

# President's Message

## The road ahead

**W**elcome to the latest issue of *Medical Writing*. Following our record-breaking Spring conference in Valencia, Spain, which saw an unprecedented number of attendees, I am both humbled and excited to address you as the new President of EMWA.

The Valencia conference was a testament to the strength and dedication of our EMWA community. With just shy of 500 participants, the energy and enthusiasm were palpable, marking a significant milestone as our association looks to the future to develop, strengthen, and grow.

Our schedule at the conference was jam-packed. We had 49 face-to-face training workshops, four expert discussion groups, expert seminars in three key areas, a full day symposium, early morning, lunchtime, and evening short seminars, the Freelance Business Forum, and a full day of information, talks, and discussions on how to get into medical writing. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the workshop leaders, speakers, organisers, and attendees who contributed to making this event an outstanding success. The high turnout and the quality of interactions reaffirm our commitment to fostering a collaborative and supportive environment for medical writers across Europe and beyond.

No one attending the conference, whether in person or online, would have missed the overarching theme: artificial intelligence (AI) in medical writing. As a profession, we have come a long way in the past 12 months. We have moved beyond our initial fears to working out where we as individuals, companies, and EMWA members might fit into this new normal that is starting to emerge. It was stated that "AI will not take your job, but someone using AI will." I'm not sure it's so simple. Scientific rigour, critical analysis, a deep understanding of data, and the ability to target the right audience remain essential skills and no machine will replace the empathy and diplomacy required to communicate with cross-functional teams of individuals. We need to spot

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what AI tools do not uncover, and when they produce erroneous output and fabrications. It is therefore just as important that EMWA continues to develop educational activities in standard scientific, medical writing skills as well as supplementary activities as we learn the tools of the future.

Looking ahead, we are embarking upon an ambitious 5-year strategic plan aimed at strengthening our association and expanding our reach. One of the key initiatives is the launch of a new, user-friendly website. This platform will serve as a comprehensive resource for members, providing easy access to educational

materials, industry updates, and networking opportunities. It is designed to support our current members in their professional development and to facilitate greater engagement within our community, as well as promoting EMWA and our profession to future medical writers.

Additionally, the Executive Committee is soon to nominate the new Membership Officer. This position will be crucial in ensuring that we



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## EMWA's Switzerland hub

continue to meet the evolving needs of our members and support our much-valued volunteers. EMWA would not be the association it is today without the dedication of hundreds of volunteers who provide training, engage on social media, support special interest groups (SIGS) and subcommittees, and promote the medical writing profession to students. The Membership Officer will focus on enhancing member engagement, addressing concerns, and fostering a welcoming environment for new and existing members alike. This initiative aligns with our commitment to value-driven membership and continuous improvement.

Naturally, our strategic plan also emphasises the importance of professional development and education. We will continue to expand our



workshop, webinar, and seminar programs, offering a wide range of topics that cater to the diverse interests and needs of our members. Furthermore, we are committed to supporting the growth of our SIGS, which provide valuable platforms for specialised knowledge exchange and collaboration as well as that of our local EMWA groups: country-based initiatives to facilitate local networking, discussions, information sharing and the dissemination of best practices in a given country or geographic area.

As we move forward, I encourage all members to take an active role in EMWA's initiatives. Your participation and feedback are invaluable as we strive to enhance our services and support the professional growth of our community, expanding our reach through digital platforms, and fostering an inclusive environment where every voice is heard and valued.

As we embark on this new chapter, I am reminded of the words of a former EMWA president, over 10 years ago: "The spirit of true sharing of experience and lasting friendship [is

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what defines EMWA]". This sentiment continues today. Let us uphold these values and work together to strengthen the association that we have grown to love and depend on.

Thank you for your continued commitment to EMWA. Together, we will build on our successes and achieve new milestones in the years to come.

Warm regards,

**Sarah Tilly**

President, European Medical Writers Association (EMWA)

**Acknowledgement:** The above was written with the assistance of ChatGPT, of course, never left alone but always with the EMWA President in the loop. Needless to say, ChatGPT was not able to output any of the more specific, personal messaging in this welcome message. I challenge you to try to guess what is ChatGPT-created and what is EMWA President-created!