

Medical Writing

Editing

Medical writing is an umbrella term that involves not only writing but also editing and translating medical texts between different languages. While some of us will work specifically as editors in medicine or science, editing skills are paramount to medical writers, translators, and communicators in general.

The success of the Writing Better Workbook published in the spring 2017 issue of *Medical Writing* (Volume 26, Issue 1 at <http://journal.emwa.org/writing-better/>) underscored the importance of improving both our writing and editing skills as medical writers. With this goal in mind, we put together this issue on editing including articles that cover the essential aspects of editing and practical tips to implement on a day-to-day basis. The first articles are organised in a workbook style including exercises on proofreading, macroediting, and editing for non-native speakers of English. The following offer practical tips on microediting, editing after translations, giving feedback to medical writers, and the implications of a certification in editing. We brought together experienced editors from different fields who contributed with state-of-the-art information on each of these topics.

Naila Zaman opens this issue with a step-by-step guide to become a bullseye proofreader with the ability to identify and remedy grammatical, typographical, and spelling errors in medical content. **Krithika Muthukumaran** puts emphasis on “How clear is the story?” to ensure clarity and flow while keeping in mind the intended aim of the article and readership making the story powerful and effective. EMWA’s workshop leader **Kari Skinningsrud** covers the challenges and good practices when editing texts written

by non-native speakers of English. In the following article, the highly experienced **Barbara Grossman** and **Marian Hodges** put together a structured and methodical approach to ensure both consistency and accuracy in delivering a high-quality product in their article “Microediting: Details matter.” **Laura Collada Ali, Paz Gómez Polledo, and Claire**

Harmer talk about “Revision: Parameters and practices within the translation industry” and how these practices are paramount and differ from merely editing in English. **Bridget Pfefferle** highlights the importance of giving feedback as an editor and practical insights to leverage this soft skill. Finally, **Lillian Sandø**, one of the few BELS-certified EMWA members, writes about her experience with the exam and the relevance of this certification for both medical writers and editors.

In a similar fashion to excelling at our writing skills, editing and its nuances should be at the core of our working habits as medical writers. Every article included in this issue tackles a different aspect of this practice. However, I would like to highlight one that, in my opinion, should be at the top and many times is underestimated: keeping our audience in mind at all times. In academia, most often we aim to just get our results out there, and that’s why most academic papers are incredibly long, complex, and hard to read. One of the primary skills that we should train when transitioning from academia to medical writing is the ability to make complex content readable and tailored to our target audience, whoever that might be.

Finally, we nowadays have technological development on our side with tools like Grammarly (among others) that help us improve our writing skills and even check for plagiarism while we write or edit. Tools such as these are widely available online and facilitate writing and editing. However, we should not rely solely on them but use them as learning resources. Our writing and editing skills should become a habit to the point that we make use of our bullseye even when writing emails, putting together a presentation, or submitting our résumé for a job application.

A great medical writer never rests. Enjoy this issue!

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