

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The *AMWA Journal* is designed to be an authoritative, comprehensive source of information about knowledge, skills, and opportunities in the field of medical communication worldwide. This goal is accomplished by the publishing of articles, columns, features, news, and interviews in the field of medical communication. The *AMWA Journal* encourages the submission of manuscripts on topics that are timely and relevant for medical writers and editors, as well as suggestions for content for its recurring sections.

Unless otherwise noted, submit manuscripts and suggestions for content to the Journal Editor at [amwajournaleditor@editorialrx.com](mailto:amwajournaleditor@editorialrx.com).

## FEATURE-LENGTH ARTICLES

Feature-length articles include topical features, original research in medical communication, and Science Series articles.

### Topical Features

The Journal accepts manuscripts on areas of interest to medical communicators, including topics within such broad categories as regulatory writing, continuing medical education, patient education, medical marketing/advertising, public relations, medical journal management, publication ethics, health policy, etc. The Journal especially encourages the submission of articles on the theoretical underpinnings of specific types of medical communication. *AMWA Journal* readers are primarily practitioners (not academicians), and application of theory to practice is an essential component of manuscripts.

› **Word Count:** 3,000 words (plus an informative abstract of 250-300 words)

### Content

- Provide background and rationale for the topic in the introduction.
- Define the scope; that is, the degree of depth/breadth to which you will discuss the topic.
- Emphasize the relevance of the topic to medical communicators in the introduction and throughout.
- Use relevant reference materials to support the information you present.
- Use headings to divide text into sections to help guide the reader through the main points of the topic.
- Use graphic elements (graphs, illustrations, tables) to illustrate key points, as appropriate.
- Include a reference list with complete citations (in AMA style).

### Original Research

The Journal accepts manuscripts reporting original research on written communication, publication trends, and medical communicators' productivity and value added. (For more guidance, see Lang T. Just Who Are We and What Are We Doing, Anyway? Needed Research in Medical Writing. *AMWA J.* 2009;24(3):106-112.)

› **Word Count:** 3,000 words (plus an informative abstract of 250-300 words)

### Content

- Create a logical case and context for the problem statement in the introduction.
- Articulate a clear, concise, complete research question.
- Discuss literature already published on the research question and describe how the current research builds on established research.
- Clearly define the research design, methodology, and sample (or population).
- Describe in detail the procedures for data analysis and the statistical methods used.
- Organize results in a way that is easy to understand.
- Use graphic elements (graphs, illustrations, tables) to illustrate the most important results.
- Interpret the results without overstating or overgeneralizing.
- Ensure that the conclusions follow from the design, methods, and results.
- Emphasize the relevance of the findings specifically to medical communicators and the impact of the findings on the work of medical communicators and/or on the field in general.
- Include a reference list with complete citations (in AMA style).

### Science Series

The Science Series accepts manuscripts that provide an overview of a specific anatomic or physiologic topic (eg, body system), disease or condition, diagnostic method (eg, laboratory tests, imaging systems), or type of treatment (eg, devices).

Submit manuscripts for the Science Series to Randy Fritz, Science Series Editor, at [fritz.randall@mayo.edu](mailto:fritz.randall@mayo.edu).

› **Word Count:** 3,000 words (plus an informative abstract of 250-300 words)

### Content

- Focus on a specific topic and provide broad details (the goal is to offer an introduction to the topic, not a comprehensive review).

- Structure the article according to basic concepts (anatomic or physiologic topic); epidemiology, etiology, clinical presentation, diagnosis, and treatment (disease or condition); or description, principles of use, and outcomes (diagnostic methods and treatments).
- Include graphics to help highlight anatomic detail; show patterns or trends; illustrate devices, instruments, or tools; or demonstrate function.
- Do not include information that recommends or endorses a specific proprietary treatment or diagnostic method.
- Include a glossary of topic-specific terms and highlight those terms in bold in the text.
- Provide a list of resources that will help readers further their study on the topic.

## OTHER TYPES OF ARTICLES

Other types of articles include those in the Around the Career Block and Practical Matters sections, as well as coverage of meeting sessions/presentations (AMWA or otherwise). These articles are shorter and less “formal” than feature-length articles.

### Around the Career Block Section

The Around the Career Block section accepts manuscripts that provide advice on career-related issues, profiles of professional organizations, and first-person accounts of educational experiences.

#### *Career-related Articles*

These articles address topics that are relevant to the career development of medical communicators in a variety of settings and/or at various levels of experience. Areas of interest include job hunting, developing a portfolio, interviewing techniques, hiring guidance, performance evaluation, mentoring programs, performance goals, etc.

