



# Journal Europe

The Newsletter from the European Medical Writers Association  
Chapter of the American Writers Association

Spring, 1994

## Celebrating Success and Meeting New Challenges

Leen Ashton-Vanherle

At the business meeting that preceded our third annual conference in February, the many changes that EMWA has met over the past year came to light. The most striking change is our new identity as a chapter of the American Medical Writers Association. The affiliation became official in March of 1993. Last year also saw the birth of the *AMWA Journal Europe* with the help of Connie Grogan and Liz Healing, the Freelance Directory compiled by Linda Dearden, the EMWA Promotional Brochure created by Geoff Hall and Debbie Taylor, and the realization of the Third Annual EMWA Meeting managed by Kate Beardshall and last year's president Aaron Bernstein. The efforts of all EMWA members have helped us grow in maturity as an organization that encourages professional growth in the field of biomedical communication. And grow in number! Our membership doubled to over a hundred members in the past year. These advances would not have been possible without the efforts of the EMWA executive committee and the leadership of Aaron Bernstein. Congratulations! And thank you for preparing the way as I set out in 1994 as new president of EMWA.

Our chaptership with AMWA has many advantages. AMWA has more than 50 years of experience in the field of biomedical communication. A glance at the agenda for a typical annual AMWA

conference shows that their 4000 members are willing to share their expertise in manuscript editing, audio-visual communication, regulatory affairs, teaching, freelance careers, and public relations and marketing. A particularly valuable advantage of our AMWA membership is being able to take advantage of the AMWA training programs in these fields and earn certification in specific areas of interest. Our partnership with AMWA will not only allow us to take advantage of the training programmes offered in the U.S.A., but also to facilitate development of our own programmes for certifying members in Europe. A major challenge in my year of presidency will be to help bring EMWA closer to this goal. Discussions among EMWA members and with members of the AMWA executive committee AMWA in the U.S.A. will be key to the realization of this objective.

Of course, our new status as an AMWA Chapter is not without its problems. Integration has presented difficulties after two years of existence as an independent organization, and the great distance between Europe and North America imposes limitations on communication. There are still some agreements to be finalized such as name giving (AMWA becoming International) and agreement between EMWA and AMWA on membership fees. Many of the problems that EMWA faces have been communicated to the executive committee of AMWA by letter, and this year's annual conference in Phoenix will serve as a practical stage to continue our work on harmonization.



Communication is key to an organization that fosters communication. At the business meeting, alternatives for faster communication were discussed. A system is needed to facilitate communication among EMWA members, and communication among EMWA members and AMWA members in North America. One possibility that is being investigated is an electronic network, such as the Internet E-mail System, but we are looking for other possibilities, and suggestions are always welcome.

We are celebrating fast growth of our organization, but this has created a need for a more formal structure, with clearer definitions of the roles of executive committee members. At this year's business meeting, one strategy for approaching this goal was agreed upon: next year, the election process for Secretary, Treasurer and Vice President will be more formal than in the past. At the end of the year, members will be asked to send in a written application for these posts. The application form will be included in our newsletter. The elections for these posts will take place at the 1995 EMWA Meeting.

We ask that members consider how their talents might best be put to work in EMWA. Articles for our newsletter, submissions for our freelance directory, help with an electronic mail system - the choice is yours. We ask especially that you consider possible speakers for next year's conference, and themes and leaders for workshops.

Financial support for the meeting is also sought; perhaps your firm would be willing to support our conference. The Programme Director for next year's meeting is Debbie Taylor. Please contact Debbie or me with your suggestions and inquiries.

Another aspect of our fast growth is how to attract new members. I would like to encourage you to distribute our EMWA Promotional Brochure to prospective members, and spread the news about the many advantages of an EMWA membership. Contact me personally if you would like to receive a packet of brochures for further distribution. Individuals who are interested in EMWA membership should be directed to Remy Brossel, the EMWA Secretary. Remy will add their names to our mailing list, and see to it that membership packages are sent out. Congratulations for a year of great success! With your continued participation, the future of EMWA looks golden.



## **Impressions from the third Annual Meeting of the European Medical Writers Association**

Debbie Taylor

The third annual EMWA meeting was held in Basel, Switzerland, on the 24th and 25th of February, 1994. Over 50 attendees, from 8 countries gathered together at the World Trade Center. The 2-day conference began with a business meeting. Aaron Bernstein, the EMWA president for 1993-94, reviewed EMWA's accomplishments over the past year: the doubling of membership, the publication of the EMWA brochure and the establishment of the EMWA Journal Europe.

