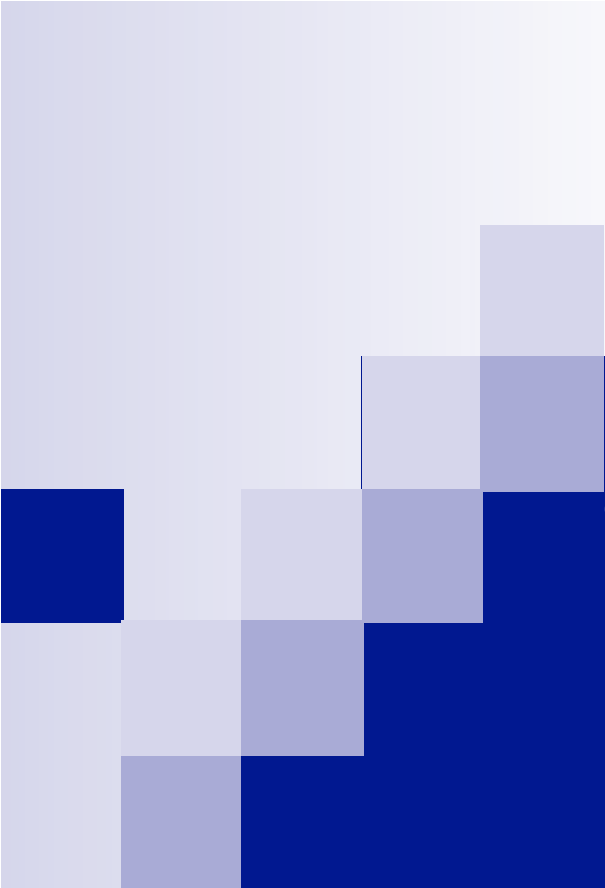


- 
- The writing tests, interviews, training opportunities and career development
  - What to expect of life in a MedComms agency
  - Presenting yourself to the agencies
  - Recognising your existing skills & strengths



- Dr Karen Wilson Smith: the writing tests and interviews, training opportunities and career development
- Dr Annick Moon: Recognising your existing skills & strengths
- Dr Carys Mills: Presenting yourself to the agencies
- Katia Chrysostomou: What to expect of life in a MedComms agency



The writing tests, interviews,  
training opportunities and  
career development



# A bit about me

- PhD at University of Birmingham
- Report writer on animal pharma newsletter for 2 years
- Medical writer/editorial manager at Medicus for 3 years
- Editorial Director at Parexel MMS for 9 years
- Freelance writer for 7 years



# What are agencies looking for

- The ideal
- The experienced
- The inexperienced with relevant practical experience
- The inexperienced without relevant practical experience



# What are the key skills or attributes?

- Writing, writing, writing
- Project management
- Ability to understand a brief and to take instruction
- To know when to ask for help and when to use your initiative
- Flexibility
- Pro-activity
- Team-work
- Personality



# Writing tests - what are they looking for?

- Your current ability and future potential
  - Completed within a reasonable timeframe?
  - General appearance – professional, clear, accompanying e-mail
  - Objective assessment to compare with other applicants – past and present

