Editor’s response to ‘Just to be sure’

I appreciate Dr Alraek’s concern, and always welcome feedback from readers. His point is well taken, as one of the Editor’s main roles is to ensure that papers do not deceive their readers, particularly in their titles. This phrase ‘double blind’ drew my attention, too, when accepting the paper, but I reminded myself that there are actually six agents that can be blinded in a clinical trial: patient, therapist, other care provider, assessor, data entry clerk and statistician; and the term ‘double blind’ is sadly used by different authors as a kind of shorthand to mean different things. There are plenty of other examples where it indicates the study is ‘patient- and assessor-blind’.

It seemed unfair to compel this author to use the term in the way that Dr Alraek—and I—would prefer, but I promise to try to persuade authors about this in future. The best solution is for authors to specify exactly who was blinded.

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Adrian White

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