The workshops and topics presented during the meeting are summarized below.

Tim Albert, Consultant and Trainer in Written Communications, Tim Albert and Associates, England

### *Brushing up you Style*

Mr. Albert's advice to improve writing techniques was simple yet very effective. "Make your first words count. Space key sentences evenly. Keep long sentences and long words to a minimum. Use the active tense". In other words, ask yourself how you would say it in the pub! He introduced us to "Scenglish", the art and skill of making written communication in science as difficult as possible to comprehend.

Joni Koogler, Writer and Editor at the Univ. of Massachusetts

### *Preparation of a U.S. Investigational New Drug Application*

The comprehensive information packet that Ms. Koogler handed out, included addresses, phone numbers and FAX numbers that are invaluable to those who prepare these documents.

*AMWA Journal Europe*

Joan Nilson, Administrator of the Department of Chapters and Membership of AMWA's Executive Committee

Ms Nilson congratulated the EMWA Executive Committee for the impressive programme offered at the 3rd annual meeting. Remarking on the relationship between EMWA and AMWA, Joan emphasized that the new EMWA/AMWA affiliation will strengthen and broaden the educational programmes of both organizations and that computer technology such as electronic mail, could serve to minimize the geographical distance between the groups.

Dr. Frank Wells, Medical Director, ABPI, London

### *Standards of Clinical Research*

Dr. Wells addressed Clinical Research Standards in the U.K. and fraud with respect to Good Clinical Research Practice. The ABPI (Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry) has produced a series of policy guidelines, edited by Dr. Wells, for those involved in the research, development and marketing of medicines.

Dr. McCulley, Shipley Associates, Basel, Switzerland

### *Managing scientific writing and thinking*

Dr. McCulley emphasized the importance of developing documentation as early as possible and in parallel with the research process. Drafting a document in the planning stages of a project increases accuracy and efficiency.

Dr. Chris Preston, Worldwide Manager of Clinical Documentation, F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd, Basel

### *Clinical trial reports and the ICH process*

The International Committee on Harmonization (ICH) was initiated in 1989 in order to expedite the registration process of pharmaceuticals with respect to



reporting of clinical trials. Dr. Preston, who serves on the ICH's European Union Task Force, presented the current status of the proposal. The proposal was drafted by the 12 members of the European task force and was based on guidelines from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products (CPMP). They focused on producing a document which was concise, structured and which eliminated redundancies. It was reviewed by the FDA and Japan's MHW early this year. A final agreement is expected by November 1995.

Geoff Hall, Editorial Director, Graham and Gilles Communications, UK

*What makes a Medical Story news?*

Stating the subject in the opening words and summarizing the whole story in the opening paragraph are important considerations when writing for the press. Short sentences and short words are essential. A good presentation, a story appropriate to the audience and flexibility increases the likelihood of publication.

Dr. Maurizio Rainisio, Statistics for Research, Basel, Switzerland

*CANDA - Computer-assisted New Drug Application*

The impetus behind the development of CANDAs was to speed up the review process. The FDA now has a draft document for CANDAs guidelines. The agency hopes to eventually automate all NDA reviews using this tool. Dr. Rainisio demonstrated the ease with which a reviewer can access information and review data using his own computer.

Mr. Tim Goggin, Clinical Pharmacology Study Director, F. Hoffmann-La Roche LTD, Basel

*The need to evaluate the quality of life in phase III clinical trials*

Quality of life measurements include physical activity level, psychomotor function and life satisfaction. This type of evaluation serves as a good predictor of patients compliance and has the potential for a useful marketing tool. It can also be used to distinguish among therapies for their safety and efficacy.

Leen Ashton concluded the meeting with the *New President Address*. Her infectious enthusiasm for our growing organization resulted in several volunteers offering their services for next year's meeting. Mr. John Aitken, Clinical Documentation Specialist at F. Hoffmann-La Roche, is the new Vice-President.

The facility and programme were sponsored by F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd (Basel, Switzerland), Hoechst AG (Frankfurt, Germany), Boots Pharmaceuticals (Nottingham, UK), Janssen Research Foundation (Beerse, Belgium) and Zeneca Pharmaceuticals (Alderley Park, UK).



## Requests for articles

Connie Grogan

All of you are professionals in biomedical writing and experts in different technical fields. Won't you share your experience with other EMWA members? Below are some recommendations for types of articles.

