

President's Message

As I write this, 2020 is drawing to a close. Although it has been an enormously challenging year, I want to take a moment to recognise a high point – the successful completion of EMWA's first virtual conference. What a milestone and major achievement for a membership-driven organisation! Thank you to all volunteers who made this happen!

We had more than 300 registrants from 27 countries, spread over five continents, celebrating the diversity of EMWA. We had top-notch speakers with great presentations, but what thrilled me most was the interaction amongst the attendees. What made EMWA's face-to-face conferences unique was the kind and welcoming atmosphere. Never would I have thought that we could transport this to a virtual environment. But indeed, at the networking reception we had so much fun together, chatting about which country has the best wine and food, running over time for one hour, that we basically forgot that we were not able to see each other in person. During the first session the next day, Getting into Medical Writing, there was such a friendly atmosphere in the chat that people felt comfortable asking questions and giving recommendations based on their experiences. With this, attendees not only benefitted from the experience of the speakers, but from the collective brain power of nearly 100 attendees. The same friendly and collaborative atmosphere was also present throughout the other presentations, and seeing some faces and some names in the chat several times over the day surprisingly made you feel connected, even if we did not have the chance to meet in person.

Thank you to all participants who made this happen – thank you for your kindness, it was great seeing you at least virtually. Thank you to all workshop leaders, the Head Office, and everybody else involved in organising the conference! Thank you also to Martin Delahunty and Chris Winchester, along with our conference director Slávka Baróniková, for the excellent organisation of the symposium. I hope that the conference has left you inspired, motivated, and energised.

In addition to preparing the conference, we have worked on establishing new connections in the field of medical writing / communications. Our conference director Slávka has engaged Publication Plan and Retraction Watch as media partners, which will increase EMWA's visibility. Furthermore, new connections have been developed through our AMWA-EMWA-ISMP Joint

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Position Statement on medical publications, preprints and peer review that is currently under external review by different stakeholders and organisations. And Cemile Jakupoglu, co-chair of our Veterinary Medical Writing Special Interest Group, has established first contacts with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) – one of their members likely speaking at the first Veterinary Expert Seminar in Spring 2021.

This leads me to our last expert seminar on safety reporting for medical devices. Albeit this is a new area for EMWA, we had more than 50 registrants. This shows the interest in this emerging field and all presenters were in agreement that this field will benefit from the skills of medical writers/ communicators. We will continue to provide you with training options in this area.

More good news: in terms of training, I am very happy to inform you that through the huge efforts made by one of our EMWA members, Stéphane Romet, his colleagues at work, and with the help of our Honorary Secretary Claire Harmer, EMWA is now Datadock-registered. This is a major milestone, as it means that EMWA members based in France will be able to apply for a subsidy to attend EMWA conferences and participate in training activities as part of their allocated continuous professional development costs. For further information, contact the Head Office at info@emwa.org.

Have a good start to the New Year, and stay safe and healthy!

Beatrix Doerr