

Appendix 1. The DISCERN Instrument

The DISCERN tool is a standardized 16-item questionnaire used to judge the quality of written health information, especially treatment choices. Each item is rated on a 5-point scale, where 1 = definite “No”, 2–4 = partially, and 5 = definite “Yes.”

Section 1: Reliability of the publication

1. Are the aims clear?
2. Does it achieve its aims?
3. Is it relevant?
4. Is it clear what sources of information were used to compile the publication (other than the author or producer)?
5. Is it clear when the information used or reported in the publication was produced?
6. Is it balanced and unbiased?
7. Does it provide details of additional sources of support and information?
8. Does it refer to areas of uncertainty?

Section 2: Quality of information about treatment choices

9. Does it describe how each treatment works?
10. Does it describe the benefits of each treatment?
11. Does it describe the risks of each treatment?
12. Does it describe what would happen if no treatment is used?
13. Does it describe how the treatment choices affect overall quality of life?
14. Is it clear that there may be more than one possible treatment choice?
15. Does it provide support for shared decision-making?

Section 3: Overall quality rating

16. Based on the answers to all of the above questions, rate the overall quality of the publication as a source of information about treatment choices.

Scoring:

- ❖ Each question scored 1–5.
- ❖ Total score ranges 16–80.
- ❖ Interpretation:
 - ◆ <40 = poor quality
 - ◆ 40–55 = fair quality
 - ◆ >55 = good quality