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Varsha

From the (Deputy) Editor's Desk: Life Beyond Clinical Study Reports – An Insight into Other Types of Writing

by Varsha Imber

It all happened after I had attended my second EMWA conference in Dublin. After seeing members volunteering to run workshops, agreeing to write articles for TWS, and taking up various roles on the EMWA Executive Committee (EC), I thought that this looks challenging and maybe I should have a go! Although, at that time, I was doing my Masters degree and had enough on my plate, I knew I would need something else to occupy my time when it was all over. Most people would cherish their "free" time after doing extra studies, but not me! It all happened a few months after completing my Masters. I felt a bit twitchy and before boredom could set in, I decided to contact Julia Forjanic Klapproth to ask if I could get on the EC. Unfortunately, it was impossible at that time, but she forwarded my email to Barry Drees. This is when I thought, "Oh my goodness, what have I let myself in for...I know I will be persuaded to do something for TWS," and I was right! As far as I can remember, Barry called me within a few days to discuss the options available, which were writing an article for TWS, being a copy editor, or the most "prestigious" role of being the Editor, and of course, he "sold" the latter option to me!

Following my conversation with Barry, I was quite excited and went around telling my work colleagues that I was going to be the Editor for TWS. Nevertheless, in the cold light of day, the excitement had worn off somewhat and I felt a bit nervous (okay, very nervous) because I would be responsible for putting a whole issue together (aarrgh!). Then, as the days went by, I did not hear anything from Barry, and I thought (well, secretly hoped!) that maybe he had forgotten about me. But I was wrong, and he did track me down (and in the last issue, my name was mentioned in black and white)! There was no escape, and here I am with my first issue. So, here goes!

Have you ever wondered if there is life beyond writing clinical reports and protocols? If your answer is yes, then fear not as there is light at the end of the tunnel in the form of medical communications-type writing (e.g., publications, medical advertising, medical education)! If, however, your answer to the question posed is no, then still read on, as you may change your mind later!

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Like many, I did not know what medical communications-type writing involved. However, after writing reports and protocols for a long time and hearing some of my friends who had started working for "med comms" agencies (one thing I have learned is that you have to keep up with the lingo!) talking about their new experiences (such as, jet-setting off somewhere exotic, having brain-

storming

The Write Stuff

From the (deputy) editor's desk

meetings in the pub, and the list goes on!), I thought medical communications can't be that bad, can it? So, I decided to take the plunge. After all, if I didn't like it, I could always go back to writing clinical documents.

Although a relatively new recruit in this field, I can tell you that medical communications-type writing is shockingly different from clinical writing. It is challenging (not that clinical writing is not, but in a different manner), it takes one to new depths and you don't have to deal with statistics or statisticians (unless, of course, you like to!). So, in this issue of TWS, I would like to give you an insight into what is available to medical writers who want to do something different, but still use their skills to some extent. There will be a range of articles that will give you tips on how to publish journal articles, tell you what is involved in medical advertising, and give you an insight on how to organise a symposium. In addition, for those of you who missed out, we have a report on the EMWA conference in Montpellier, and we have the usual features, such as the message from the President and meetings of interest.

Well, I can go on forever, but before I end, I have to say that putting this issue together was challenging and hard work, but enjoyable. I now understand how hard Barry works on producing an issue of TWS! Lastly, I would like to say thank-you to everyone who took time out to write articles for this issue (no bribes were offered either!). So, happy reading, folks!

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On another note, most of you will remember Nick, who tragically passed away. Sabine, Nick's widow, recently wrote to Keith with the following message.

"It is hard for me to express just how much EMWA's collective appreciation of Nick has helped us to keep going through this difficult time. On behalf of all of us, I would like to thank everyone at EMWA for the many caring emails, letters and phone calls, and for your generous donation to the Woodland Trust. In their last letter, the Trust informed us that the total amount received for Nick's trust by 30 May was a stunning £1,598.43! There will be a lot of trees planted or tended in Nick's name all over the UK."