



News and Notes from the World of Medical Writing

EMWA, AMWA, and ISMPP respond to baseless claims about medical writers

EMWA's Special Interest Group on Medical Communication initiated a reply to an article that made unfounded derogatory remarks about medical writers (MWs). Without providing any evidence, in an article about the development of randomised clinical trials in oncology (doi:10.1001/jamaoncol.2021.0379), the authors Del Paggio JC, Berry JS; Hopman WM et al. state:

There is reason to be concerned that medical writers may unduly influence the interpretation of trials. Additionally, their role is contrary to accepted scientific principles whereby first authors should take responsibility for writing their own manuscripts. This is an issue that requires serious discussion by clinicians and journal editors, as it is unlikely that medical writers have a neutral effect on the clinical trial reporting.

In the same section, they insinuate that the involvement of MWs in oncology RCTs is violating the authorship criteria of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.

The authors of the letter to the editor (Schindler T, Marchington J, Flores G; doi:10.1001/jamaoncol.2021.3341) point out that contrary to the accusations, studies have shown that the involvement of MWs in preparing manuscripts improves several outcomes, including better adherence to reporting guidelines, more complete reporting of trial results, a greater rate of publication over time, and a lower risk of publication retraction resulting from misconduct. Furthermore, the authors highlight that MWs are highly trained professionals, many with advanced degrees in life sciences, who help scientists achieve clear, objective, and understandable descriptions of study data. The letter adds that MWs are trained in good publication practice and that their

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organisations have developed principles of ethical conduct.

The letter to the editor was endorsed by leaders of three organisations – Beatrix Doerr for EMWA, Susan Krug for the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA), and Rob Matheis for the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP). This showcases the importance of ongoing alignment and exchange between the different MW organisations. MWs who come across published negative statements about medical communicators should inform the professional organisations to enable adequate responses. For the current case, everybody is welcome to submit further comments on the article page at the *JAMA Oncology* website.

Asian Council of Science Editors holds 7th annual conference

The Asian Council of Science Editors (ACSE) hosted its 7th Annual Conference, themed around “Pandemic Driven Scholarly Publishing: Ways to Ensure Future Resilience and Sustainability”, bringing together industry and academic experts to discuss the current status and future challenges to the Asian publishing industry.


The virtual conference was held August 21, 2021, and more than 200 people took part, including speakers, moderators, panel experts, and participants from a diverse group of countries including China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Pakistan, India, Iran, Australia, Malaysia, Argentina, and Indonesia.

The conference's platinum sponsors (Science Alert, Asian Network for Scientific Information

& Trend MD), gold sponsor (Science International, Asian Digital Library, ASCI Database), Silver Sponsors (SciONE, LiveDNA, and JournalsPedia), and collaborators (APII, AASSA, RCCIIT, NCT, ISMPP, AMWA, EMWA, ICP | UOK, J4R, FUI, and IINAMEI) made it a phenomenal success.

The conference commenced with the opening address of Dr Gazi Mahabubul Alam, chief advisor of the ACSE, followed by four sessions by distinguished speakers.

The first session was on various aspects of scholarly communication, publication, and editorial evaluation during the pandemic. The second session revolved around the topic of new technical tools to facilitate the publishing community. The third session featured five academic experts, who concluded with sharing their side of stories and opinions in facilitating

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pandemic-driven scholarly publishing. The last session looked at solutions, industry tools, and techniques to cope with the rising real-time challenges for the daily routine of editors and publishers. This was followed by a panel discussion on “Distraction, Modernism, and Creativity: Ways to Generate and Implement new Thoughts in Scholarly Publishing”.

For information about the ACSE annual conference, visit: <https://blog.theacse.com/2021/08/28/7th-acse-annual-conference-highlights/>. We would like to thank our esteemed speakers, panelists, and moderators for making this event a great success.