From academic to medical writer

A guide to getting started in medical communications

Written by Dr Annick Moon
Published by Burntsky Ltd

For more information about careers in MedComms see www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
From 2 to 260 in 20 years

A start-up success story

AMICULUM was designed to be different

In 2001, Richard Allcorn and Jenny Putin, two entrepreneurs working in medical education, created a vision for a global healthcare communications, consulting and learning business, which would blend scientific expertise with creative flair. The business, a self-funded start-up based in a spare room of a rented house, has grown steadily year on year and now comprises a global team of over 260 healthcare professionals who work with global pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in some of the most complex and exciting areas of medicine. In spite of this growth, AMICULUM is proud to remain independent and guided by the very same values it was founded on, two decades ago.

Our family

Each AMICULUM agency offers specific expertise but shares a common heritage, vision and philosophy

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https://careers.amiculum.biz/
Continuous learning and professional development is a key feature of life at AMICULUM. The business has developed a comprehensive learning ecosystem named “Curriculum” – which covers a wide range of topics from technical subjects to management skills and leadership. Curriculum promotes professional development for all team members who are invited to get involved both as learners and subject matter experts. It provides a rich and dynamic learning environment for AMICULUM members worldwide.

Learning and development specialist
at AMICULUM

I'm part of the dedicated, in-house team at Curriculum, which ensures we offer employees easy access to both insights from colleagues and curated external resources. We are constantly building our content library and are always open to new ideas for creating learning resources and ways to deliver these to help everyone thrive at work. I believe that AMICULUM's approach to learning and development is world class and a real differentiator for us as a business.

Selected candidates for roles at AMICULUM can now register their interest to access a selection of e-learning content from Curriculum to facilitate their preparations for a future career in healthcare communications and offering a flavour of the quality and extent of support provided to members of the AMICULUM team.

Access the AMICULUM Curriculum

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More careers guides available from www.FirstMedCommsJob.com

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the numerous members of the MedCommsNetworking.com Community and, in particular, to the sponsors of FirstMedCommsJob.com, who have contributed their thoughts and comments during the development of this publication.

If you have any feedback please let us know.

Further copies are available to download directly if you visit www.FirstMedCommsJob.com

Printed copies of this guide are also available if you contact the publishers – support@nextpharmajob.com

From academic to medical writer: a guide to getting started in medical communications

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Moon A. From academic to medical writer. March 2021.
For more information about careers in MedComms, see www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
Foreword to 2021 edition

In the years since we first published this annual careers guide about medical writing in MedComms, the global business has evolved significantly – but the basics remain the same. MedComms agencies are looking for individuals with:

- a genuine enthusiasm for science and its application to the world of medicine
- the ability to work independently within a small-team environment.

MedComms can literally take you all over the world and provides attractive long-term career pathways.

Starting with the first edition of the guide in 2009, we’ve built up a comprehensive, free information service at www.FirstMedCommsJob.com where you can now find extensive insights into working life in MedComms along with information about our regular careers events and networking activities. We’ve been proud to play our part in supporting so many people in finding their entry-level position. We’ll continue to update the information provided here on an annual basis and we welcome your feedback.

Peter Llewellyn
For more information see: www.linkedin.com/in/networkpharma

About the author

Annick is a freelance medical communications consultant and writer, living and working in Oxford. After gaining a degree and doctorate in physiology from Newcastle, she undertook post-doctoral research at Oxford and Manchester. During her time as an academic, she was an editorial committee member for the Physiological Society’s magazine. Annick started her first job in medical communications in 2001 and worked at various agencies until she set up her freelance business in 2006 providing consultancy and writing services to the pharmaceutical and biotech industries. She provides medical writing training and has been a regular participant in careers events over the years, talking about the role of the medical writer in MedComms.

Annick Moon
For more information see: www.moon-medical.com

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Introduction

After years of hard work, you finally got your doctorate. Or maybe you’ve done a few post-docs. Lectureships are hard to come by and as one short-term contract begins it’s time to start looking about for the next. Sound familiar? Time to leave academia, but feel like you’ve occupied a narrow scientific niche for so long that you’ve specialised yourself out of the job market?

Leaving academia doesn’t mean turning your back on science. Your vast scientific knowledge, and your research and analytical skills are truly valuable – ever thought about a career in medical communications?

What is medical communications?

**No…**
- Journalism
- Academic publishing

**Yes…**
- Providing consultancy services to the pharmaceutical industry to help raise awareness of medicines

Medical communications provides consultancy services to the pharmaceutical industry to help raise awareness of medicines

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**About this guide**

This guide focuses on medical writing careers in medical communications, in particular in MedComms agencies. The MedComms industry provides consultancy services to pharmaceutical companies, and the role of the medical writer is to use science and language to deliver these services successfully, while working to the highest ethical standards and adhering to industry regulations and guidelines.

The aim of this guide is to give you the information you need to decide if you are suited to the role of medical writer, and to provide the insider knowledge you need to excel at interview.

Please see the profiles provided by people working in MedComms later in this booklet for more insights into working in the industry.

**For more information about starting out in MedComms and details of careers events, past and future, visit:**

www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
The pharmaceutical industry

A medicine starts out as a new chemical entity which, after many years of basic research, has emerged as a potential treatment for a particular disease. To put this in context, consider that from 10,000 promising new chemical entities, if one makes it to the first stage of a clinical trial, the R&D department is doing well. The new chemical entity must then undergo many years of clinical development, and must fulfil many criteria before eventually being approved for use as a medicine.

Getting a drug from the laboratory through all of the necessary clinical trials and regulatory administration, and approved for release on the healthcare market represents a major triumph for a pharmaceutical company; indeed, developing a drug can take up to 15 years and the cost can run into the £billions – but the story doesn’t end there. To get doctors to prescribe the medicine, you have to tell them about it, which usually involves marketing and communications activities: ensuring that doctors are well informed about a new medicine is essential if it is to be used appropriately and ultimately improve the health of many thousands of people.

To appreciate the scale of the ‘from bench to bedside’ process, it is first necessary to consider the phases of clinical development.

**Pre-clinical**

Before a new drug can be tested in people, it must undergo rigorous pre-clinical testing, both in vitro and in suitable animal models; also known as non-clinical testing. During this phase, important pharmacological data are obtained about drug dosing, and potential hazards and risks are identified. This allows the regulatory authorities to make a risk assessment and consider the drug’s suitability for testing in humans.

**Phase I**

Once approved for testing in humans, Phase I can begin (sometimes known as ‘first-time-in-man’ studies). Phase I studies typically involve a small number of healthy human volunteers in whom the chemical toxicity and the clinical side-effects of the drug are investigated. Volunteers receive various doses of the drug, and the aim is to determine the drug’s pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic profile in humans.

**Phase II**

After the initial safety testing in human volunteers is complete, the drug can be tested in patients. The aim of a Phase II trial is to provide ‘proof of principle’ and to assess the clinical benefits of the drug, in addition to the side-effects, sometimes in comparison with placebo. The benefit/risk profile of the drug is then used to plan the next phase of development.

Developing a drug can take up to 15 years and the cost can run into the £billions.
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<tr>
<th>Phase of clinical development</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-clinical</td>
<td>Testing in vitro and in suitable animal models</td>
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<td>Phase I</td>
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<td>Phase IV</td>
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**Phase III**

If the Phase II study shows the drug to provide a good clinical effect without producing unacceptable side-effects, then a larger Phase III study can begin. A Phase III trial must compare the new medicine with the current standard treatment for the disease or with placebo if there is no suitable active comparator. A Phase III trial is designed to show a statistical difference between the new drug and the comparator, and to establish its therapeutic benefit and side-effect profile.

