

# GP websites – are they readable?

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## Introduction

The UK has one of the highest percentage of internet users in the world, with over 72% of adults accessing the internet daily (1).

Individuals are increasingly turning to the internet for information on health and social care services, with approximately 1/4 people in the UK using the web for self diagnosis of illness (2).

GP websites have the potential to be an important source of health information to the public as well as provide information on their services.

This poster aims to assess the readability of GP websites as well as assess information provision of GP services on the nhs.uk website.

## Methods

- A randomly chosen subsection of 10/44 practices (82,872 registered patients) in Brighton and Hove was analysed for readability using the Flesch Reading Ease Score (FRES) (3).
- FRES quantifies readability and can be interpreted as in Table 1 (4). Scores were calculated using Microsoft Office Word 2013.
- For each GP website text was copied from each of eight categories of information in Table 2 and prepared for analysis by only keeping running text.
- Each category of information was checked on each nhs.uk equivalent website (see Table 3).

Table 1 – Interpretation of the FRES Score (4)

FRES	Verbal description	% of people likely to understand
90-100	Very easy	93
80-90	Easy	91
70-80	Fairly easy	88
60-70	Standard	83
50-60	Fairly difficult	54
30-50	Difficult	33
0-30	Very difficult	4.5

Table 2 – Categories of information analysed

Category	Explanation
Opening times	Opening time & out of hours services
Appointments	How to book an appointment & home visits
Prescriptions	Prescription information & costs
Clinics	All clinics/service information & travel vaccines
Tests and results	Including X-ray & blood test results
Patient registration	New patients, non-English speakers, temporary residents and registering online
Practice staff	All staff information
PPG	Patient participation group + complaints information

## Results

### 1. All of the analysed information was rated as 'fairly difficult' or 'difficult'

- Average FRES by category of information showed that opening time, clinic and practice staff information all scored 40-50.
- Other categories had a FRES between 50-60.

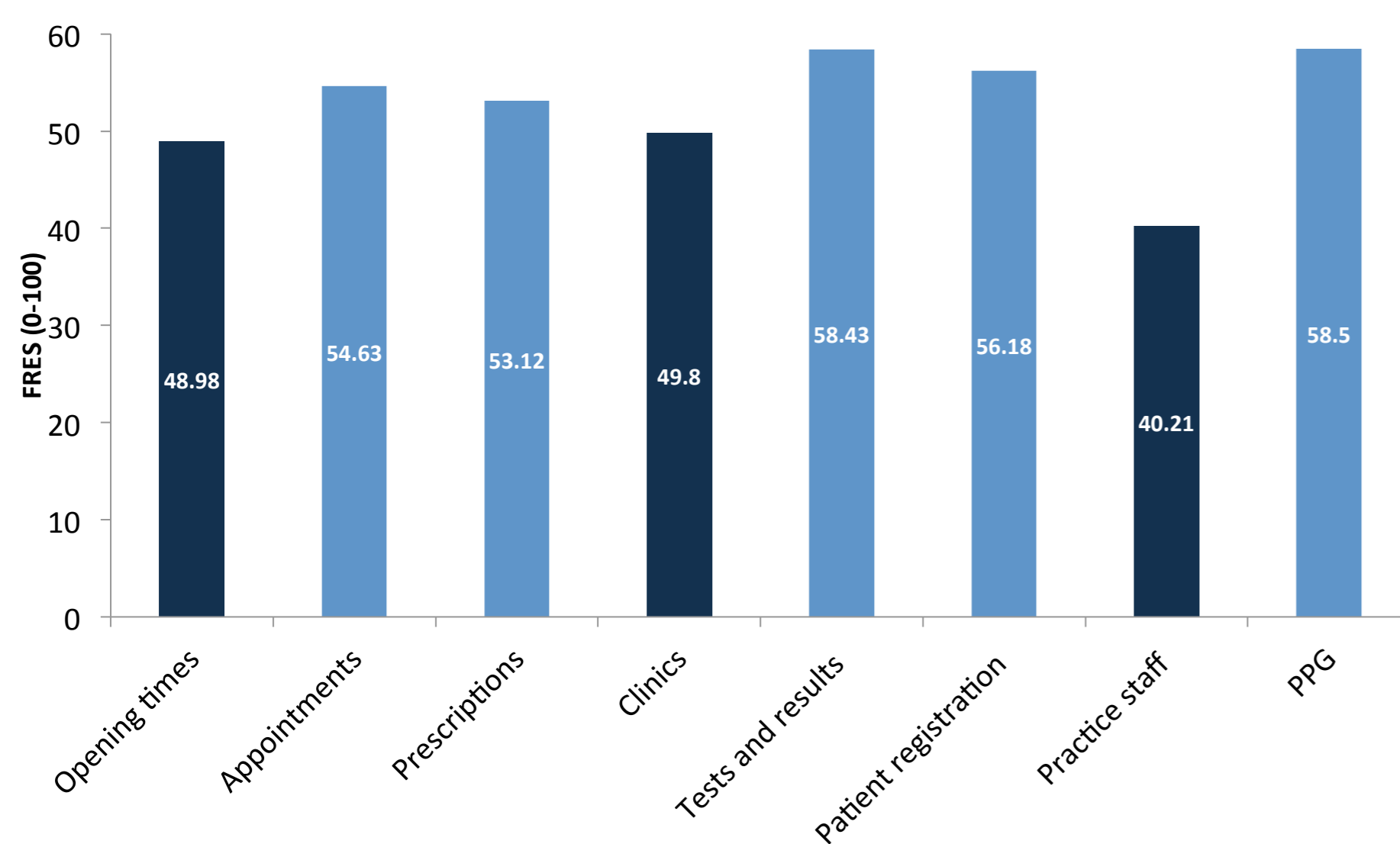


Figure 1. Average FRES scores by category of information

### 2. There was not much variation in FRES of each practice

- Highest FRES was 56.01, while lowest was 48.18.
- This is a difference of 7.83.
- 9/10 GP websites had an average FRES of 50-60.

