

Appendix C – Think Aloud Protocol

1. Introduction of interviewer, study title and importance

Title: Involving patients and clinicians in a pilot randomised clinical trial of spinal manual therapy versus nerve root injection for lumbar radiculopathy: a patient and public involvement project

Importance: Our goal is to enhance the quality and relevance of the SALuBRITY trial by collaborating and involving patients and clinicians, whose lived experiences and expertise offer invaluable insights into lumbar radiculopathy and its treatment.

2. Goal of think aloud protocol

The think aloud protocol gives insights to the difficulties encountered while reading the patient trial information documents. It is not about judging your task performance, we rather aim for receiving information about the language, comprehensibility and potential missing information of the trial documents.

3. Explanation of the think aloud protocol

In the think aloud protocol, we will ask you to simply say out loud whatever comes into your mind as you read aloud the patient study information document. The task will be video and audio recorded (through Zoom), and only the PPI project team will have access to the recording. One project team member will take notes to contribute to the digitally recorded material and may remind you to “keep thinking out loud or speaking your thoughts”, if you lapse into silence. Discussion about difficult or confusing sections will take place after completion of the task. It may help you to remember that you are teaching us about the quality of the documents from your perspective and advising us on how the documents could be better.

4. Give an example of the think aloud protocol

I will give an example of the think aloud protocol to help you get familiarized with the process.

Example: I read through a patient information document, we received from the research department of Balgrist about drinks containing polyphenol and the influence on the immune system and muscular growth.

5. General instructions

Feel free to stop the task if you feel uncomfortable.

Do you have any questions about the process?

Please keep thinking out loud (or speaking your thoughts).

You can begin the process.

6. Instructions after task completions

Thank you for participating in this think aloud exercise.

How did you feel while performing the task?

Do you have any feedback related to the task?

Do you have any questions or are there any parts of the document you want to talk about?