If efficacy is established in Phase III trials, then all data are submitted to the regulatory agencies who will decide whether the drug can be marketed based on the strength of evidence.

**Phase IV**

Phase IV trials are often referred to as post-marketing surveillance studies – following a successful Phase III trial the drug will have been approved and marketed, so a Phase IV trial is used to gather information in large populations to assess the optimal use of the drug and any side-effects that may not have been identified in a clinical trial setting.

**Why does the pharmaceutical industry need external consultants?**

It makes financial sense for a pharmaceutical company to outsource certain activities to external partners. From running a clinical trial to manufacturing a box for the medicine, the pharmaceutical industry is supported by organisations and agencies, each with specialist expertise.
What is MedComms?

Agencies servicing the pharmaceutical industry provide expert consultancy on anything from producing regulatory documentation to fulfil legal requirements to devising campaigns to help market a drug. For most pharmaceutical products, a communications and publications programme will run alongside the clinical development process, and will then support the launch of the drug and ensure that the drug remains on the clinical radar for the duration of its patent (also known as its lifecycle).

Types of agency

There are many types of agencies offering a range of differing services to the pharmaceutical industry and it can be confusing trying to figure out which agency does what, especially as the terminology is often used inconsistently. Some agencies concentrate on publications and medical education (generally called MedComms or medical education agencies) – the focus of this booklet; others on legal and regulatory documentation or advertising. Some agencies offer a full range of consultancy such as medical education, public relations, market research and advertising, whereas others focus on a niche area.

Many of these agencies are part of a global group with sister-agencies covering the range of healthcare communications and marketing services, and there are also many small independent specialist agencies.

Whatever the service offered, the objective is always the same – to educate and inform stakeholders such as doctors, patients, nurses and hospital managers about innovations and perspectives in healthcare.

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<th>Regulatory affairs:</th>
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<td>Materials to support cost-effectiveness messages</td>
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<td>Materials to communicate with the media; issues management</td>
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<th>Advertising and branding:</th>
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<td>Trade press; consumer adverts; sales aids; direct mail; exhibition stand materials</td>
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MedComms agencies

MedComms agencies have their roots in medical education, and traditionally produce materials such as journal manuscripts for peer review, learning resources, slide kits, and posters and presentations for conferences. However, the boundaries are often blurred, and MedComms agencies may also touch on media materials at the public relations end of the spectrum, or more promotional materials at the commercial end of the spectrum (i.e. brochures, leaflets and animations). MedComms agencies also advise the pharmaceutical industry on how best to educate and inform their customers (i.e. doctors, nurses, hospital managers, pharmacists, patients) about the benefits and risks of the therapy using clinical and economic data. All materials should comply with best practice guidelines, as issued by bodies such as the European Medical Writers Association and the International Society for Medical Publications Professionals (further details are available on page 15).

Why join a MedComms agency?

When it comes to getting broad writing experience, a MedComms agency is a good place to start your career. One day you’ll be writing a highly technical document and using all of your scientific and research skills, and the next you’ll be using your creative powers to summarise the entire document in one diagram. Also, in a MedComms agency, it is possible to find a job that suits you: some people prefer the more scientific, educational element of the job and are happy to write nothing but technical manuscripts and may focus very specifically on narrow therapeutic fields, whereas others enjoy the challenge of a new therapy area every week. Other people prefer the more creative element of writing a range of materials, or prefer to be out of the office talking to clients.

Which job?

As well as medical writing, there are numerous different roles within a MedComms agency, many of which require a scientific background.

**Account Manager**
New media agency
You will manage a diverse range of projects including on-line disease awareness and patient education websites, interactive...

**Editorial Project Manager**
Medical Education Agency
Are you an energetic, ambitious and passionate individual with the desire and potential to join one of the largest healthcare communications agencies in the UK?

**Medical Editor**
Healthcare Communications Agency
Proofing copy to the highest standard for a full range of medical education and communications materials including scientific abstracts, papers, posters, oral presentations, print items, and multimedia; professional liaison with pharmaceutical industry key contacts; managing and co-ordinating materials through design.

**Medical Writer**
International MedComms
Suitable candidates will ideally have at least 18 months relevant writing experience with a background in Medical Communications, Clinical Research, Academic Research or Publishing. A life science degree is preferable. You will display excellent organisational skills and acute attention to detail.
Medical writing

A medical writer is part of a team of people who develop a communication strategy to help deliver an effective campaign – what are you going to say? Who are you going to say it to? When are you going to say it? As a medical writer your job is to write high-quality, scientific copy for the wide range of materials that a MedComms agency produces. Your role will also involve keeping an eye on developments in any given scientific field, recognising the big players in the therapeutic area, assessing the strategies used by your clients’ competitors by monitoring their activities, and identifying opportunities to communicate your client’s information.

Attending conferences, and advisory board and standalone meetings is a large part of agency life, so if you like travelling, this is a definite perk. Most medical writers have visited a few of the major conference venues of Europe, such as Prague, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Paris, Barcelona, Berlin, Munich, Nice, Rome and Milan, and also popular global venues such as Cancun, Toronto and Sydney. However, although you may find yourself staying at a nice hotel, you might not get much sleep.

Medical editing

Many agencies combine the role of writing and editing. In such agencies a medical writer is not only expected to produce original articles but also to be able to ‘edit’ other writer’s work – checking it for scientific accuracy, and grammatical and editorial errors. Some agencies split this role, employing both medical writers and editors. In such agencies, medical editors tend to have a wider function, adding proofreading and print production skills to their editing role. In terms of entering an agency as a trainee, agencies more commonly recruit writers than editors. Trainee editors are often known as editorial assistants.

Account/project management

For more information see our careers guide: The business of medical communications by Lindsey Heer, available from www.FirstMedCommsJob.com

An account/project management team is responsible for making sure that projects are delivered on time and on budget. This role includes tasks such as preparing cost estimates, tracking projects, liaising with internal team members and external suppliers, negotiating with clients and
preparing invoices. Usually, account managers progress to become account directors, a position that may additionally involve looking for new business opportunities and promoting the agency to potential clients (although some agencies employ dedicated sales staff). Account managers often have a scientific background, but it is not essential.

**Event management**

Attending conferences, and advisory boards and standalone meetings is a large part of agency life. Events managers are involved in all aspects of event management, including the production of materials to promote the events, sourcing venues, programme development, and booking flights and hotel rooms for attendees. A scientific background is not essential for this role, and many people come to the job from a background in hospitality or event management.

**Entry requirements**

A PhD in life-sciences is the usual entry requirement for a medical writer joining MedComms, and many applicants have post-doc experience, although candidates with any relevant post-graduate qualification may be considered. If you have a science degree or other health-related degree (e.g. nursing, physiotherapy), but no post-graduate qualification, work experience in the publishing or pharmaceutical sectors will probably be needed.

**Career progression**

A new medical writer will largely be trained ‘on the job’, your work being reviewed during this period by a more senior writer. Many agencies also have structured training programmes and you may get to attend external courses. For most new medical writers it will take about a year to lose the ‘trainee’ status (regardless of your job title when you start). After about 6 months of being a trainee, it starts to become frustrating (and sometimes horrible) having your work picked-apart; however, it takes a few years to gain experience and to learn how to plan and produce a range of materials, and it is worth being patient and establishing a good foundation.

Whatever position you choose as a starting point, once in the industry there is scope to change direction and to progress in various ways. The editorial route leads from medical writer to senior writer; beyond this, job specifications tend to vary between agencies, offering the opportunity to define and develop your career according to your strengths. Some writers choose to focus on writing in roles such as principal writer and editorial team leader; others do less writing, focusing more on managing and directing accounts.

