what this new study adds?
- Does it include implications of uncertainties (related to methods, research design, data, theoretical suppositions etc.) for research findings?
- Does it place the study in the context of existing public health nutrition guidelines?

Transparency

- Does it summarise details of the university/affiliation and who is issuing the release?
- Does it include details of funding and a statement on conflicts of interest?
- Does it communicate details of the originator of knowledge (if relevant)?
- Does it include a direct link to the research article?