

A quick guide to

Risk communication

To communicate risks in healthcare means to **disseminate accurate and objective knowledge about hazards** that may affect people's health. We want to raise awareness of risks, make sure people understand how they could be affected, and encourage informed and independent decision-making. **Good risk communication also helps maintain credibility during a crisis**, when uncertainty and confusion threaten trust in the authorities.



6 tips

for effective risk communication in pharmacovigilance

FEEL THE RISK

1 A risk is not just a number that expresses the likelihood of an event, but the feeling of what might happen and its impact. That perception varies from person to person and depends on the type of risk, time, and our values and biases.

FRAME RISKS WITH BENEFITS

2 Speak openly about potential harms, but always do that in the context of benefits so people can compare them.

LISTEN TO YOUR AUDIENCE

3 Put yourself in your audience's shoes and understand their perspective. What is important to them? What do they need to know to make the decision they're trying to make?

USE GRAPHICS

4 Numbers are hard to grasp. Use graphical elements to help people visualise numbers and compare pros and cons at a glance.

BE UPFRONT ABOUT UNCERTAINTIES

5 State what you know and what you don't know. Explain what you're doing to find out more and when you expect to have that information.

INFORM BUT DON'T PERSUADE

6 Give people the information they need in a way that helps them weigh up the evidence for themselves, and trust them to make their own decisions. It's not our role to decide for them.