### *Regular columns*

- Book reviews. There are many books available on biomedical writing. Many EMWA members are in the pharmaceutical industry, so books on the regulatory process and on preparing regulatory documents could also be useful. Other topics could include medical ethics, biotech glossaries and other reference books. Book reviews should briefly describe the book (content, organization, exercises, etc). Bibliographies covering a defined field are also welcome.
- Write it right. Editors in Europe have the particular challenge of working with English-as-second-language-authors; indeed, EMWA has many English-as-second-language-authors in their constituency. If there is a particular grammatical or stylistic problem that you are struggling with that could be of general interest, I invite you to submit your query. If there is someone in our constituency who would like to serve as Grammar Editor, I invite your participation. For the time being, I will answer queries. Articles on usage, grammar and style in biomedical writing are also requested.
- Meetings, workshops, seminars. Announcements are welcome
- Personal news

- Job announcements. These are encouraged, but contributors should be made aware that our publication schedule is only three times / year.

### *Themes of possible interest to EMWA members*

The list below is not restrictive or exhaustive. Use it to create your own list of possible topics for newsletter articles.

- Electronic Communication
- Editing of statistics
- Lay presentation of a particular biotechnology relevant to biomedical communicators
- Topics in medical ethics
- Author/editor relationships
- Teaching of biomedical writing
- Anonymous survey of incomes for professionals in biomedical writing
- Anonymous survey of the professions represented by EMWA
- Brief Helpful "Hints" on any topic in biomedical writing
- Organizations and roles of writing/editing/documentation departments (publishers, pharmaceutical companies, etc.)
- Key features of preparing a given regulatory document (e.g. IND, NDA)
- Resolution of particular problems in regulatory submissions
- Politics affecting biomedical writers and editors

### *Size of article submissions*

The newsletter format handles short articles better than long ones. I would suggest a length of a type-set quarter-page to a page-and-a-half for most articles.



## Upcoming Meetings

### **8th International Conference of IFSE (International Federation of Science Editors)**

**Science, Culture and Communication for  
the 21st Century  
July 9-13, 1995, Barcelona, Spain**

Barcelona will host the eighth meeting of the International Federation of Science Editors. In a series of seven sessions, leading scientists from academic institutions and the private sector, as well as major figures in science editing and journalism will explore the creative process in science, new communications technologies and their impact; the adequacy of professional training of journalists and editors, how to bring emerging regions into the communication network: major problems in physics, cosmology and biology; how different cultures view science, and remedies for the failure of educational systems to teach science.

#### Location:

the meeting will be held in the building that houses the University of Barcelona's Faculty of Biological Sciences.

#### Registration fees:

fees for the meeting will range from \$150 to \$285, and special hotel rates will be available.

Inquiries should be addressed to IFSE Secretariat at Mario Negri Sud Research Institute, School for Scientific Communication, 66030 S. Maria Imbaro, Italy, Fax +39 872 570 317 or Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Prof. Ricardo Guerrero, Department of Microbiology, University of Barcelona, Av. Diagonal 645, 08028 Barcelona, Spain, Fax +34 3 3341079

People interested to join the IFSE can contact:

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School for Scientific Communication  
Mario Negri Sud Research Institute  
66030 S. Mario Imbaro  
Italy  
FAX: 39 872 570 317, -578 240  
TEL: 39 872 570 316, -303

### **AMWA chapter, Canada Royal York Hotel, Toronto**

#### **Core Workshops**

On Thursday, September 15, 1994, The AMWA Canada Chapter, in conjunction with the Annals of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, will present four AMWA workshops from the Core Curriculum during the annual Royal College meeting. The workshops will be held at the Royal York Hotel, Toronto, site of the 1991 AMWA Annual Conference.

Each workshop will be tailored to the needs of Royal College members but will also be appropriate for non-physician AMWA members as well as non-members who are professional biomedical communicators. The courses are being taught by experienced workshop leaders who are volunteering their time to help authors and editors advance their skills in preparing biomedical articles for publication and in making presentations in front of a group.



The workshops this year are as follows:

- Writing Abstracts (CC-EW): led by Jennifer Smyth, director of regulatory and governmental affairs, Biochem Therapeutic Inc., Laval, Quebec, and Bruce Squires, MD, PhD, editor-in-chief of CMA Publications, Canadian Medical Association, Ottawa;
- Statistics for Medical Writers and Editors (CC-EW): led by Tom Lang, editorial services manager, Department of Scientific Publications, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland Ohio;
- Making Effective Presentations (CC-ED/PRAM): also led by Bruce Squires; and Organizing the Biomedical Paper (CC-EW) (also led by Tom Lang).

For further information and to register, call Ann Bolster at 1-800-663-7336, ext. 2117, from a touch-tone phone or else 1-800-267-9703; or you can fax her at (613) 523-0937. But do it soon: attendance is limited.