› **Word Count:** 750-1,500 words

#### *Tone*

As for all other manuscripts, the tone of the manuscript should be objective and professional. Achieving the appropriate tone is often a challenge, as many manuscripts submitted to this section are based on AMWA annual conference sessions. Manuscripts should not read like a transcript of an oral presentation. Avoid a personal, conversational tone, and support statements with references rather than basing statements exclusively on personal experience. (Manuscripts invited for the “My Perspective” column in Around the Career Block do not need supportive references and may be somewhat less formal in tone.)

#### *Content*

- Create a title that is concise but descriptive enough to inform readers about the relevance of the topic.
- In the title and introduction, define the readers who will benefit most, either by setting (freelance, clinical research organization, professional society, etc) or by level of experience (entry-level writer or editor, hiring manager, veteran writer, etc).

- Provide background and rationale for the topic, focusing on information that will be of greatest use to the target audience.
- Describe your qualifications for instructing and/or advising readers on the topic.
- Use graphic elements (bullet points, tables) to highlight and/or summarize key information.
- Conclude by summarizing the importance of the topic and how the reader (and his or her work) will benefit.
- Include a reference list with complete citations (in AMA style).

### *Profiles of Professional Organizations*

These profiles help readers discover or better understand organizations that address specialty niches and may therefore be a useful supplement to AMWA membership.

› **Word Count:** 600-1,000 words

#### *Content*

- Provide an overview of the organization in terms of its mission and types of members.
- Describe the features of the organization that are of specific benefit to medical writers and editors.
- Include a quote from someone involved with the organization, if possible.
- Include a textbox with details about joining the organization (membership criteria, application process, cost, etc) and a resource (Web site or contact information) for more details.

### *First-person Accounts of Educational Programs*

These articles provide overviews of educational programs designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of medical writers and editors.

› **Word Count:** 600-1,000 words

#### *Content*

- Provide an overview of the program in terms of the end result (certificate, degree, other) and the intended targets of the program (who benefits most?).
- Describe the courses or workshops in the program and the background of the faculty.
- Describe your experience with the program in terms of level of commitment and benefits and drawbacks.
- Include a quote from someone involved with the institution or program, if possible (another student, a faculty member, staff person).
- Note the success of the program in terms of how students' careers are advanced by the knowledge and skills learned.
- Include a textbox with details about the requirements of the program (eligibility for enrollment, requirements for completing the program, cost, etc) and a resource for more information.

### **Practical Matters Section**

The Practical Matters section accepts manuscripts that provide practical guidance to medical writers and editors (at all levels of experience) for improving the skills involved in their daily work activities in a variety of medical communication settings.

› **Word Count:** 750-1,800 words

### **Tone**

As for all other manuscripts, the tone of the manuscript should be objective and professional. Achieving the appropriate tone is often a challenge, as many manuscripts submitted to this section are based on AMWA annual conference sessions. Manuscripts should not read like a transcript of an oral presentation. Avoid a personal, conversational tone, and support statements with references rather than basing statements exclusively on personal experience.

### **Content**

- Create a results-oriented title that will draw in readers.
- Introduce your topic by describing why it's important and by discussing the benefits of improving the skill/process involved.
- Structure the article around main points that represent steps in a process or primary factors to consider.
- Reinforce statements, tips, and steps with concrete examples as often as possible.
- Use graphic elements (bulleted lists, tables, figure) to highlight and/or summarize key information.
- Conclude by summarizing again the importance of the topic and how the reader (and his or her work) will benefit.

### **Coverage of Live Meeting Sessions (AMWA or Other)**

The Journal accepts summaries of AMWA annual conference sessions, reports on pertinent sessions at meetings hosted by other professional organizations, and local/regional AMWA events. Individuals interested in writing a summary of an AMWA annual conference session should contact Conference Coverage Coordinator Kristina Wasson-Blader (kwb@kwbhealthcom.com). Individuals interested in writing a report on an AMWA chapter event or a report on a session at another professional organization should contact the Journal Editor.

› **Word Count:** 500-1,000 words

### **Content**

- Include the date and location of the event in the opening paragraph (except for AMWA annual conference coverage).
- Provide a factual summary of the substance of the session without editorializing.
- Focus on highlights and provide concrete information that will be useful to readers. (Avoid sweeping statements such as "In closing, Smith reviewed several strategies for addressing this problem," as specific details are needed to provide value to readers.)
- Attribute facts in the article to the speaker (for example, use "Dr X said," "According to Dr X," and similar phrases).
- When there is more than one speaker, include comments about each speaker's presentation (if possible).
- Use graphic elements (bulleted lists, tables, figures) whenever possible.
- Include entertaining quotes and asides to enliven the prose.
- Note if any portion of the presentation is available online (and in what format; ie, slides, Webcast).

## **OTHER SECTIONS**

### **Member Musings**

The Member Musings section is a forum for members to share personal essays (related to medical writing and editing) and creative work.

› **Word Count:** 500-750 words

### **Sounding Board**

The Sounding Board is a forum for members' opinions on topics relevant to medical writing and editing. Contact the Journal Editor to seek approval for the topic before preparing and submitting a manuscript.

