My career in MedComms

Rick Flemming
Before MedComms

• BSc in Physiological Sciences, Newcastle University (’93-96)
• MSc in Human and Applied Physiology, King’s College, London (’96-97)
• Editorial Assistant, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London (’97-98)
Before MedComms

• PhD Physiology & Pharmacology, Leeds (’98-2002)

Discrete store-operated calcium influx into an intracellular compartment in rabbit arteriolar smooth muscle

R. Flemming, A. Cheong, A. M. Dedman and D. J. Beech
School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK

This study tested the hypothesis that store-operated channels (SOCs) exist as a discrete population of Ca^{2+} channels activated by depletion of intracellular Ca^{2+} stores in cerebral arteriolar smooth muscle cells and explored their direct contractile function. Using the Ca^{2+} indicator fura-PE3 it was
Leaving academia

• Narrow career path
• Short-term contracts
• Time for a change
• Knew my limitations
My career in MedComms

2003
• Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Macclesfield

2005
• Senior Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Knutsford
Why did I become a medical writer?

- Wanted to stay in science
- Clear career pathway
- Good mentorship and training
- Good financial benefits
- Variety of projects and therapy areas
- Work in different parts of the UK / world

... and fundamentally, I enjoy and am good at writing...
What did I learn in academia that is relevant to medical writing?

- Research skills and not get side tracked by needless detail
- Attention to detail and scientific accuracy
- Confidence in learning new skills and facts
- Ability to contribute to a team
Moving into MedComms: culture shock

- Friday.....
- Monday.....
Overview of some medical communication services

- Publications
  - Educational materials, such as slide kits and monographs
- Services
  - E-solutions, such as websites, and digital strategies
  - Strategic consulting and competitor intelligence
  - Live educational, scientific meetings of all sizes
Publications

- Abstracts for congresses
- Posters/slide presentations for congresses
- Clinical study manuscripts
- Review articles
- Meta-analyses
Clinical study manuscript

Tolerability and safety of perampanel: two randomized dose-escalation studies


Objectives — To evaluate, for the first time in patients with epilepsy, the tolerability and safety of escalating doses of oral perampanel, a novel, selective, non-competitive AMPA antagonist, as adjunctive therapy for refractory partial-onset seizures. Materials and methods — Two consecutive, randomized, double-blind, dose-escalation studies recruited adults (18–70 years) with uncontrolled partial-onset seizures receiving one to three concomitant antiepileptic drugs. In study 206, 210 patients were randomized and received increasing doses of perampanel for 12 weeks.

Acknowledgements

Editorial support was provided by Rick Flemming, PhD and Sian-Marie Lucas, PhD of Complete Medical Communications and was funded by Eisai Inc. These studies were funded by Eisai Inc.
Clinical study manuscript: how it works in practice

1. Receive brief for an experienced colleague
2. Write a bulleted outline
3. Address internal review comments and send to client and authors
4. Teleconference with client (pharma) and authors (clinical study investigators)
Factor Xa Inhibitors: Next-Generation Antithrombotic Agents

Donald J. P. Pinto, Joanne M. Smallheer, Daniel L. Cheney, Robert M. Knabb, and Ruth R. Wexler*

Research and Development, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, P.O. Box 5400, Princeton, New Jersey, 08543

Received February 3, 2010

Acknowledgment. Professional writing and editorial assistance were provided by Rick Flemming, Ph.D., at PPSI, and were funded by Bristol-Myers Squibb and Pfizer. The authors also thank Joseph Luettgen, Meriah Valente, and Swanee Jacutin-Porte for technical assistance.
EGFR mutation testing in lung cancer: a review of available methods and their use for analysis of tumour tissue and cytology samples

Gillian Ellison,1 Guanshan Zhu,2 Alexandros Moulis,3 Simon Dearden,1 Georgina Speake,1 Rose McCormack1

Acknowledgements Medical writing support was provided by Rick Flemming, PhD, CMPP and Annette Smith, PhD of Complete Medical Communications, and was funded by AstraZeneca.
Meetings

- Satellite symposia
- ‘Standalone’ meetings
- Advisory board meetings
- Pitches
- Medical/scientific association congresses
Medical congresses

• ASCO 2012, Chicago
  – American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting
  – >25,000 registered delegates + ca. 10,000 affiliated professionals
  – Cutting-edge science
  – Comprehensive report for a biosimilar manufacturer
Challenges: deadlines
Challenges: criticism
Challenges: writing treadmill
Upsides: variety

