

Advancing the Medical Writing Profession:

the Joint Position Statement on the Role of Professional Medical Writers

A wintry London in January saw the release of the first joint position statement on the role of the professional medical writer (page 7). But why do we need such a statement and what does it say? The Executive Committee identified the need to update our guidelines on medical writing, and Sam Hamilton approached Art Gertel and me in May last year about the possibility of a joint position statement endorsed by both the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) and EMWA. When the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP) also said that they would come on board, we knew we were onto something. Eight months later, at the 2017 European meeting of ISMPP, the AMWA–EMWA–ISMPP Joint Position Statement on the Role of Professional Medical Writers was launched.

The time was right to review our organisations' existing guidance, which dated back five years or more.¹⁻³ As well as taking account of updated guidelines from professional bodies around the world, we were able to cite new evidence regarding medical writers' understanding of best practice guidelines^{4,5} and the value of our profession to evidence-based medicine.⁶⁻⁹ Indeed, more evidence of our value is emerging all the time.¹⁰

More importantly, we were able to unite three leading professional organisations with a combined membership of over 6,500 to speak with one voice for medical writers and communicators around the world. The Joint Position Statement was drafted and reviewed by representatives of AMWA, EMWA, and ISMPP, located in Europe, North America, and Asia, and supersedes previous position statements and guidelines from participating organisations. Preparation of the Joint Position Statement was possible thanks to the efforts of four members of the Writing Committee (Art Gertel, AMWA; Chris Winchester, EMWA; Karen Woolley and Yvonne Yarker, ISMPP), the organisational reviewers, and all those involved in the original position statements of the three organisations.

The Joint Position Statement will be presented at the EMWA Congress in Birmingham in June, in a special lunchtime session on Wednesday 3 May, and during an Expert Seminar Series earlier that day, entitled "Improving quality and maximising value: professional medical writers and peer-reviewed publications".

References

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