**Earning potential**

Starting salaries vary between agencies, and depend upon your experience. Trainee writers leaving academia with a PhD or another higher degree, or with post-doc experience, can expect a ballpark of £25–30K. It is often a source of frustration to trainees with post-doc experience that they have started on a similar salary as someone straight out of their doctorate; don’t be disheartened. If you are a bit older, with more experience and knowledge, it is likely you will progress more quickly than someone younger. For older people with many years of academic experience or for professionals from other relevant backgrounds (e.g. healthcare or publishing), starting salaries may be higher than a trainee rate. However, starting salaries are no indication of career progression and earning potential, and the rate at which your salary increases depends on how you progress. Experienced MedComms professionals are in demand, particularly those with extensive writing skills – it is not unknown for a writer to go from being a trainee to running their own department, or even their own company, within a few years.
So you want to be a medical writer...

There's an equation to describe medical writers:

\[
\text{Likes science} \times \text{likes writing} = \text{medical writer}
\]

Training to be a medical writer is hard work as, despite your scientific background and your extensive publication record, there's still a lot to learn.

Common characteristics of a medical writer in no particular order

**Established scientist**

A doctorate and post-doc experience will be advantageous when applying for a job as a writer. The basic entry requirement is a science degree.

**Enjoys writing**

You are the type of person who enjoyed writing your thesis rather than seeing it as a necessary evil.

**Good listener**

Whereas in academia your opinion about your research area was valued, in MedComms, although you'll be expected to have a good knowledge of numerous therapeutic areas, your opinion may not be asked for. You will be required to listen to the client and the medical experts, and to communicate their opinions.

**Excellent research skills**

You will be expected to learn numerous new clinical fields very quickly. Although it's always nice to get a project that is related to your research background, this doesn't happen very often. For example, your existing knowledge may be in microbiology, but you may be expected to become an expert in psychiatry. You will have to be able to research new areas and to discuss the diseases with confidence in a variety of situations. This may seem like a daunting task, but you'll be surprised at how far the research skills you developed during your doctorate can carry you.

**Pedantic**

If the use of an apostrophe in a plural word makes your blood boil, or if you have ever told someone that it is ‘10 items or fewer’ not ‘10 items or less’ then you are a true pedant. This type of pedantry is often called attention to detail.

Moon A. *From academic to medical writer*. March 2021.
For more information about careers in MedComms, see www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
Comfortable with statistics

You don’t have to be an expert in statistics, but presenting data and making them easy for doctors to understand will be part of your job. Medical statistics are a far cry from the odd t-test you had to do for your doctorate, and whereas you won’t be expected to number crunch, you will have to produce evidence-based arguments based on clinical data. A basic understanding of the analyses used in clinical trials will be essential, and you should find that you quickly learn various statistical concepts that are commonly used in clinical research.

Thick-skinned

It may seem like a step backwards going from being a respected scientist to being a trainee, and learning to be a writer will be tough to begin with. You will hand over a piece of work on which you have spent hours, only to have it covered in comments by a senior writer. Nevertheless, if you stick with it, you will gradually develop a set of much sought-after skills. Once you become an experienced writer, this still doesn’t mean that people will love every word you write – many a beautiful piece of work has been picked apart by a client – so you have to be able to deal with it, and re-write it numerous times if necessary.

Applying for your first medical writing job

Preparing a good CV is essential when applying for any job, but when applying to be a writer, editorial accuracy is extremely important. Unlike other sectors, your CV and covering letter will be assessed by a panel of editors who will spot grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and clumsy sentences, and these things will not be forgiven. Also be careful about posts on social media that are in the public domain. Joining forums relevant to the job may be viewed favourably, but your posts will be scrutinised. Even posts that have no relevance to medical writing may be used to see if you are a suitable candidate, and whereas offensive comments attributed to you in the public domain are obviously going to be disadvantageous, even seemingly harmless posts may reveal your inability to construct a sentence.

Writing experience outside of your academic work will help get you noticed

Additional experience

Writing experience outside of your academic work will help get you noticed and will show that you have a genuine interest in communications. Getting published is easier than you think. Many of the academic societies produce a publication for their members and the editor will be happy to consider your contribution. For example, the Physiological Society produces Physiology News, a quarterly magazine, and the Genetics Society produces Genetics Society News, a bi-annual newsletter. Or if you are feeling really ambitious, you could enter a science writers’ competition.
Transferable skills

When leaving academia it is very easy to understate your skills and experience. Something you may consider to be a mundane everyday task may represent a valuable skill to a potential employer.

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<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Doctoral thesis, peer-reviewed manuscripts, slide presentations, conference posters/abstracts, grant applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation skills</td>
<td>Transfer talk, conference presentations, journal club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>Designing experiments and scheduling resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project leading and mentoring</td>
<td>Mentoring project students, teaching/demonstrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Liaising with colleagues and collaborating with other research groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing science with experts</td>
<td>Confidently discussing complex issues with leading experts (e.g. in the pub on a Friday night)</td>
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The writing test

As part of the interview process, you will be asked to do a writing test. Sometimes this will be before you are invited to interview, and sometimes after your first interview. There is no industry standard for the test. Examples of what you may be asked to write include:

- an abstract for a poster or a manuscript
- a mini review based on a small number of papers that have been supplied
- a news article based on a conference report, manuscript or other background documents
- a conference report based on a slide presentation and abstract book.

Whatever the task, it is important that you prepare properly. Even if your writing skills are excellent, you are unlikely to be an expert in drafting clinical documents or on the rules of writing marketing copy for a medicine. Don't worry though, because the reviewers will not expect you to be an expert, but they will be looking for:

- attention to detail – avoid spelling mistakes and grammatical errors
- structure and flow – provide a well-structured document with a logical flow of ideas
- simplicity – don’t overcomplicate the project by doing extensive background research about the disease; it is unlikely that a writing test will need this, and the test nearly always involves reporting the information you have been given.

The agency will probably give you a guide to how long the test should take. You may find that it takes quite a bit longer, but this is fine and is often the case. If you go over the suggested time by days, rather than hours, maybe consider other roles within the agency.
Using your initiative can make all the difference when it comes to getting through the writing test. For example, if you are asked to write a newsletter aimed at nurses, buy a copy of Nursing Times to get an idea of pitch and tone. Also, there are many guides to medical writing available, which are definitely worth a read before attempting the test. How to Publish in Biomedicine, by Jane Fraser, gives excellent advice and tips (further details are available on facing page).

However, sometimes using too much initiative can be an applicant’s downfall. If you already know someone who is a medical writer, it is fine to ask for advice, but do not ask them to do the test for you. The people reviewing your test will know what standard to expect based on the experience outlined on your CV. If you get offered the job based on dishonesty, you will be found out when the work you produce on your own falls below the standard of your test.

As well as a writing test, you may be asked to complete an editing test to assess your eye for detail. If you use standard editing marks, this will be viewed favourably, although this is not what is being tested so it is fine to mark-up the mistakes using whatever method suits you.

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**Editing test**

The following editing test contains 20 editorial errors – these include errors of spelling, punctuation, grammar, consistency or meaning. For fun, how many can you spot?
(Answers on page 15.)

Over a median followup of 8.4 years, 64 patients (9.7%) experienced disease recurrence (median time to recurrence 5.6 years). The 5, 10- and 15year recurrence-free probabilities were 0.93, 0.87, and 0.81, respectively. Using time-to-event estimates to adjust for differences in follow-up between groups, radiotherapy was found to reduce tumour recurrence in patients who received a sub-total resection ($p<0.001$) but not in those undergoing gross-total resection of the tumor ($p=0.63$). Multivariate analysis identified cavernous sinus invasion (hazard ration 3.6, 95% CI 1.5-6.4, $p<0.001$) and STR without radiotherapy (HR 3.6, 95% CI 1.4–14, $p=.01$) predictive of an increase in disease recurrence. Median follow-up for overall survival was 14.0 year. The 5-, 10-, 15- and 20-year estimates for overall survival were 0.91, 0.81, 0.69 and 0.55, respectively. Mortality was higher in patients who underwent radiotherapy with or without SRT than would have been expected in the general USA population.