• Epilepsy
• Oncology
• Spinal devices
• Thrombosis
• Men’s health
• Plus lots more...
Upsides: flexibility (sometimes...)
Upsides: teamwork

- Medical writers
- Editorial managers
- Account managers
- Business development
- Design studio
Upsides: travel

- New York
- Chicago
- San Francisco
- Stockholm
- Prague
- Paris
- Florence
Upsides: working with the experts
Upsides: demand for your services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Writing and Editorial jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writer/Senior Medical Writer (Macclesfield) - Bioscript Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK - North West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| We are a successful, full-service medical communications group with offices in Central London, Bollington and Philadelphia, PA. We are privately-owned and have an excellent client base and a great tea[...]
| [Recruiter: Bioscript Group | Posted: 22/04/2013 | Jobcode 95003 | More... ] |
| **Experienced Medical Writer - Continuing Medical Education**  |
| UK - South East                    |
| Fresh Connect Recruitment          |
| An Experienced Medical Writer is being sought by a Continuing Medical Education agency based in Surrey. This is an unusual opportunity for a talented individual to work full-time but spend two days a[...]
| [Recruiter: Fresh Connect | Posted: 17/05/2013 | Jobcode 95967 | More... ] |
| **Senior Account Executive - Medical Communications**  |
| UK - London                        |
| Fresh Connect Recruitment          |
| A successful and innovative Medical Communications agency has an exciting new opening for a talented Senior Account Executive to provide them with the creativity, vision and account handling expertise[...]
| [Recruiter: Fresh Connect | Posted: 17/05/2013 | Jobcode 95963 | More... ] |
| **Senior Medical Writers x 3**  |
| UK - North West                    |
| Exemplar People                   |
Opportunities: clearly defined progression

- Associate Medical Writer
- Medical Writer
- Senior Medical Writer
- Editorial Manager or Principal Writer
- Editorial Unit Manager or Editorial Director
Increasing opportunities with greater experience

**Associate Medical Writer**
- Learn the job
- High proportion of job spent writing at desk

**Medical Writer**
- Build up experience
- Increase client contact & live meeting experience

**Senior Medical Writer**
- Pass on experience and review the work of others
- Lead client teams and meetings without support

**Editorial Manager**
- Line management and business development
- Provide clients with strategic advice
My career in MedComms

2003
- Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Macclesfield

2005
- Senior Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Knutsford
My career in MedComms

2003
• Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Macclesfield

2005
• Senior Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Knutsford
My career in MedComms

2003
• Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Macclesfield

2005
• Senior Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Knutsford

2006
• Editorial Manager, MedComms Agency, Knutsford
My career in MedComms

2003
• Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Macclesfield

2005
• Senior Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Knutsford

2006
• Editorial Manager, MedComms Agency, Knutsford

2008
• Freelance Medical Writer
Benefits of being a freelance medical writer

- You are your own boss
- Flexibility in when you work and what work you do
- Potential to earn more
Drawbacks of being a freelance medical writer

• Losing the benefits of being in employment (regular wage, holiday and sick pay, pension etc.)
• Risk of not getting enough work to pay your bills
• Marketing yourself
• Book-keeping and accountancy
• Lose the social element of working with and around other people
My career in MedComms

2003
• Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Macclesfield

2005
• Senior Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Knutsford

2006
• Editorial Manager, MedComms Agency, Knutsford

2008
• Freelance Medical Writer
My career in MedComms

- **2003**: Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Macclesfield
- **2005**: Senior Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Knutsford
- **2006**: Editorial Manager, MedComms Agency, Knutsford
- **2008**: Freelance Medical Writer
- **2011**: Freelance Medical Writing Agency
“Life is like riding a bicycle, in order to keep your balance, you must keep moving.” Albert Einstein (1879–1955)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy and excel at writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific background and love of science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedantic and accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent research skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t mind or love travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to think on feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thick skinned!!**
Tips for getting into MedComms

• Write at every opportunity
• Learn about medical writing, MedComms and pharma
• Perfect your CV, covering letter and emails!!!
• Try and get relevant work experience
  – Contact freelance medical writers, med comms companies
  – Although not advertised, some may offer paid or unpaid experience
My career in MedComms

2003
• Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Macclesfield

2005
• Senior Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Knutsford

2006
• Editorial Manager, MedComms Agency, Knutsford

2008
• Freelance Medical Writer

2011
• Freelance Medical Writing Agency