### **Don't forget: the AMWA 1994 Annual Conference**

**Phoenix, Arizona  
November 2-5, 1994**

Most of the new workshops introduced last year will be repeated along with a smattering of new ones to keep us abreast of the newest technologies and practices in our fields. AMWA is fortunate enough to be able to offer the same number of workshops in Phoenix as in Atlanta, so the Annual Conference participants will again have an assortment of 77 workshops from which to choose.

For example, Core Curriculum will be expanded slightly with some new electives as well as multiple sessions of these required workshops: *Word Usage and Abusage, Sentence Structure and Patterns, Punctuation for Clarity and Style, Effective Paragraphing, Bibliographic Resources for Medical Communicators, Tables and Graphs, and Improving Comprehension* (nee Readability). Members new to biomedical communications may gain an overview from the comprehensive *Scope of Medical Communications workshop*.

These, plus the Core electives, the Advanced Curriculum and the non-credit workshops promise to offer a full programme that is exciting as ever. AMWA/EMWA members will automatically receive registration forms in the near future.

### **Introducing the Medical Journalists' Association (MJA)**

The Medical Journalists' Association aims to provide channels for the discussion of subjects of common interest to medical journalists to try and improve the quality of medical journalism generally; to try to improve understanding between medical journalists and the health and medical professions, and to provide all feasible forms of assistance to medical journalists in the pursuit of their profession.

They have a membership of over 300, including leading medical journalists who contribute to national, provincial and specialist publications as well as radio and television.

A major benefit of joining the MJA is the social side. Its professional meetings and



award presentations enable members to make useful contacts, exchange information and generally keep in touch with what is happening.

Membership is open to people who are bona fide journalists, authors, or broadcasters, who spend the majority of their working time in writing or broadcasting about medical or health matters.

For further information contact:  
Mrs. Gwen Yates  
Hon. Secretary  
Medical Journalists' Association  
Barley Mow  
185 High Street  
Stony Stratford  
Milton Keynes, MK11 1AP  
UK

### **"Brushing up your style"**

One of the exercises at Tim Albert's workshop on 'brushing up your style' at the recent BMWA meeting in Basel involved re-writing the familiar phrase 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away' into the worst kind of scientific language. Here are some of the offerings:

Supernumerary visitations from medical practitioners may be prevented by the diurnal consumption of frugiverous material.

Supplementary daily dietetic fruit intake (apples) with long-term compliance may statistically significantly reduce clinical dysfunction.

If the object for the dissemination of trees of the apple species is internalised every 24 hours by the oral route it will achieve the objective of preventing the medical physician from visiting the subject.

It is commonly accepted that consumption of the fruiting body of *Fruticus frutiosis* on average of approximately 365 days in any one non-leap year can, in some cases, reduce the number of visits needed to be made by a medical practitioner.

It has been demonstrated that a deciduous fruit consumed on a daily basis will obviate the requirement for visits from your local healthcare provider.

It is perceived that the consumption of at least one piece of fruit, seven times a week at regular 24-hourly intervals would be instrumental in preventing the general practitioner from attending one's place of residence.

It has been demonstrated in previous studies (data on file) that once-daily self-administration per os of a naturally-occurring preparation of fructose, glucose and other reducing sugars, plus malic and ascorbic acid in an encapsulated liquid-in-solid matrix formulation, shows significant clinical benefit as assessed in terms of out-of-hours attendance by registered medical practitioners.



## Bloopers

Most of the following phrases were found in protocols and statistical analyses

- Heart rate was expressed in *bits/minute* (could be the heart rate of a computer fanatic)
- One of the primary efficacy parameters in a trial on prostate cancer was prostate *seize* (sounds painful)
- The percentage of *fallen* nails involved was ... (shame on them; the etymology of this one was difficult to track: the statistical analysis of this study on onychomycosis was based on a German protocol; the German for affected nails is "befallen Nägel", hence the "obvious" translation fallen nails)
- Found in C.V. of two East-European doctors:  
Occupation of wife: Bannister (he probably meant barrister but she must be a wonderful support to him)  
Condition: married (it did not say how serious the condition was)
- The first country to enlist the 500th patient will receive a *price* (no wonder recruitment was slow)

If you come across any similar "enrichments" of the English language, please share them with us.

## Book review:

"How to write a paper" ed. George Hall, BMJ Publishing Group, London, 1994

Liz Healing

This is an excellent little book for anyone writing papers for publication. In its 100 or

so pages it provides a readable, and often entertaining, account of all the stages of writing a paper. It also covers abstracts, case reports, reviews and letters to journals.