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**The interview**

Most agencies select candidates based on one short interview, or perhaps two. I’ve never heard of MedComms agencies running day-long interviews, or asking candidates to undergo tests not directly related to writing. By the time you have been invited to an interview, you should have passed the writing test, although some agencies may ask you to complete another short writing test when you attend the interview. If this is the case, they should let you know before what to expect. You may be asked to give a presentation, but again, you will be told what you need to prepare before the interview.
Further information

Useful books

Getting Research Published, An A-Z of Publication Strategy
Third Edition.
Available from www.crcpress.com
ISBN-13 9781785231384

David Moher (Editor), Douglas Altman (Editor), Kenneth Schulz (Editor), Ivetta Simera (Editor), Elizabeth Wager (Editor), Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.
Available from www.wiley.com
ISBN-13 9780470670446

How to Publish in Biomedicine: 500 Tips for Success
Third Edition.
Available from www.crcpress.com
ISBN-13 9781785230103

Careers support

FirstMedCommsJob – www.firstmedcommsjob.com
NextMedCommsJob – www.nextmedcommsjob.com

Professional bodies

Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading – www.clep.uk
European Medical Writers Association – www.emwa.org
Healthcare Communications Association – www.hca-uk.org
International Society for Medical Publication Professionals – www.ismpp.org

Pharmaceutical industry news, views and information

MedComms Networking – www.medcommsnetworking.com
PharmaFile – www.pharmafile.com
pharmaphorum – www.pharmaphorum.com
PharmaTimes – www.pharmatimes.com
Pharmaceutical Executive – www.pharmexec.com
PMLiVE – www.pmlive.com
The Publication Plan – www.thepublicationplan.com

Answers

Over a median follow-up of 8.4 years, 64 patients (9.7%) experienced disease recurrence. A median follow-up of 8.4 years, 64 patients (9.7%) experienced disease recurrence.
The skills you develop as a medical writer make you an asset, and prepare you well for the variety of career paths that then become available.

At that stage, I had given little consideration to the career path I wanted; I was simply driven by passion and curiosity. I enjoyed planning and executing experiments, using cutting-edge technologies, building collaborations and working with brilliant scientists in a leading research institute. However, what I enjoyed most was communicating my results through writing up my research and presenting these results worldwide. I found it very exciting to share my findings, especially in the hope that these discoveries may one day make a difference for patients with breast cancer.

As much as I enjoyed the diversity of conducting experiments with bee venom in breast cancer cells, what I enjoyed more was communicating these findings to the appropriate target audience. These experiences – of analysing and graphing the data, placing the results in context of the literature, and building a clear and coherent scientific story – are what made me well prepared for the next phase in my journey.

After completing my PhD, I seemed to stumble across the world of medical writing and the many agencies in the MedComms industry. Since starting as an associate medical writer, I have been developing manuscripts, abstracts, posters and slide decks for the publication and presentation of clinical trial results. Meeting with global pharmaceutical clients and developing content across a variety of projects and therapy areas are some of the challenges and delights of medical writing.

Within an interdisciplinary team, I really enjoy contributing to the communication of scientific findings that will help in the treatment and prevention of disease. Attending the annual European meeting of the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP) has also been a highlight, as it brings together medical writers, publishers, editors and representatives from the pharmaceutical industry. Such events enable excellent networking opportunities with professionals from across the globe, and the chance to learn about the latest industry trends.

Looking back, I realise that completing a PhD was ideal preparation for moving into medical writing. Every day I apply the skills that I gained through my doctorate to my current role. MedComms seems to be a growing and internationally connected industry with a high demand for medical writers. The skills you develop as a medical writer make you an asset, and prepare you well for the variety of career paths that then become available. If you want to stay at the forefront of science in a fast-paced role developing accurate and well-presented scientific material, then medical writing might also be the career for you!
Cassidy Fiford

Medical Writer
Oxford PharmaGenesis

Finding a job with the right fit became a project in itself! I’d always been someone interested in many different things. I felt like a Russian doll, with so many possible careers within me: there was a part of me that wanted to tell stories (journalist), create things (artist), solve problems (scientist) and teach others (teacher). I spoke with many people in different roles and, reflecting on these conversations, I discovered some core elements I wanted from a job: creativity, meaningfulness, problem-solving, scientific knowledge and teamwork.

I started to reach out to different companies requesting work experience. Much to the intrigue of my fellow scientists, I spent several days in an editorial office of a top-tier medical journal – but it wasn’t for me.

At this point, I didn’t really know anything about MedComms. Part of me wondered if the role of a medical writer was solely dedicated to writing manuscripts with minimal teamwork, and I had doubts about moving into industry. I’ll never forget how friendly and enthusiastic the recruitment manager from Oxford PharmaGenesis sounded when she called about my work-experience request. I felt a surge of excitement at the prospect of contributing to a company that needed my help! We arranged a placement to give me a flavour for the role.

It didn’t take me long to realise that almost everything I’d assumed about medical writing was wrong – my first day alone included voice coaching training! My first big task for a client was to create a communication campaign about updates to standard operating procedures. I enjoyed thinking of ways to spark up interest in the updates and worked with designers to develop GIFs, a company first. During my internship, I also worked on infographics, podcasts and some more traditional MedComms work (e.g. systematic literature reviews). I spoke to different people across the company, made friends and realised I’d found a company with values that cared for its employees. After completing my internship, I took a short break to travel and then returned as a fully-fledged associate medical writer.

Working in MedComms often reminds me of some of the best university projects – I love the palpable excitement of solving a problem together in a team and how different perspectives are encouraged. I have found I love helping clients to understand their needs, frame their thoughts and collaborate across large companies. It’s a cliché to say that no 2 days are the same, but it’s the truth!

I love the palpable excitement of solving a problem together in a team and how different perspectives are encouraged.

Moon A. From academic to medical writer. March 2021.
For more information about careers in MedComms, see www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
I am not going to lie to you and say the 12-month fast-track programme from associate medical writer to medical writer is easy, but from my experience, it really was worth it: allegro prepared me to be successful in MedComms. Be it the first 2 months of classroom-based learning (I soon realised that I had no idea how to use PowerPoint effectively) or the two 5-month rotations in agency, through allegro I gained invaluable experience working with several teams across various therapy areas.

Although the rotations are in place to maximise exposure to the broad range of projects that we work on in MedComms, it meant that I needed to be adaptable. This skill carried over well beyond the initial 12-month training phase when I have found myself working on multiple accounts at any given time. This was one of the driving forces behind my progression to my current role as a senior medical writer.

In terms of the allegro network, you do not have to look far to find allegro writers or alumni at Ashfield Health. This allegro network helped me at the beginning of my career, starting with 14 other individuals with different backgrounds but the same level of medical writing experience (i.e. no experience). It has also proved invaluable to my progression beyond the 12-month programme, allowing me to build connections and gain an understanding of the broader Ashfield Health company. This information proved vital when I graduated as a medical writer, as having knowledge of potential opportunities throughout the company allowed me to identify therapy areas that were of personal interest. I recently found myself requesting a lateral career move to work on an oncology account. Again, this is down to the opportunities afforded to me by the allegro programme, as I was aware of areas of the company that worked on this therapy area.

