



## Winners of the Geoff Hall Scholarship Essay Competition

The Geoff Hall Scholarships (GHSs) are given in honour of a former President of EMWA. Geoff was a very special person, an extremely valued member of EMWA, and a very good friend to many EMWA members. He firmly believed that the future of EMWA lies in our new and potential members, and so it's a very fitting legacy that we have the scholarship awards in his memory.

The scholarships are awarded annually on the basis of an essay competition, and the title of this year's essay was "Good Medical Writing Saves Lives". There were even more entries than last year, and it was not an easy task to choose just two winning entries. However, two were eventually chosen, and the very worthy winners were Sophia Whitman and Cirsten Verleger.

**Sophia Whitman** obtained degrees in immunology and psychology, and then went on to coordinate studies in the field of health psychology, which gave her an appreciation of the importance of robust research. She then left this career to follow her dream to become a doctor. The reality was very different and she began to look for a career where she could still make a difference to patients' lives without sacrificing the

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quality of her own life. Following the birth of her son, she took part time work as an intern medical writer with Stiglesmedical. She gained a wide range of medical writing experience and was offered a permanent position after 6 months. Sophia tells me, "entering the competition for the GHS was not so much an essay writing exercise, but more like a personal mission to justify the incredibly hard decision I took to leave medicine. I also found the process of writing the essay had crystallised what I enjoyed most about medical writing and facilitated my decision to take the next step along my career path".

**Cirsten Verleger** trained as a doctor in Germany, and then went to the UK and France to work as a junior doctor. She had been in love with foreign languages since her adolescence, and working in the UK and France brought this love to full blossom and led her to change careers to become a translator for medical and pharmaceutical texts

with a degree in business translation. Cirsten explains, "Since I experience the importance of good medical writing on a daily basis during my work as a translator, I couldn't agree more with the title of this year's GHS Award: Good Medical Writing Saves Lives. I know first-hand how easily a message can become ambiguous by grammatical carelessness and I am passionate about well-structured texts that help the reader to follow the narrative in the best possible way. Being one of the two winners of this year's award is first of all a great honour for me. It is also very encouraging and a wonderful jump-start into my new career as a medical writer. I am very much looking forward to regularly attending the EMWA conferences and to engaging fully in EMWA's rich training programme in the upcoming years."

Sophia's and Cirsten's winning essays are presented overleaf, and we wish them the very best at the start of their very promising medical writing careers. For those of you inspired by their achievements, this year's essay title is "Creative Medical Writing: An Oxymoron?"

I hope to read your essays soon! Bestest.

**Lisa**