

President's Message

Dear EMWA Members,

EMWA's spring conference will offer, once again, an impressive variety of workshops, expert seminar series (ESS), lectures, networking meetings, and a symposium on the important topic of the real-world evidence. Our members, whatever their degree of experience, will find excellent opportunities in Vienna to further develop their skills and knowledge. However, EMWA is far more than a pure training organisation: it is an invaluable platform to interact, share expertise, and inspire each other. Together, we can tailor EMWA to our need and shape our professional role through EMWA. Not only does our association benefit from members who are willing to share their expertise and support new ideas, but also supporting EMWA can bring in return benefits to the volunteers in terms of career and personal development. The EMWA Professional Development Programme (EPDP), ESS, webinars, journal, special interest groups (SIGs), working groups, ambassador programme, public relations: these are just a few examples of how giving back is always also an opportunity to grow!

At the very beginning of my career in medical writing, a colleague introduced to me EMWA and the EPDP opportunities. I remember how inspired I was from my first conference: the practical tips learnt at the workshops, the spirit of sharing experience and networking, the informal atmosphere, new friends ... I came back with plenty of ideas for my everyday professional life, albeit my working field, pharmacovigilance (PV), was not yet a recognised medical writing area. EMWA gave me an excellent training in medical writing skills and motivated me to give back when I gained sufficient experience. I started offering PV writing trainings and liaised with other members to coordinate our efforts. Interacting with workshop participants of different degrees of expertise enriched me from a personal and a professional point of view. In my workshops, I aimed to raise awareness about the professional role of medical writers in PV. Shortly later, I was asked to organise together with another EMWA member the symposium on risk-benefit evaluation in 2015: this event brought us together with another colleague, who led the establishment of a PV SIG. Since then, this group has been making constant efforts to develop new workshops, offer updates, and enable discussions with regulators through ESS sessions. All of

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these activities have played a major role in strengthening the professional role of PV writers and the position of EMWA in public discussions. Whenever I contributed to enhance the PV offer for our members, I also benefited in return for my own growth. And on top of this, during the journey through various EMWA activities, I have found very good friends!

EMWA is addressing other hot topics, such as regulatory public disclosure, medical devices, and predatory publishing, through dedicated SIGs and working groups. Recently, after the successful webinar on veterinary medical writing, things have started moving for this area. Our journal is launching a section dedicated to veterinary medical writing, which will enhance the visibility of this professional area and ease

networking. At the same time and independently from this initiative, the Executive Committee invited a few veterinary writers we were aware of, to get together in Vienna and establish a SIG in veterinary medical writing. Further members learnt about this initiative by word of mouth and expressed their interest in contributing to the activities, regardless of their degree of experience. The number of people involved so far is still limited, but their potential is very high: this SIG will be an exciting opportunity to tailor EMWA to the need of our veterinary writing members and to help them shape their professional role.

See you in Vienna at another inspiring conference!

Tiziana von Bruchhausen
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Getting Your Foot in the Door

How Sam Hamilton did it

I have always written. At primary school, I wrote imaginative stories, and delighted in my regular “10 out of 10” scores in English language, that had me reading my work aloud to my enraptured classmates. At secondary school, my writing became more formulaic to serve the needs of the “exam machine”. As an undergraduate scientist, I enjoyed the discipline of melding theoretical arguments with crisply communicated evidence-based science. In my academic research associate days, I discovered that I wrote (for charities) and spoke well (on local radio) in communicating science and medicine to the public – something that I did just for fun. I was awarded a grant from the Committee on the Public Understanding of Science to develop my skills in this area. Then, having dismissed that crazy notion, I moved into the clinical trials industry.

Throughout my time as a clinical research associate, I wrote manuscripts for my company – just for fun and to keep my writing hand in. By now you may have guessed that this was all heading in one direction – but I didn’t know that for quite a number of years. My “getting your foot in the door” moment came as a stressed international clinical project manager, pregnant with my first child, and generally too busy to think rationally. In a rare quiet moment, I realised I could not keep up the pace, and be a competent employee and sane parent. In that serendipitous moment, I finally realised that medical writing had been staring me in the face.¹ I talked to my manager, and with his blessing, I started working in my CRO’s Medical Writing department for the wonderful Nicky Dodsworth.² I had finally come home – and the rest is history...

References

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