As a senior medical writer I am now in a position in which I can share my experience through mentoring allegro associate medical writers. As an allegro alumni who went through the first ever intake (the guinea pigs, as such), I can use my previous experiences to guide the development of new writers.

The allegro programme provided me with the ideal stepping stone to progress to my current role and I will continue to benefit from it as I move forward in my career in MedComms.
Jane Juif
Medical Writer
Lucid Group

My journey into MedComms didn’t take the normal course: science degree, PhD, bored of lab work (but still loving science) and then into MedComms. Instead, my journey began with an MSc in developmental psychology and several years of teaching, both in the UK and France. And I suppose it mainly began with an inquisitive mind, a love for the written word and most of all the desire to make a difference to people’s lives – however small my contribution!

I never once imagined that my education and career path would lead me down the route of MedComms. When I was offered the opportunity of a freelance position at HealthCare21, now part of Lucid Group, assisting on a key opinion leader mapping project, I still wasn’t convinced that this was the right job for me, or that I was the right person for the HealthCare21 team! But 3.5 years later, there are no regrets. I love my job! Every day is different, every project is part of a learning and discovering process, and I work with a hugely supportive team who have helped me grow as a medical writer.

I consider myself lucky that HealthCare21 initially saw the potential in my unusual (for MedComms) background and fortunate that Lucid Group have continued to support my progression by offering me opportunities that stretch my capabilities in new and exciting therapy areas. In my first year, I travelled to the Netherlands and Chicago to undertake congress reporting, and to Paris twice for an advisory board and a scientific working group meeting, respectively – all of which seemed so exciting having come from a secondary school environment. At the start, every task and project were unchartered territory to me and, even 3.5 years later, I can still say that each week brings new creative challenges.

I may not have a PhD, but my unconventional route into MedComms has provided me with a wealth of transferable skills. My MSc in psychology gave me experience in report writing, statistical analysis and independent research, all of which are valuable skills for the role of a medical writer. As a teacher of both children and adults, I understand the underpinnings of how people learn. I have developed the art of helping others acquire knowledge through communication, making new and difficult concepts and theories accessible to a wide and varied audience. Being able to control a class of 35 teenagers or deal with the sometimes not so pleasant insults of a misunderstood adolescent, taught me to be calm and patient whatever is thrown at me (sometimes literally). And finally, being a working mother of two children has taught me the importance of teamwork and how to multitask and prioritise.

My take-home message would be to not let age or the lack of a PhD get in the way of discovering the world of medical writing in MedComms. You should never underestimate the benefit of the transferrable skills and knowledge that you can bring to the role. It’s never too late to change career path, to step outside of your comfort zone and take on new challenges and opportunities.
Maggie Lai
Comradis, an AMICULUM agency

I started a career in MedComms rather late in life and have worked in the industry for 2 years now. It was definitely the right move and all I can say is “Why didn’t I do this earlier?”

I had forged a reasonably successful career in academia working as a post-doc, which took me to New Zealand and Edinburgh, and then established my own research group. However, the continuous search for funding was soul destroying and I began to question whether this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. The decision, however, was made for me when we didn’t get the big grant and that was it – my academic career had come to an end and it was time to look for another job.

One of my colleagues suggested I look into MedComms but I remember dismissing the idea at the time, thinking why would I want to be writing manuscripts for other people? I eventually worked for a cancer charity and started a new career as an information specialist/medical writer providing support and producing educational materials for patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals. I spoke to people affected by cancer every day and gained valuable insight into the patient’s perspective that I could apply to my work in many ways. It was an incredibly rewarding job but after several years working in a very narrow field I realised I wanted to learn about other diseases yet continue as a medical writer. So, I finally bit the bullet and looked into what MedComms could offer.

I was extremely fortunate to join Comradis in January 2019, and at a time when it was rapidly expanding. It was quite daunting at first being a trainee writer and working alongside colleagues young enough to be my children. That, very quickly, was no longer an issue partly because everyone was so welcoming and supportive, and partly because there are no job titles at Comradis. The latter was intriguing, especially having come from workplaces where there were obvious hierarchies, but it really does work and helps foster openness and a ‘can do’ attitude.

Yes, I have written manuscripts, but I have also worked on a variety of other deliverables, including slide decks, advisory board reports, e-learning programmes, scientific platforms and animations. My time working at the cancer charity hasn’t been wasted either as I have worked on patient newsletter articles for one of our clients. I have also been involved in pitching for new business, which is fun and scary at the same time (think Dragon’s Den!). Most satisfying of all is that I have gained specialist knowledge in many different therapy areas.

For anyone considering a career in MedComms, I’d highly recommend it. It doesn’t matter whether you have just completed your undergraduate degree, PhD or post-doc, or whether you have worked elsewhere and are as long in the tooth as I am. If you want to apply your scientific knowledge but keep learning new things and new skills, then this could be for you.
Laura Murch
Medical Writer
Fishawack Health

I moved into medical writing quite recently, after working in academia and biotech as a bench scientist for over 10 years. I had known that I wanted to move away from the lab for quite some time but wasn’t sure what I wanted to move into. I didn’t want to give up on the day-to-day variety and challenge of the lab, but was finding that my preference was leaning more towards talking and writing about the science than to using the pipettes.

After speaking to a few of my friends who had already made the move, I kept coming back to MedComms. Someone directed me to the FirstMedCommsJob.com site and after intently watching some (all!) of the video interviews and reading through the booklets, I realised that medical writing was for me. This was a role that would utilise my current skills, but continually challenge and stretch me to keep developing.

Since starting at Fishawack it’s been a fast-paced, deadline-driven, steep learning curve, but that suits me well and I’m really enjoying it. One of the elements I really appreciated was that I got to be involved in live project work immediately; by the end of my first week I had worked on three different assignments. That helped me to feel useful and connected to my team straight away. I look forward to new assignments and the opportunities to learn that come with each one. I feel intellectually challenged and perhaps, just as important, trusted and valued as a member of the team. One of the other things that I really appreciated was the comprehensive new writer training course onto which I was enrolled. This helped me to gain valuable insights into the writing process and to meet other people who were just starting in the role too.

If you’re considering a move to medical writing, I’d recommend researching what the role entails, but also taking the time to find out more about what the different agencies and companies are like, as each has its own culture. Fishawack appealed to me for its emphasis on teamwork, having a really friendly work environment and because it seems to value and invest in its people, with lots of opportunities for training and career development.

After reading up about medical writing I noticed that lots of people apply straight after their PhD. Before applying, I was slightly worried that I was ‘too late’ after being at the bench for so long, or that I lacked the requisite writing skills. If that’s the same for you but you like the sound of the role, then don’t be discouraged from applying. Your other experiences will likely make you a great candidate and you’ll have done more science writing than you think. As long as you’re willing to accept that medical writing is a skill set in itself and that you’ll need to start from the beginning and learn the craft before progressing, you’ll be fine. If in doubt, reach out to someone who is in a medical writing role to learn more.
Lizzie Sandham
Medical Writer
Highfield

As a recently promoted medical writer (having started as a trainee) my journey into MedComms is relatively recent, but so far it has been extremely rewarding and I am very satisfied with my decision to pursue this career!

I went to a science careers day and quickly began ruling out options. I didn’t want to remain in lab-based work, so that eliminated pharmaceutical research and development, and although the salary was tempting, I felt no excitement at the prospect of working in scientific consulting or patent law. Publishing held some interest, but upon hearing a presentation on MedComms I immediately knew that medical writing was the career path for me. The description of a medical writer as someone who enjoys science, writing and researching/learning about new clinical topics seemed to fit me perfectly.

