

# Medical Writing Humour

SECTION EDITOR



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## Cover letters and Santa Claus

To celebrate the festive season, we'd like to share with you the elves' cover letter. The target journal was the *The Polar Express*, which has an enviably high impact factor. Santa Claus is its editor-in-chief.

We run medical writing courses for PhD students at Copenhagen University,<sup>1</sup> and *Cover Letters* is one of the most popular sessions. To spark a lively discussion, we provide tips and tricks, useful phrases, and inspirational examples,<sup>2</sup> and then we ask participants to come with their own suggestions.

This cover letter from elves won the prize for this year's most entertaining suggestion.

The elves followed our guidelines:

- Keep it short and simple (max one page).
- Present the submission.
- Set the context and describe the current state of the field.
- Identify the knowledge gap.
- Describe the problem and how it was solved.
- Highlight the novelty and relevance for readers of the journal.
- State that the manuscript is not being considered for publication elsewhere.
- Suggest experts in the field qualified to carry out the review.

Dear Santa Claus,

We are pleased to submit this manuscript to be considered for publication in *The Polar Express*.

Since forever, Santa Clauses all over the world have struggled to deliver Christmas presents in time. The problem has only grown over the last decades with the increasing number of small children. We therefore feel our finding is timely and highly relevant.

We have developed a model for optimised gift wrapping, which will enable an elf to wrap a gift in less than one second, and with aesthetic perfection.

We genuinely believe that our finding will make the world a better place and that it would be of particular interest to all Santa-believers.

The paper is original work, has not been published before, and is not being considered for publication elsewhere either in printed or electronic form.

If the paper is to be considered for publication in *The Polar Express*, we would like to suggest Rudolph and the Grinch as reviewers of our work. We look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,  
The Elves



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### References

1. Moller C. New medical writing course in Copenhagen: Increasing chances of publication for non-native speakers. *The Write Stuff*. 2007;16(1):8–9.
2. Langdon-Neuner E. About cover letters for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. *The Write Stuff*. 2010;19(3):184–7.
3. Cover letters and "Arctic Monkeys". Christine Møller: *Medical Writing*. 2020;29(1):82.

### Acknowledgement

We'd like to thank Cathrine Munk Scheuer for allowing us to share her letter with EMWA readers. The prize was previously awarded to Tin-Quoc Nguyen for *Cover letters and "Arctic Monkeys"*.<sup>3</sup>

### Christine Møller BA, Dip Ed

Christine started her career as a Liberal Studies lecturer in the UK. After moving to Denmark, she taught English and worked for the British Council. Until recently she was Assistant Editor of *APMIS (Journal of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology)*. She now teaches courses in medical writing.

### Bobby Brown BSc, PhD

Bobby studied Biochemistry at the University of Glasgow and has a PhD in Plant Molecular Genetics. He worked for over 20 years as a technician and postdoctoral research scientist. Currently he is a freelance medical writer and regularly edits manuscripts written by non-native English speakers.