› **Word Count:** 750-1,000 words

### **Letters to the Editor**

Letters to the Editor provide an opportunity for readers to comment on topics published in the *AMWA Journal*. Letters should refer to Journal contents within the past two issues.

› **Word Count:** 500 words or less

### **Media Reviews**

The Media Reviews section includes reviews of books, CD-ROMs, and videos that are of practical value or topical interest for medical writers and editors. (*Guidelines for reviews can be provided on request.*)

*Contact Book Reviews Editor Evelyn Kelly (evelykell@aol.com) if you wish to submit a book for review or wish to write a review.*

*Contact the Journal Editor if you wish to write a review of other types of media.*

### **Web Wanderings**

The Web Wanderings section highlights Web sites that are useful for medical writers and editors.

*Send suggestions for Web sites to review to Barb Woldin (barbwoldin@comcast.net).*

### **Freelance Forum**

The Freelance Forum provides advice on a wide variety of freelance issues from an experienced panel of freelance medical writers and editors.

*Submit questions for the panel to the Journal Editor.*

### **Social Media**

The Social Media section includes articles focusing on the use of social media and networking in the medical communication industry.

*Send suggestions for topics to the appropriate Social Media Section Editor: Cyndy Kryder (clkwriter@verizon.net), general social media topics; Mali Schantz-Feld (mschantzfeld@yahoo.com), LinkedIn; Debra Gordon (debra@debragordon.com), blogs.*

## MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

Create the manuscript as a Word document. Use a 12-point font and double-spacing throughout. **Do not use headers or footers other than page numbers.**

### Title Page

Include the following information on the title page:

- Title of the article
- Full name(s) of the author(s), with degree(s)
- Affiliations (job title, department, institution, city, and state or country); use superscript letters to indicate the specific affiliations of each author
- Name, date, and location of meeting where paper was presented, if appropriate
- Name of the corresponding author and all contact information
- Section of the Journal for which the manuscript is intended

### Style

Refer to *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary* (W.B. Saunders, Philadelphia) for the spelling of medical terms. Use *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* or *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass.) for the spelling and hyphenation of nonmedical terms. For matters of style in general, refer to the latest edition of the *American Medical Association Manual of Style*. Follow the guidelines set forth in the "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication" ([www.icmje.org](http://www.icmje.org)).

### References

Number references chronologically (with a superscript number) throughout the text and list the reference citations at the end of the manuscript. Format the list of references according to *AMA Manual of Style* (10th ed). Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the references.

**If you have used the footnote tool in Word or reference software (such as EndNote or RefMan), please strip all coding before submitting.**

### Tables

Print each table on a separate page and include a brief title. Number the tables in the order in which they are cited in the text. Define all abbreviations used in the table and indicate the units of measurement for all values. Use superscript numbers to mark footnotes in the table.

### Figures

Figures, which consist of illustrations, photographs, and screenshots, should be professionally rendered and should be sent as separate files. **Do not embed figures in the Word document.** Ensure that letters, numbers, and symbols are clear throughout and large enough to remain legible when reduced for publication. The

preferred formats for line figures are eps or press-ready PDF files with fonts embedded. **Do not send line figures in Word or PowerPoint files.** Photos should have a resolution of 300 dpi and be in either tiff or jpg format. You must include a credit line for the photo, if needed. (Refer to the [Policy](#) for the Use of Images in the *AMWA Journal* and Other AMWA Publications for guidelines on when a credit line is needed.) You must also provide written permission from the subject of a photograph. **Do not send illustrations or photos saved from Web pages.** (The resolution is not adequate for print publication.)

**Legends.** Include figure legends on a separate page. Legends should provide enough information to understand the figures without reference to the text. Include an appropriate credit line for all previously published figures and provide written permission.

## MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

Manuscripts are accepted for consideration with the understanding that they have not been published elsewhere and are not under review elsewhere. Submit the manuscript as an attachment to an e-mail note to the Journal Editor ([amwajournaleditor@editorialrx.com](mailto:amwajournaleditor@editorialrx.com)). In addition to the manuscript, include the following:

- Completed and signed author responsibility/disclosure form (forms are available for manuscripts by a [single author](#) or [multiple authors](#))
- Completed and signed copyright form (forms are available for manuscripts by a [single author](#) or [multiple authors](#))
- Written permission of author(s) and publisher(s) to use any material published previously (figures, tables, or quotations of more than 100 words)

## COPYRIGHT POLICY

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## REVIEW AND PRODUCTION PROCESS

Manuscripts are reviewed by the editor and at least two additional reviewers. Decisions of the editor are final. All submitted material is subject to editing and copyediting. Authors will receive the edited version of the manuscript before publication, and all queries and editorial changes should be carefully reviewed at that time. Authors are responsible for the content of their entire work, including changes made during the editorial process and approved by the corresponding author.