I started seeking out opportunities to improve my writing and communication skills. I wrote articles on a variety of topics for scientific student magazines and attended FirstMedCommsJob careers events/workshops. What I really wanted, however, was a taste of working in the MedComms industry itself, and a little research led me to Highfield and its 6-month internship opportunity. This stood out as an ideal chance to explore working in MedComms in a flourishing and friendly agency.

After a successful interview, I joined Highfield as an intern in October 2019 and officially took my first few steps on the MedComms career path. I have received a huge amount of support from everyone at Highfield and have worked on live projects from day 1. Even as an intern, my work has been incredibly varied and I’ve been fortunate enough to attend client meetings and an international advisory board, which were invaluable experiences.

So far, my projects have included publications, slide decks, training materials and educational platforms across a range of scientific topics. I receive training, guidance and feedback from a great team of medical writers, who have helped me navigate the steep learning curve and build my skills and confidence. I love the fast-paced work and the rewarding challenge of assimilating new information quickly. Gaining specialised knowledge of therapy areas and treatment options, and applying this to deliver high-quality projects to clients, is extremely fulfilling. I feel I am at the cutting edge of science and making a meaningful difference by working with leading scientific experts and pharmaceutical companies to help improve patients’ lives.

I readily accepted a permanent position as a trainee medical writer at Highfield in February 2020 and have since been promoted to medical writer. I still like to challenge myself, develop my skills further and continue down the medical writing career path in this friendly, supportive agency!
Catherine Sidaway

Medical Writer
Helios Medical Communications

My route into MedComms was a little different from most, having come from working in a frontline healthcare setting, without any academic or research experience. I completed my medical degree at the University of Sheffield and followed the expected path into the Foundation Training Programme, working as a junior doctor in the NHS. After 2 years working in six different specialities, I decided to look beyond the expected career for a medical school graduate. After a lot of ‘what to do with a medical degree?’ online searching, the MedComms industry caught my eye. I was looking for a career in which I could still utilise all the knowledge and skills I had gained in medicine but without the regular unsociable working hours and all-consuming nature of being a doctor in the NHS. I attended an ‘Introduction to MedComms’ career event in Oxford to learn more about opportunities within the industry, and after talking with various MedComms agencies at the event, I was sold on medical writing.

After starting my MedComms career with Helios as an associate medical writer and learning the ropes of the role, I now work as a medical writer, and I am pleased to report that the role has provided me with everything I was looking for: a perfect mix of challenging, interesting and rewarding, but with a better work–life balance. Various skills I gained working as a doctor have been put to good use in my role as a medical writer: communicating with healthcare professionals, juggling workloads, multitasking, simplifying complex scientific concepts and deciphering questionable handwriting have all come in handy.

I loved getting stuck in from day 1, and I have had the opportunity to work on a multitude of projects during my first 18 months in the industry, including interactive educational training modules, mechanism-of-action videos, manuscripts, literature reviews, congress coverage, and advisory board and scientific exchange meetings. I really appreciate having such variety at work and being able to switch between different therapy areas and project types; no 2 days are the same, and I feel as if I am constantly learning something new!

As expected, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the role of a medical writer, with all interactions currently taking place virtually and the whole team working remotely. However, the industry is still thriving; everyone seems busier than ever, and more and more opportunities are arising from the changes to how we work. In the future, the industry will probably adopt a mixture of virtual and face-to-face meetings, but personally, I cannot wait to get back onsite with the team; an advisory board meeting in Barcelona and a scientific exchange meeting in Southampton weren’t enough for me!

Making the move from frontline healthcare to MedComms was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I get to geek out over seemingly impossible science and work with international experts in an industry that is striving to improve patients’ lives. I just wish I had made the move sooner!
Tanja Torbica  
Scientific Director  
Complete HealthVizion

I had never heard of MedComms until a friend from my PhD lab mentioned that she was getting into it and moving out of her academic career. At the time I was happy where I was and planned to continue my research because I was so interested in the science. I then took on a post-doc research role in a separate laboratory, in a different field from my PhD, which allowed me to learn a great deal and inspired me to develop new expertise, as well as share my experience with others. I had always loved science and the element of discovery in my research; however, during this role, I came to realise that this would become weighted with the continual need to develop grant proposals and live with the uncertainty of long-term stability as a researcher. Ultimately, I knew that a career in academic research was not for me in the long-term. I still loved science and discovery but craved stability as well as continual learning. It was at this time that I revisited the idea of a career in MedComms, as my friend had done previously.

I was unsure at first about what kind of role would be suitable for me, balancing my love of science with the experience I’d developed in driving my own projects and communicating about my work. Through speaking with a recruiter, medical writing seemed to be just what I was looking for, offering a mix of responsibilities. I was also enthused about being able to learn about a broader range of topics in science and medicine than the more niche areas I’d focused on in academia, without personally having to generate all of the data! Soon after, I successfully applied directly for a role as an associate medical writer at Complete HealthVizion (CHV), part of the broader McCann Health network. It appealed to me that CHV was actively connected to something bigger.

Since joining CHV as an associate medical writer in January 2014 I’ve had the opportunity to work across numerous projects in different therapy areas, with products at different stages of development, from pre-clinical to post-approval, learning from and working with many talented individuals. During my years as an associate through to senior medical writer, I gained experience in publications, medical affairs, medical education, digital projects and business development in addition to becoming a member of the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP). From there, taking on additional leadership responsibilities, I progressed to the role of scientific team leader. I then had the opportunities and support to progress to scientific director, where I am continually growing my expertise, solving new problems and supporting and coaching line reports.

CHV is a dynamic, learning organisation with a strong collaborative culture. I find it to be incredibly rewarding to work together in this way to support our clients and, ultimately, different stakeholders in healthcare and medicine. I have found the adaptation to MedComms to be a welcome change from academia, since it has broadened my horizons compared with the often-narrow focus in academia. With CHV I’ve never stopped learning and it never gets boring!
Tom Walker
Mudskipper, an AMICULUM agency

MedComms is a career that people apparently stumble upon, but not me. From the moment I started writing my PhD thesis, I knew my time in academia was coming to its end and a new journey focused on telling scientific stories awaited me. That’s the thing about being a medical writer for me, creating a story from complex scientific information to help people understand what that information tells us. During my – now distant-feeling – time in academia, I was always told to “focus on the data” and that “there is no room for being creative” when writing about science, but as alluded to, during my 4 years to date as a medical writer I have learned that this simply isn’t the case. In fact, creative expression and the ability to convey an engaging story (scientifically accurate, of course) from a simple data set or bits of information are fundamental aspects of effective scientific communication. It was the initial promise and eventual realisation of greater creative freedom that drove me into MedComms and why I can’t now see myself doing anything else.

There are many roles involved in MedComms, and being part of a team committed to the same goal is a rewarding experience day-to-day. It encourages you to work together in the pursuit of excellence and I find myself not just willing but highly motivated to ‘go the extra mile’. The ‘all-for-one and one-for-all’ attitude I refer to extends to all aspects of my career as well. At Mudskipper, I have always felt that my personal progression and evolution has been at the forefront of the company’s considerations. Accordingly, I was exposed to surprisingly varied projects from almost my very first days in the job. To name but a few, these can include writing abstracts and manuscripts on ground-breaking developments in medicine, developing engaging and creative presentations to be presented to ~500 medical experts at a congress symposium and designing advisory board meetings aimed at gathering insights from the world’s foremost experts in their medical fields. The variety of work helps to prevent the days from being repetitive, and working with leading medical experts on potentially practice-changing medicine adds an inherent degree of importance to the work you are doing, making it a privilege to be a part of.

