

# Improving primary care research reporting

## Introducing the Consensus Reporting Items for Studies in Primary Care checklist

Nicholas Pimlott MD PhD CCFP FCFP

**C**anadian Family Physician (CFP) begins 2025 by introducing the Consensus Reporting Items for Studies in Primary Care (CRISP) checklist to its tools for journal authors and peer reviewers. What is CRISP and why is it important to CFP and its research contributors, peer reviewers, and readers?

The CRISP checklist is built upon a 5-year program of rigorous research that engaged the worldwide, interprofessional, interdisciplinary community of primary care. Background studies used by CRISP included 596 individuals from 29 countries and actively engaged underrepresented voices and divergent views.<sup>1</sup> The studies used by CRISP reported that primary care practitioners frequently read original research articles, but often find articles do not adequately describe study findings in a way that makes it easy to apply them to patient care in practice settings.<sup>2</sup>

The CRISP initiative charted a new pathway to create research reporting guidelines. Instead of relying on an elite group of methodologists dictating the proper content of reports, CRISP considered the creators and users of primary care research to be the experts, including researchers, clinical practitioners, patients, communities, editors, peer reviewers, educators, policy-makers, and funders.<sup>3</sup> A Delphi study prioritized recommendations and integrated them into the CRISP checklist of 24 items to include in primary care research reports. Each item is listed because the primary care community believed it was essential to make study reports valid and applicable to different primary care settings and patient populations.<sup>4</sup>

The CRISP checklist is flexible and accommodates a variety of primary care research methods, study designs, patient populations, topics, and systems of care. Not all items apply to all study reports. Authors and editors make final decisions on content and form. Nothing restricts creative and effective reporting. The CRISP statement also summarizes the research program and provides guidance on using the checklist, with explanations and examples.<sup>5</sup>

The CRISP checklist was designed to improve reporting of primary care research, but is also valuable for reviewing manuscripts, designing studies,

and teaching research methods. The checklist applies to all primary care research. This includes not only research done by primary care investigators, but also research done by other professionals studying primary care settings, patients, and problems, and all research intended to influence the practice and organization of primary care.

Finally, the CRISP statement is published in the *Annals of Family Medicine*<sup>5</sup> and endorsed by the North American Primary Care Research Group (the global organization for primary care research) and the World Organization of Family Doctors.

To access the CRISP checklist on the CFP website, visit <https://ow.ly/7OQm50UrY2u>. 

**Dr Nicholas Pimlott** is Editor of *Canadian Family Physician* and Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto in Ontario.

#### Acknowledgment

I thank **Drs William R. Phillips** and **Elizabeth Sturgiss** for their correspondence and for highlighting the key findings of the Consensus Reporting Items for Studies in Primary Care initiative, statement, and checklist for authors and peer reviewers.

#### Competing interests

None declared

#### References

1. Phillips WR, Sturgiss E, Hunik L, Glasziou P, Olde Hartman T, Orkin A, et al. Improving the reporting of primary care research: an international survey of researchers. *J Am Board Fam Med* 2021;34(1):12-21.
2. Phillips WR, Sturgiss E, Yang A, Glasziou P, Olde Hartman T, Orkin A, et al. Clinician use of primary care research reports. *J Am Board Fam Med* 2021;34(3):648-60.
3. Phillips WR, Sturgiss E, Moriarty F, Orkin A, Lucassen P, van der Wouden JC. What specific items are needed in a guidance statement for the reporting of primary care research? An online Delphi study protocol of the international primary care research community [study protocol]. *Open Science Framework Home* 2023 Dec 20. Available from: <https://osf.io/ejf8p>. Accessed 2024 Dec 2.
4. Sturgiss EA, Prathivadi P, Phillips WR, Moriarty F, Lucassen PLBJ, van der Wouden JC, et al. Key items for reports of primary care research: an international Delphi study. *BMJ Open* 2022;12(12):e066564.
5. Phillips WR, Sturgiss E, Glasziou P, Olde Hartman TC, Orkin AM, Prathivadi P, et al. Improving the reporting of primary care research: Consensus Reporting Items for Studies in Primary Care—the CRISP Statement. *Ann Fam Med* 2023;21(6):549-55.

*Can Fam Physician* 2025;71:66 (Eng), e19 (Fr).

DOI: 10.46747/cfp.710166

La traduction en français de cet article se trouve à <https://www.cfp.ca> dans la table des matières du numéro de janvier 2025 à la page e19.