

AMWA–EMWA–ISMPP Joint Position Statement on the Role of Professional Medical Writers

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Introduction

This joint position statement of the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA), the European Medical Writers Association (EMWA), and the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP) describes the appropriate role of professional medical writers in the development of medical and scientific publications, including:

- articles and supplementary content (eg, video abstracts) for publication in peer-reviewed journals
- abstracts, posters, and oral presentations for dissemination at scientific congresses.

This joint position statement is in line with up-to-date guidelines from several other international organisations.^{1–13}

Responsibilities of professional medical writers

Professional medical writing support helps authors and sponsors to disclose their research in peer-reviewed journals and at scientific congresses in an ethical,¹⁴ accurate,^{15,16} and timely¹⁷ manner, with the ultimate aim of advancing patient care. Professional medical writers have extensive knowledge of ethical publication guidelines.^{18,19} When assisting authors with communication of the results of company-sponsored research, they must:

- follow Good Publication Practice (GPP3) guidelines and International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recommendations^{1,2}
- consult appropriate reporting guidelines (eg, CONSORT²⁰ and others collated by the EQUATOR network²¹)
- ensure that the authors and sponsors are aware of their obligations under these guidelines^{1,2,20,21}
- keep up to date with advances in medical communications ethics and best practices.

Responsibilities of authors who collaborate with professional medical writers

Authors who choose to collaborate with a professional medical writer on manuscripts or congress presentations must:

- ensure that they, as authors, have access to all relevant information (eg, protocols, statistical analysis plans, statistical analyses, and clinical study reports)
- provide intellectual input before writing commences and throughout content development
- ensure that the final text fully reflects the views of, and is approved by, all authors
- affirm the appropriateness of the final choice of journal or congress
- acknowledge the provision of medical writing support, including the nature of the support, and the names, highest relevant qualification (eg, degrees or professional credentials), and affiliation of the professional medical writer accountable for the support provided, and acknowledge the funding sources for the provision of medical writing support (see Box)
- recognise as a co-author all contributors (including a professional medical writer) who meet the ICMJE authorship criteria.¹

Example of template disclosure statement for professional medical writing support

“The authors thank [name and qualifications] of [company, city, country] for providing medical writing support/ editorial support [specify and/or expand as appropriate], which was funded by [sponsor, city, country] in accordance with Good Publication Practice (GPP3) guidelines (<http://www.ismpp.org/gpp3>).”

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