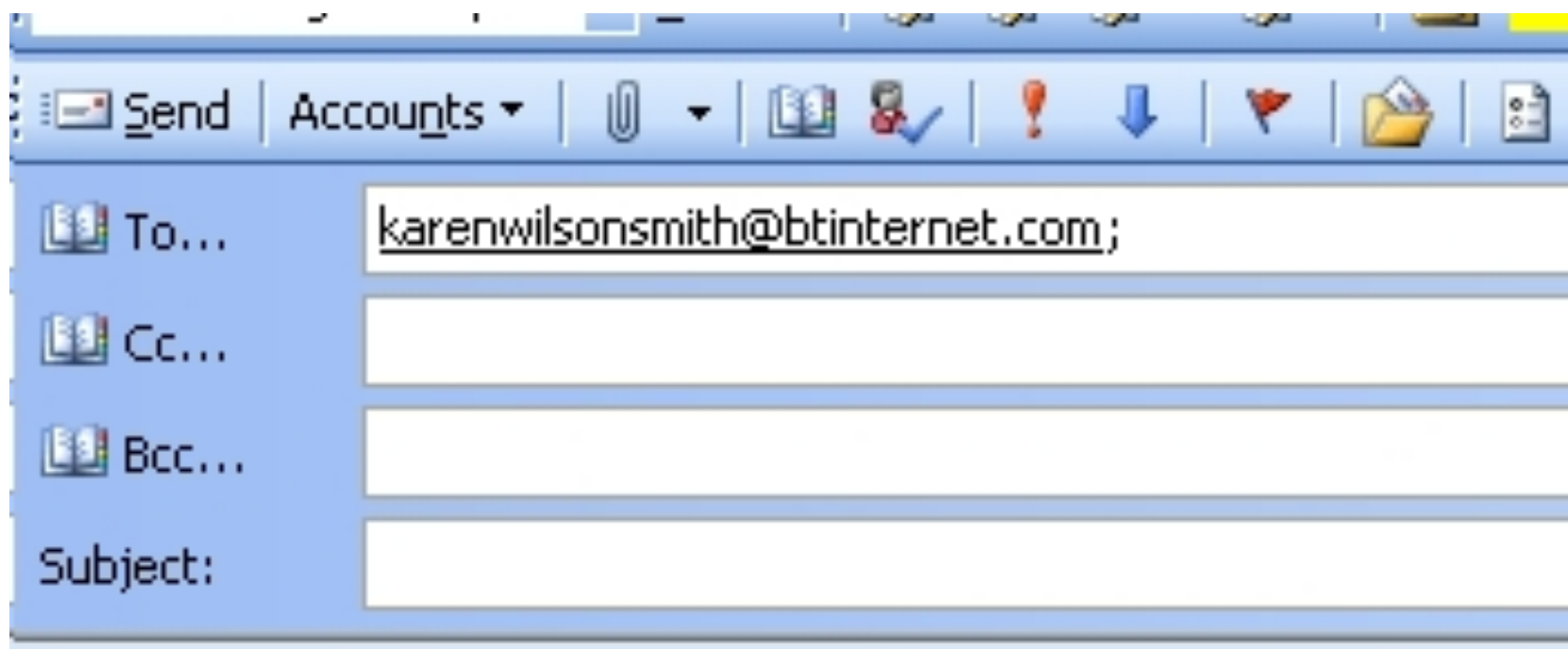


# Writing tests – how are they assessed?

## ■ **General writing ability**

- Good use of English (grammar, punctuation, SPELLING)
- Attention to detail (use consistent abbreviations, units, spelling)
- Writing style (flow, sense, beginning-middle-end)



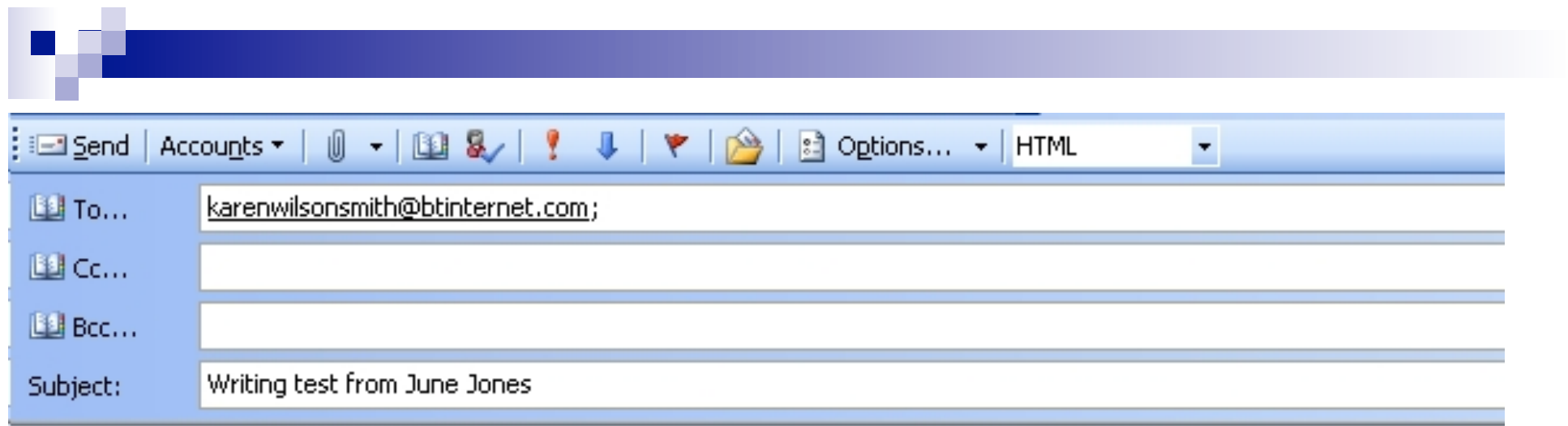


The image shows a screenshot of an email composition window. The window has a blue header bar with a menu bar containing 'Send' and 'Accounts', and a toolbar with various icons like a paperclip, a calendar, a person, a warning sign, a download arrow, a flag, an envelope, and a document. Below the header, there are four rows for email fields: 'To...', 'Cc...', 'Bcc...', and 'Subject:'. The 'To...' field contains the email address 'karenwilsonsmith@btinternet.com;'. The other fields are empty.

To...	karenwilsonsmith@btinternet.com;
Cc...	
Bcc...	
Subject:	

Here is my writing test.