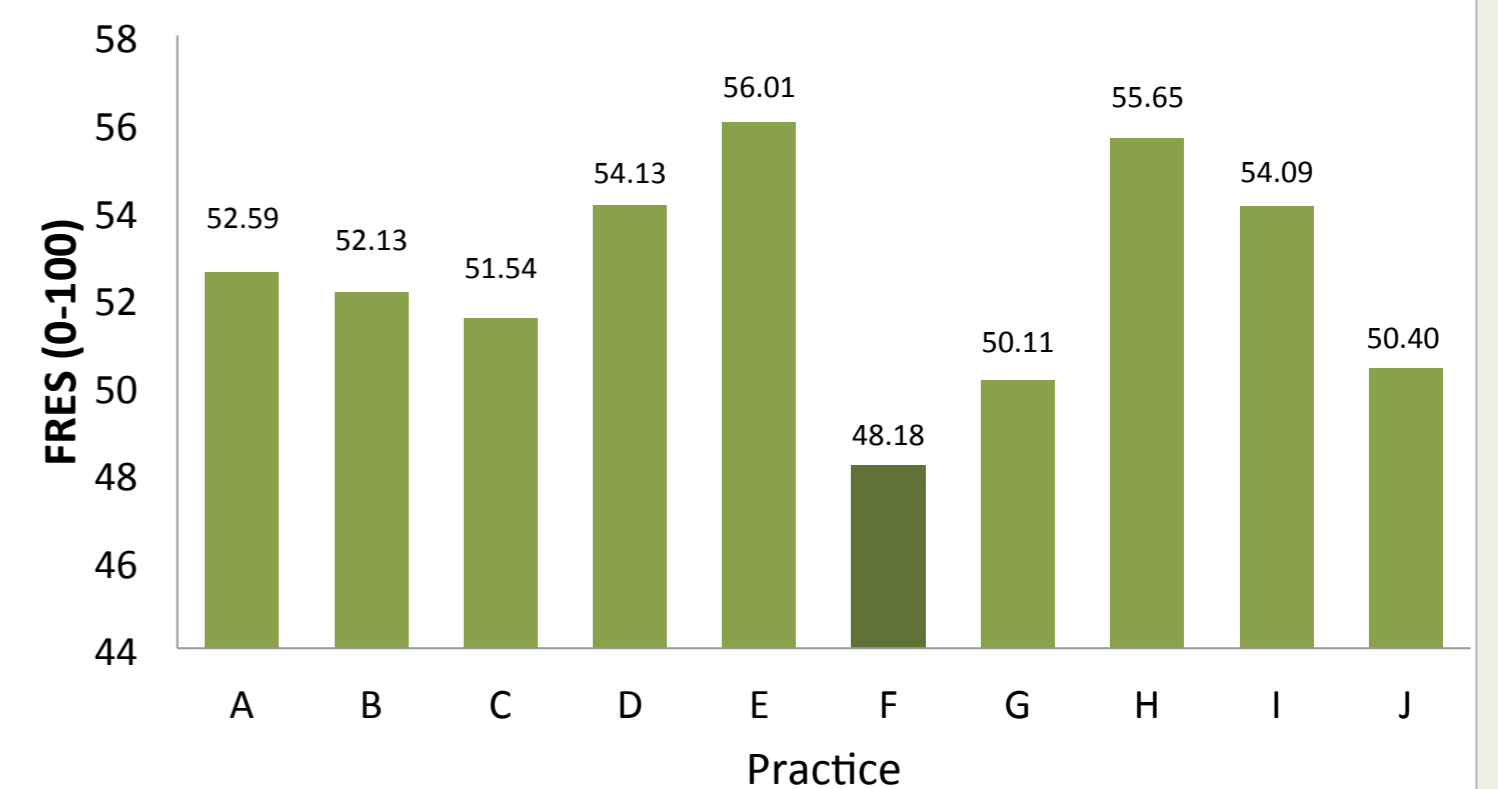


Figure 2. Average FRES scores by GP practice website

### 3. nhs.uk is not comprehensive in terms of information

Practice	Opening times	Appointments	Prescriptions	Clinics	Tests & results	Patient registration	Practice staff	PPG
A	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red
B	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red
C	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red
D	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red
E	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red
F	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red
G	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red
H	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red
I	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red
J	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red

Table 3. Representation of nhs.uk information for practices. Green = information, red = no information

## Discussion

### 1. GP website information can be rewritten to be more readable and understandable

- The results suggest that in most cases information was not written specifically with readability in mind.
- Some information was duplicated across different websites, with the original source not being referenced.
- There is scope for sharing readable service information across websites and also greater use of linking into NHS Choices Health advice material.

### 2. Information on nhs.uk websites is not standardised

- nhs.uk information for each practice was varied in terms of content and when it was last updated.
- There were also instances of contradictory information (e.g. on opening times) on the nhs.uk and independent GP websites.
- This has potential to cause unnecessary confusion for the public.

## Conclusion

- GP websites have the potential to be an important central point of both health and service information. However, there is significant work to be done in this area.
- Firstly, service information needs to be more readable by making some of it standardised.
- Secondly, information duplication and omissions on nhs.uk websites need to be corrected.
- Thirdly, NHS health information can be more integrated into GP websites, as it already follows readability standards (5).

## References

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