At Mudskipper, we are committed to delivering consistent excellence in MedComms. One could therefore be forgiven for thinking that medical writers are machines akin to the androids in I-Robot or other similar cinematic embodiments of dystopian society – the reality couldn’t be more different. Based on my own experiences, each writer has their own style and specific interests, and is encouraged to use them to find their metier. I quickly learnt that I had an interest in data visualisation, the art of taking straightforward or complex data/information and finding the simplest and most effective way of visualising it. Equally quickly and without asking, this interest was nourished, bestowing a uniqueness to my development as a medical writer that grants a sense of purpose, and ultimately, fulfilment.

Moon A. From academic to medical writer. March 2021.
For more information about careers in MedComms, see www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
I work in MedComms...

“"I work in MedComms because I love being part of a project at every step, from concept to delivery.”’

Marc Astick, Senior Medical Writer I at Langland

“I work in MedComms because I love the variety of work and being able to combine my creativity and love of science. I come from a clinical background and have been welcomed into an extremely knowledgeable and supportive team. I have seen the powerful impact that effective communication of cutting-edge research in medicine can have on patient care, so I find contributing to this extremely rewarding. The flexibility of remote working has also been a huge bonus for me. I’m excited to travel in the future and learn from leading experts in key therapy areas. I couldn’t be happier that I moved to MedComms!”

Kate Bevan, Associate Medical Writer at Adelphi Communications

“I work in MedComms because I have never stop being fascinated by how the human body works. I love that my job allows me to constantly learn about how different diseases develop, and how we can utilise technology in evermore creative ways to combat them.”

Alex Binks, Medical Writer at Synergy Vision

“I work in MedComms because I love applying my drug knowledge to new therapeutic areas. The challenge of translating a difficult scientific concept into a creative and simple solution keeps me intellectually stimulated. I also work with a supportive and dedicated team, which is an added bonus!”

Ashley Cao-Nguyen, Medical Writer at Synergy Vision

“I work in MedComms because I love applying my scientific knowledge in a creative way to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences. I enjoy working on a huge array of project types across multiple therapy areas. The work stays interesting despite having been at Porterhouse Medical for over a decade.”

Erica Cave, Associate Scientific Services Director at Porterhouse Medical, part of the Porterhouse Medical Group

“I work in MedComms because I can combine my flair for science and writing, and improve patients’ lives through education and increased awareness of diseases.”

Kiran Cheema, Associate Medical Writer at Lucid Group

“I work in MedComms because I always knew that I didn’t want to pursue academia after grad school. My transition into MedComms as a medical writer turned out to be a great choice. I like that the role requires me to use my research and writing skills, and at the same time continually exposes aspects of the pharma industry to me that I would have never learned about in academia. It’s also perfect for anyone like me who prefers crafting sentences over conducting experiments!”

Erica Cave, Associate Scientific Services Director at Porterhouse Medical, part of the Porterhouse Medical Group

“I work in MedComms because it allows me to apply my skills to meaningful work, which makes a tangible difference and offers an excellent work–life balance.”

Daniel Bradley, Editorial Assistant at Ashfield MedComms

“I work in MedComms because it provides me with the opportunity to work on projects in a wide variety of therapy areas, and to continue making a difference to patients without having to be at the ‘coalface’!”

Suzanne Brunt, Medical Writer at Porterhouse Medical, part of the Porterhouse Medical Group

“I work in MedComms because it allows me to expand my knowledge in different areas of the medical sciences while thinking creatively to produce materials that help inform healthcare professionals and improve patient care.”

Annabel Calvert, Medical Writer I at Langland

“I work in MedComms because I can combine my flair for science and writing, and improve patients’ lives through education and increased awareness of diseases.”

Jasmine Chong, Medical Writer at Caudex

“I work in MedComms because it allows me to work across multiple therapy areas each day, writing in different styles for a range of audiences, and I can discuss the latest exciting developments with expert healthcare professionals. Each day provides a new opportunity to have a positive impact on patients’ lives.”

Emma Conran, Principal Medical Writer at Porterhouse Medical, part of the Porterhouse Medical Group

“I work in MedComms because I love the intellectual challenge of learning about different therapy areas and then applying this new knowledge to come up with creative ideas. I also enjoy being a valued part of a close-knit team, which is more fun than spending hours alone in a dark microscope room!”

Nadia Cummins, Medical Writer I at Langland

For details of careers events, plus much more, visit: www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
“I work in MedComms because I get the opportunity to interact with world-leading experts on a daily basis, discussing science that is at the forefront of disease areas.”

Maria Davies, Medical Writer at Helios Medical Communications

“I work in MedComms because it allows me to explore my passion for effective science communication that results in real change in patients’ lives.”

Brendan Deeney, Associate Medical Writer at Ashfield MedComms (allegro)

“I work in MedComms because I like to apply my creativity to developing novel solutions to my clients’ challenges.”

Richard Dobson, Programme Director at Adelphi Communications

“I work in MedComms because I work in MedComms because it allows me to combine two of my passions, science and creativity, in a diverse and challenging role that always keeps me ‘on my toes’. It gives me a great sense of achievement to work with dedicated teams to communicate complex concepts for a variety of audiences, with the ultimate goal of improving patients’ lives. There are endless opportunities to work across different therapy areas and projects, so you can always find something to suit your strengths and support your progression!”

Alex Elson, Scientific Director at Ashfield MedComms

“I work in MedComms because I work in MedComms because it allows me to work in a fast-paced environment, learning so much about so many different diseases and working with a very diverse group of people with many different talents, all while making a difference to patients’ lives.”

Emily Doster, Associate Medical Writer at Ashfield MedComms (allegro)

“I work in MedComms because no 2 days are the same. It’s fast-paced, you learn so much about so many different diseases and you work with a very diverse group of people with many different talents, all while making a difference to patients’ lives.”

Amy Doyle, Medical Writer II at Langland

“I work in MedComms because it lets me contribute to medical science in a way that makes the most of my strengths. I love learning about the latest medical research and being able to share it with others, and I also love not working in a lab anymore!”

Roxanne Dyer, Associate Medical Writer at Caudex

“I work in MedComms and I’m so glad I do. Since I started out doing a PhD and post-doc, I’ve worked on a variety of therapy areas and projects, honing my writing skills and travelling the world. I couldn’t ask for more.”

Tim Ellison, Senior Medical Writer at Oxford PharmaGenesis

“People in the job – in their own words

For details of careers events, plus much more, visit: www.FirstMedCommsJob.com
I work in MedComms...

“People in the job – in their own words

“I work in MedComms because I have the opportunity to become an expert in multiple therapeutic areas while contributing in some way to helping improve patients’ lives, all from the comfort of my home office!”

Jennifer Granit, Scientific Team Lead at Parexel International

“I work in MedComms because I find it motivating to learn about new advances in medicine and therapy areas in detail. I love the variety of projects and working as part of a collaborative team to achieve great results.”

Julie Gray, Principal Writer at Adelphi Communications

“I work in MedComms because I enjoy translating medical data into digestible outputs for different audiences. It also allows me to work flexibly, which is great for my work–life balance.”

Shaun Hall, Associate Medical Writer at Ashfield MedComms (allegro)

“I work in MedComms because I have the opportunity to make a difference for patients while continuing to do what I loved from my years in research: telling stories about science. As a kid, I wanted to pursue a career in science because I liked science fiction. Now I get to write stories about therapies that would have been science fiction a few years ago and be a part of turning them into reality for patients.”

Joseph Kruempel, Associate Medical Writer at Complete HealthVizion

“I work in MedComms because it offers an opportunity to learn about new advances in medicine and therapy areas in detail. I love the variety of projects and working as part of a collaborative team to achieve great results.”