Each chapter is written by a different author, but the editor has done an excellent job in ensuring that they don't overlap or leave gaps. He also manages to create a consistent whole without sacrificing individual writing styles. Many of the chapters include useful illustrations of good examples and things to avoid - Richard Smith's section on 'Introductions' even manages to quote my personal-favourite opening sentence of a novel, i.e. Anthony Burgess' memorable: "It was the afternoon of my 81st birthday, and I was in bed with my catamite when Ali announced that the archbishop had come to see me" from his novel *Earthly Powers*, although he does advise that it might not be suitable for a journal article. Michael Doherty (editor of *Annals of Rheumatic Disease*) provides lively examples by advising us to write scientific letters in the style of Raymond Chandler rather than Charles Dickens.

Some readers might be disappointed by the lack of references or suggestions for further reading but I found this a refreshing sign that this is a book based, not on theories, but on years of practical experience and is written by editors and authors who are not afraid to express their own opinions. Since George Hall is an anaesthetist, it is not surprising that several of the contributors are colleagues in this specialty, but its appeal is certainly not restricted to this field.

I can recommend this book wholeheartedly to anyone struggling with, or even considering, writing a paper for publication - what's more it only costs £8.95!





### SMITHKLINE BEECHAM BIOLOGICALS

We are a pharmaceutical company specialised in R&D, production and marketing of vaccines. With the rapid development of new vaccines on an international scale, our Clinical Research & Development department wishes to recruit (m/f):

#### SCIENTIFIC WRITERS (full-time/part-time)

They will be responsible for writing reports and scientific articles, based on clinical trial protocols, destined for internal and external use.

The selected candidates will possess a university degree in science (biology, biochemistry, pharmacy...). They will have a proven experience in the writing and editing of scientific reports/articles in English. They will be perfectly fluent in English (written/spoken) and have a good knowledge of French. Experience in word-processing/computer graphics would be an asset.

If you are interested in these challenging jobs, please send your application with a detailed C.V., to our Human Resources Department, rue de l'Institut 89, 1330 Rixensart, who will consider your application with discretion.

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### JANSSEN RESEARCH FOUNDATION

"Janssen Pharmaceutica is a fully integrated pharmaceutical company with a strong worldwide presence in selected market segments. It is driven primarily by the discovery and development in-house of innovative human medicines."

*(from: Janssen Mission Statement)*

In **International Clinical Research and Development**, the Medical Writing and Editing, a five-member subgroup of the Clinical Data Processing team, is responsible for the preparation of clinical documentation. It collaborates closely with biostatisticians and clinical researchers, and its main activity consists of drafting the clinical part of registration dossiers.

This department is seeking a (m/f):

#### MEDICAL WRITER

##### Your responsibilities:

Mostly writing up clinical trial reports in English - mainly in gastroenterology - on the basis of statistical analyses. Depending on priorities, writing activities may shift to other areas or other types of documents, such as publications.

##### Your profile:

- you have a broad background in the (para)medical or life sciences, including research experience or experience in medical writing in pharmaceutical R&D;
- you have a working knowledge of clinical research, regulatory affairs, biostatistics and word-processing;



- you have flawless English-language skills;
- you have strong communication and analytical skills;
- your work is methodical, efficient and accurate.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please send your application, including a curriculum vitae, to:

Janssen Pharmaceutica,  
Human Resources Department,  
for the attention of Rudi Van den Bergh,  
Turnhoutseweg 30,  
2340 Beerse  
Belgium.



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The role involves having full responsibility and accountability for ensuring the quality and integrity of Clinical Study Reports you write. This involves proactively liaising with a variety of colleagues including physicians, in the production of summary documents and regulatory responses. Coordinating the work of junior staff and

supervising external contractors is an important element of the post.

The successful candidate will be a science graduate with at least 2 years relevant experience including direct medical writing experience. Familiar with producing clinical study reports for regulatory submissions, you will have initiative, excellent communicative skills, have the ability to liaise with and develop good working relationships with staff over a wide range of disciplines.

The salary has been set to attract high calibre candidates, so if you are seeking a challenging career move within a dynamic environment, where your responsibilities will match your experience and talents, then please send/fax your CV, quoting Ref 904, to Sharon Carter-Jones, Sciencetech, The Broadway 15-17, Hatfield, Herts AL9 5RX

Tel: 0707 264311

Fax: 0707 275402

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### **Personal news**

Born to John Aitkin a girl, named Nikita



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