

Careers in Medical and Scientific Writing

Panel organized by Career Services

Speakers:

Carl E. Clay, PhD, *Clinical Publications Lead – ERP, AstraZeneca*

Mary E. Dominiecki, PhD, *Medical Director, AOI Communications, L.P.*

Carl Clay, PhD Molecular Medicine, Wake Forest University

- Postdoc: Washington University in St. Louis
- Postdoc: Maryland

Attended an endocrinology meeting and met someone who was in medical writing.

Went to work for Complete Healthcare Communications (CHC), which does publication planning. Worked on manuscripts for peer review journals. Next, worked for Vindico, a company that works on continuing medical education (CME).

Got a call from AstraZeneca; he now works with AstraZeneca thought leaders and agencies like CHC and Vindico on managing the clinical publications in support of diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Mary Dominiecki

- PhD in Microbiology and Immunology NYU
- Postdoc in cancer immunology at Penn

Became assistant professor at Slippery Rock University and found she didn't like the job.

- Looked for other things to do; Carl helped her

Easier to write clinical papers than your own research.

Her first job was at CHC in pain management.

Moved to AOI Communications (AOIC) where the only focus is on oncology: webcast, visiting speakers bureau, publication planning, slide decks, sales training materials, educational projects

Most of AOIC's clients are pharmaceutical companies but AOIC also has some non-profit clients.

Has a host of freelance writers who she supervises

Promotional materials are handled by medical communicators, reviewed by the FDA

Science writing for chemists and engineers:

- There is work for them
- Math people: work in cost estimation
- Lots of science freelancers

Regulatory writing refers to writing up study protocols, study reports and docs that go to FDA

- Follow templates
- Huge and growing field: with pharmas, agencies, clinical research organizations (CRO)

Questions

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)

- Who can be an author?

Ghost writing as a practice doesn't exist anymore

It's a very dynamic relationship

Carl: when you're on the side of the company you have so much more information than when you're on the agency side

Qualifications:

- must be very detail-oriented and able to tailor info to different audiences
- must show that you can communicate
- emphasize the things you've written
- show you have broader skill sets

Look for writing opportunities

- it's worthwhile to volunteer to write chapters with your advisor
- offer to do it on a contract basis
- freelance: take the job you can do

Lots of writers work at home full-time

- No benefits
- It's a business

Resources

- Abbott, Langer Association Surveys - www.abbott-langer.com
- free salary survey in Scientists <http://www.the-scientist.com/salarysurvey/>
- American Medical Writers Association - Amwa.org (has listservs)
- LinkedIn: hook in with recruiters
- the Boss Group
- staffing on Medical Communication Job Board - <http://www.medcomjobboard.com/>
- Yoh Staffing <http://www.yoh.com/>
- Medical Writer Coach - medicalwritercoach.com – How to Break into Medical Writing – Carl Clay's web site
- Complete Healthcare Communications' website: www.chcinc.com

October, 27 2009