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Jennifer Granit, Scientific Team Lead at Parexel International

“I work in MedComms because it is an ever-challenging and rewarding sector with the primary focus on improving the lives of patients. Medical writing provides me with the opportunity to continue learning about human disease and medicine, whilst working in a professional role with a meaningful purpose.”

Shaun Hall, Associate Medical Writer at Ashfield MedComms (allegro)

“I work in MedComms because I enjoy translating medical data into digestible outputs for different audiences. It also allows me to work flexibly, which is great for my work–life balance.”

Emma Handley, Senior Medical Writer at Porterhouse Medical, part of the Porterhouse Medical Group

“I work in MedComms because it is an exciting industry, with loads of opportunities to grow and develop. You get to learn about the latest advances in medicine, gain new skills and ultimately be involved in work that helps patients and their families.”

Lucy Helas, Editorial Assistant at Ashfield MedComms

“I work in MedComms because it offers an opportunity to make a difference for patients while continuing to do what I loved from my years in research: telling stories about science. As a kid, I wanted to pursue a career in science because I liked science fiction. Now I get to write stories about therapies that would have been science fiction a few years ago and be a part of turning them into reality for patients.”

Joseph Kruempel, Associate Medical Writer at Complete HealthVizion

“I work in MedComms because, simply put, I really enjoy it! I get to work in an industry that is just as much creative as it is scientific; it is the best of both worlds.”

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Lucy Liveston, Medical Writer at Porterhouse Medical, part of the Porterhouse Medical Group

“I work in MedComms because it is the true bridge between the medical community and the non-medical decision makers. It adds tremendous value to medical innovations and finally translates to better patient care. Working in MedComms gives me the same level of satisfaction as I had in my years as a researcher, if not more.”

Tejal Madhwani, Scientific Specialist at Parexel International

“I work in MedComms because it allows me to use my scientific and communication skills to contribute to the improvement of patient outcomes across the world.”

Lucy Helas, Editorial Assistant at Ashfield MedComms

“I work in MedComms because I enjoy learning about a multitude of clinical disciplines, working as part of a dynamic team and developing communications across multiple formats that have a real-world impact. The fast-paced nature of MedComms allows for the completion of many projects and gives me a real sense of accomplishment.”

Alison Murphy, Medical Writer at Oxford PharmaGenesis

“People in the job – in their own words

“I work in MedComms because I have the opportunity to become an expert in multiple therapeutic areas while contributing in some way to helping improve patients’ lives, all from the comfort of my home office!”

Jennifer Granit, Scientific Team Lead at Parexel International

“I work in MedComms because I find it motivating to learn about new advances in medicine and therapy areas in detail. I love the variety of projects and working as part of a collaborative team to achieve great results.”

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“I work in MedComms because it allows me to raise awareness of therapies that can make a real difference to people’s lives.”

Kirsty Millar, Senior Medical Writer at Ashfield MedComms

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People in the job – in their own words

“"I work in MedComms because it allows me to learn something new every day and play a role in making a difference to patients’ lives!”

Preeyah Purang, Medical Writer at Ashfield MedComms (allegro alumni)

“I work in MedComms because I enjoy working with exceptional colleagues who want to make a difference by doing the right thing, for the right reasons. I’m able to work with multiple teams to generate high-quality work that makes a real difference to our clients. I’ve been able to work on a variety of projects, with the opportunity to focus on those that I’m more suited to. There’s always someone who needs a helping hand or who’s able to help you out when needed. Collegiality, collaboration and opportunities for mentoring, combined with subject matter that demands the very best of me, keeps me coming back for more.”

Richard Pye, Senior Medical Writer at Oxford PharmaGenesis

“I work in MedComms because it’s such an interesting job that combines scientific knowledge with creative approaches to communication.”

Cally Robinson, Senior Medical Writer I at Langland

“I work in MedComms because it gives me the opportunity to be part of a fantastic and extremely talented team. Together, we provide creative and scientifically based solutions to our clients’ problems, and no 2 days (or clients!) are the same.”

Bethany Roche, Senior Medical Writer II at Langland

“I work in MedComms because I love the science, the variety and the dynamic environment each day brings. Whilst many of my projects involve developing highly scientific material, I also have the opportunity to flex my creative muscles with visually pleasing graphics and engaging interactive content. The tangible impact that our work has on the lives of patients is immensely rewarding too.”

Jake Stoddart, Medical Writer at Complete HealthVizion

“I work in MedComms because I enjoy being part of a talented team, working to deliver creative and engaging scientific content in a variety of ways. My role allows me to use the knowledge I gained from university to make a difference to patients’ lives.”

Olivia Thomson, Associate Medical Writer at Ashfield MedComms (allegro)

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I work in MedComms...

“I work in MedComms because it’s fun! It also keeps me close to cutting-edge science and allows me to be part of an amazing team of talented and dedicated people. What’s not to love?”

Linda Townsend, Scientific Director at Ashfield MedComms

“I work in MedComms because it allows me to work with the latest scientific data and alongside clinicians at the top of their field.”

Kenny Tran, Medical Writer at Prime Global

“I work in MedComms because it allows me to combine my scientific knowledge and passion for writing to help improve patient lives by producing creative and impactful communications.”

Niall Tyrer, Associate Medical Writer at CMC Connect

“I work in MedComms because I get to read about cutting-edge scientific discoveries every day and then get to work on a creative strategy for communicating this science to a range of audiences. As part of the job, we get to meet and get inspired by incredible, intelligent, passionate people who care deeply about their research and its effect on healthcare.”

Olga Ucar, Scientific Team Lead at inScience Communications

“I work in MedComms because it’s how I can contribute to bringing new therapies to the patients who need it most.”

Lauren Van Wassenhove, Scientific Writer at Parexel International

“I work in MedComms to keep up with medical breakthroughs, and to collaborate with top scientific minds.”

Chris Watling, Principal Medical Writer at Prime Global

“I work in MedComms because it allows me to be a science nerd every day! On top of that, the work that I’m doing contributes to the sharing of knowledge on diseases and treatments in order to improve patient lives. It’s an ideal career for a science graduate.”

Alex Webster, Senior Medical Writer at Ashfield MedComms

“I work in MedComms to fulfil my combined passion for science and creativity. I enjoy that every day is different; I have had exposure to multiple therapy areas, a wide range of project types and numerous pharmaceutical companies.”

Gemma White, Associate Medical Writer at Ashfield MedComms (allegro)

“I work in MedComms because data are useless unless they are communicated effectively to meet the specific needs of audiences. Patients and healthcare providers need to know the same stuff, just at completely different levels.”

Chris Whittaker, Scientific Director at Ashfield MedComms

“I work in MedComms because the work is diverse and rewarding. While I don’t have a background in science or medicine, my editorial skills allow me to bring attention to detail, consistency and creativity to the work of our clients, which ultimately allows us to produce work of the highest quality.”

Emma Winter, Senior Medical Writer at Ashfield MedComms (allegro alumni)

“I work in MedComms because it has enabled me to use my years of clinical experience as a doctor to set up a Medical Advisory Group, which helps benefit clients by providing unique insights into what makes both healthcare professionals and patients tick from an ‘insider’s perspective’.”

Beth Wynne-Evans, Medical Advisor and Senior Medical Writer at Porterhouse Medical, part of the Porterhouse Medical Group

“I work in MedComms because it is so rewarding being part of an amazing team that helps to transform and even save people’s lives! What’s more, I love how varied the work can be!”

Lucia Zoppi, Editorial Assistant at Ashfield MedComms

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In June each year we celebrate life in MedComms with contributions from across the globe, from Auckland in New Zealand to San Francisco in the USA, providing great insights into the MedComms working day

visit www.MedCommsDay.com

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