



Open Science and Open Pharma

As well as accelerating scientific progress, open science has the potential to improve confidence in science – and trust in evidence from the pharmaceutical industry. This special issue on open science and Open Pharma brings together perspectives from medical writers, publishers, and scientists, including those with lived experience of the importance of accessibility.

Open science can best be defined as the practice of science across all STEM disciplines such that others can collaborate and contribute, and where research data and processes are freely available, under terms that enable reuse, redistribution, and reproduction. This includes peer-reviewed publications, data repositories, workflow and

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collaboration tools, and science policies and mandates.

Open access publication ensures that the highest quality, peer-reviewed evidence is available to anyone who needs it, anywhere in

the world. This issue focuses on how open access and plain language summaries improve transparency, advance medical science and ultimately improve patient care. Focus will also be given to how Open Pharma, a group of pharmaceutical companies and other research funders – alongside healthcare professionals, regulators, patients, publishers, and other stakeholders in healthcare – are driving towards this goal.

Alison Chisholm summarises the key points from a recent Open Pharma symposium held at the 2022 annual conference of the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers. Open access matters to the increasingly diverse range of stakeholders involved in taking new discoveries from the



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bench to the bedside. The logical next step is understandability in its broadest sense – ensuring that research findings are published in a way that can be understood as widely as possible.

In our second article, **Shalini Dwivedi** and **Vidhi Vashisht** describe open access initiatives from a range of stakeholders and review the growing importance of plain language summaries (PLSs) in improving the transparency of medical research.

The growing importance of communicating research in widely understandable language is reflected in the development of different document types for different purposes. **Sarah Griffiths** and colleagues review the varied terminology used to describe the three main types of document communicating in accessible language and change to make a case for harmonisation.

Even with immediate open access to research results in understandable language, people with disabilities face unique barriers to information access. The author **Jeffrey Ricker**, who is completely blind, explains how he faces obstacles every day owing, in part, to electronic documents designed primarily for those with vision. He also provides practical tips and resources for medical writers on writing for people with disabilities.

Data sharing is an important principle of open science that has powerful potential to increase trust in published research. For medical research, ethical considerations place important constraints on the sharing of patient data, and **Eniola Awodiya** and **Joana Osório** evaluate how pharmaceutical companies are seeking to strike the right balance between patient privacy and transparency.

Being free to access is of no value if content is not discoverable. The term grey literature is used to describe a wide range of different information that is produced outside traditional publishing and distribution channels. Typically, a lack of indexing or tagging with uniform metadata means that the grey literature is not easily discoverable. In our fifth article, **Toby Green** delivers a call to action to medical writers and communicators to engage with these rich and diverse sources of information.



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As medical communicators, we want to know that the research we are communicating has been discovered and used. Digital and social media content are a natural source of information for patients and healthcare professionals alike, but accurate and independently verified measurement of their use and value remains challenging. **Tomas Rees** critically evaluates measures of the impact of publications and how these

can generate insights to inform future publication planning.

As a takeaway message, medical writers and communicators have a critical role to play in helping to advance open science publication principles and best practices. Much progress has been made in the past 10 years, but there is much more to do.

In addition to these theme-related articles, we hope that you will enjoy other content,

including the 2021 salary survey from over 400 EMWA members. We would like to close by thanking all the authors who have contributed articles to this themed issue and the editorial team at *Medical Writing* for making it possible. We hope you enjoy these diverse perspectives on important developments for science, the pharmaceutical industry, and ultimately for the patients we are here to serve.

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Martin is a highly experienced, commercially focused, and innovative senior academic publishing executive, with global expertise gained from working with private and public scientific, technical, and medical publishing companies. He is a former Global Director at Nature Partner Journals, Past Secretary of the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals, and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. Martin has extensive international expertise working with universities, research organisations, and academic researchers. His core focus is the strategic and business development for open access and open science publishing.



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Tanya Stezhka spent 7 years as a Commissioning Editor followed by work as a Senior Editor for Taylor & Francis Medical before moving to a Senior Account Manager role at Oxford PharmaGenesis in 2020. Tanya studied Biology at the University of Manchester then completed her MRes in Clinical Science at the University of Liverpool. Tanya's involvement with Open Pharma allows her to stay connected with trends in publishing and the pharmaceutical industry.



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Chris Winchester is CEO of Oxford PharmaGenesis, an award-winning HealthScience communications consultancy with over 500 employees in Europe, North America, and Asia Pacific. Chris studied Biochemistry at St Catherine's College, University of Oxford, leaving with a DPhil in 1997. He is a Co-founder of Open Pharma, a Director of Oxford Health Policy Forum, an Associate Fellow of Green Templeton College, University of Oxford, a Director of the Friends of the National Library of Medicine, and a past Chair of the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals.

THE 2021 EMWA

Salary and Freelance Rates Survey

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