

FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

Overcoming Obstacles and Building Bridges in Global Medical Communication

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Medical communicators are tasked with delivering scientific information to numerous stakeholders, including patients, caregivers, providers, researchers, policymakers, and payors, around the world. In recent years, content offerings have expanded beyond traditional scientific publications deliverables, such as abstracts and articles, to include enhancements that are more easily digestible by patients or busy clinicians, such as plain language summaries, infographics, graphical abstracts, and other multimedia formats. Global medical communications is a burgeoning field that involves the delivery of cutting-edge scientific research to a broader global audience. However, medical and scientific articles have historically been published only in English and kept behind journal paywalls, limiting accessibility by the global scientific community. In this special issue of the *AMWA Journal*, we explore some of these issues and consider ways that medical communicators are improving access to scientific data and bridging the gaps between stakeholders around the world.

In the first theme article of this issue, Amanda Xiaoqing Mao, PhD, an experienced bilingual Chinese medical communicator and translator, shares best practices for medical translators to ensure the best possible translations. To begin with, medical translators must possess strong writing skills and have a thorough understanding of medical terminology in both the source and target languages to ensure that a translation accurately conveys the intended message while maintaining the original tone and style. To support their work, medical translators may use existing tools or create their own when needed, such as bilingual glossaries or machine translators. In conclusion, Dr Mao posits that medical translation is an essential component of the global medical communications industry, alongside regulatory writing, scientific publications, health communication, continuing medical education, promotional writing, and grant writing.

In the second theme article of the issue, Jo Gordon of Oxford PharmaGenesis shares information about the history and mission of Open Pharma, which is a non-profit-seeking collaboration that aims to improve the

communication of research sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry. The article offers a wealth of information to medical communicators working in the field of scientific publications about the work and resources of Open Pharma and how they can get involved.

In the third theme article of this issue, Claire Beeby and Eleanor J. Raynsford of Oxford PharmaGenesis and Charles Pollitt of Ipsen present findings of a pilot study that evaluated a Web-based translation tool for translating scientific abstracts and plain language summaries (PLSs). Google Translate was used to translate abstracts and PLSs from 5 medical journal publications into 4 languages: French, German, Mandarin, and Slovenian. Bilingual reviewers with scientific backgrounds were tasked with assessing the translation quality of each abstract and PLS. The authors present the results of their study along with a discussion of their research in context and ways to increase accessibility of scientific content by non-English speakers.

I would like to note that the articles in this issue have been graciously contributed by medical communicators working outside the United States in Europe, Asia, and Australia, thus providing a different perspective on issues that may be important to medical communicators around the world. I invite both our current AMWA members as well as any new readers of our journal from around the world to share feedback about the content and consider contributing their own perspectives on global medical communications to future issues of the *AMWA Journal*.

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