

The Purpose and Process of Cognitive Testing

One of the most useful techniques available to report sponsors who want to test materials with their audience is cognitive testing. Cognitive testing is an interview method for investigating the thought processes and reactions that people have as they read information, explore options, and make decisions. The method was originally developed as a tool for selecting and refining survey questions and response options. More recently, it has been adapted to test health-related report materials in general and quality reports in particular.

Cognitive testing of quality reports involves conducting one-on-one interviews with a small sample of people who are representative of your report's intended audience. These one-on-one interviews, which typically last about 1 to 1½ hours, give people the opportunity to discuss specific elements of your report, including tables, figures, and the language used to explain technical concepts.

This section addresses the following questions:

[Why Is Cognitive Testing Useful?](#)

[How Is Cognitive Testing Conducted?](#)

[How Is Cognitive Testing Different From Usability Testing?](#)

[Recommending Reading on Cognitive Testing](#)

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