

LETTERS

Professional writers can help to improve clarity of medical writing

The editorial by Roger Collier calls for the clear presentation of study findings, to ensure that results that have been carefully gathered are appropriately communicated.¹ The Global Alliance for Publication Professionals agrees with these sentiments, and states, “Most of the responsibility for improving writing in academic medicine, however, falls upon the physicians and scientists who produce it.” However, it has been shown that the major barrier to publishing research is lack of time,^{2,3} which may well lead to poorly written manuscripts, as well as nondisclosure of results. The issue of waste in biomedical research has been tackled before,⁴ and the Global Alliance for Publication Professionals has previously highlighted the role that professional medical writers could play in resolving the burden of time constraints and lack of training faced by researchers (see PubMed Commons comments⁴).

We would like to emphasize the role of professional medical writers in helping authors deliver high-quality, accurate and timely manuscripts in an ethical and transparent manner. Such medical writers are highly qualified individuals, combining scientific rigour, in-depth knowledge of publication guidelines and aptitude for effective communication.⁵⁻⁷ Professional writing services have a recognized impact on publication success,⁸⁻¹³ and although such professional assistance does have budgetary implications, as previously suggested, provision could be included in research⁴ or departmental budgets.^{3,14} Indeed, there may be cost savings associ-

ated with the lower time requirement for authors preparing a high-quality, readable, concise and accurate manuscript that adheres to a journal's instructions to authors and applicable best practices.

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Competing interests: The Global Alliance for Publication Professionals (www.gappteam.org) is a group of independent individuals who volunteer their time and receive no funding (other than website hosting fees from the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals). All Global Alliance for Publication Professionals members have held or hold leadership roles at associations representing professional medical writers (e.g., the American Medical Writers Association, the European Medical Writers Association, Driving Insights into Action, the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals, the Association of Regulatory and Clinical Scientists), but do not speak on behalf of those organizations. Global Alliance for Publication Professionals members have or do provide professional medical writing services to not-for-profit and for-profit clients.