Jane Jones



Dear Karen

Please find attached my writing test for the position of medical writer. I have recently finished my PhD in neuroscience and am able to start work immediately. As I have outlined in my cv (also attached), I have written several articles for my university research magazine, in addition to abstracts, posters and papers from my research project. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes  
Jane

Jane Jones  
0826 111222  
|

**Remember to attach your documents and call them something useful!**



# Writing tests – how are they assessed?

- **Scientific writing ability**

- Understanding of basic science terms
- Identification of key scientific points
- Clarity of writing / ability to pitch to correct level

- **Commercial writing ability**

- Identification of key commercial points
- Balance of commercial vs scientific messages

Toyama S, et al. **Inhibitory effects of ZSTK474, a novel phosphoinositide 3-kinase inhibitor, on osteoclasts and collagen-induced arthritis in mice.**

Arthritis Res Ther. 2010 May 18;12(3):R92

**Scientific writing**

- **INTRODUCTION:** Targeting joint destruction induced by osteoclasts (OCs) is critical for management of patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Since phosphoinositide 3-kinase (PI3-K) plays a critical role in osteoclastogenesis and bone resorption, we examined the effects of ZSTK474, a novel PI3-K-specific inhibitor, on murine OCs *in vitro* and *in vivo*.
- **METHODS:** The inhibitory effect of ZSTK474 on OC formation was determined and compared with other PI3-K inhibitors by counting tartrate-resistant acid phosphatase (TRAP)-positive multinucleated cells after culturing murine bone marrow monocytic OC precursors, and RAW264.7 cells. Activation of Akt and expression of nuclear factor of activated T cells (NFAT) c1 in cultured RAW264.7 cells were examined. The suppressing effect of ZSTK474 on bone resorption was assessed by the pit formation assay. The *in vivo* effects of ZSTK474 were studied in collagen-induced arthritis (CIA) in the mouse. Oral daily administration of ZSTK474 was started either when more than half or when all mice developed arthritis. Effects of ZSTK474 were evaluated using the arthritis score and histological score of the hind paws.
- **RESULTS:** ZSTK474 inhibited the differentiation of bone marrow OC precursors and RAW264.7 cells in a dose-dependent manner. The inhibitory effect of ZSTK474 was much stronger than that of LY294002, the most commonly used PI3-K inhibitor. In addition, ZSTK474 suppressed the bone resorbing activity of mature OCs. Moreover, oral daily administration of ZSTK474, even when begun after the development of arthritis, ameliorated collagen-induced arthritis (CIA) in mice without apparent toxicity. Histological examination of the hind paw demonstrated noticeable reduction of inflammation and of cartilage destruction in ZSTK 474-treated mice. ZSTK474 also significantly decreased OC formation adjacent to the tarsal bone of the hind paw.
- **CONCLUSIONS:** These findings suggest that inhibition of PI3-K with ZSTK474 may potentially suppress synovial inflammation and bone destruction in patients with RA.

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- **CONCLUSIONS: These findings suggest that inhibition of PI3-K with ZSTK474 may potentially suppress synovial inflammation and bone destruction in patients with RA.**



# The interview – assessing the other skills

- Project management (can you manage several projects?)
- Ability to understand a brief and to take instruction
- Know when to ask for help and when to use your initiative
- Flexibility (able to work on a variety of projects?)
- Pro-activity (can you pick up the phone? Are you a self-starter?)
- Team-work (are you willing to muck in and do your share of the tough jobs?)
- Personality (does it fit with the current team / can they imagine working with you?)

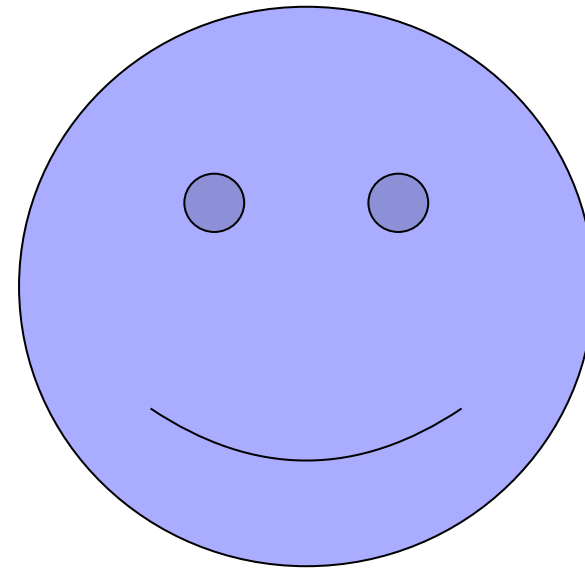


# Training opportunities

- Some agencies offer courses on writing, editing, presentations etc
  
- Most training will be “on the job”
  - Don't be afraid of feedback – welcome it
  - Ask if you don't understand (but ask the right person - not necessarily the client)
  - Listen to advice
  - Raise the alarm if you are worried
  - Remember – you are writing to fulfil the client's objectives

# Career development – my advice

- Learn your trade – aim for at least 3 years of solid writing experience
  - Wide range of therapy areas
  - Wide range of project type
  - Different client companies
  
- What are the options?
  - Specialist writer
  - Team leader / manager
  - Client services
  - Client
  - Freelance
  
- What sort of person are you?
  - Small company / large company?
  - Enjoy project management?
  - Enjoy managing people?
  - Enjoy writing?



**Have fun – it's a great career!**