



Life in MedComms

Rick Flemming MSc, PhD, CMPP





What does a medical writer in MedComms typically do?

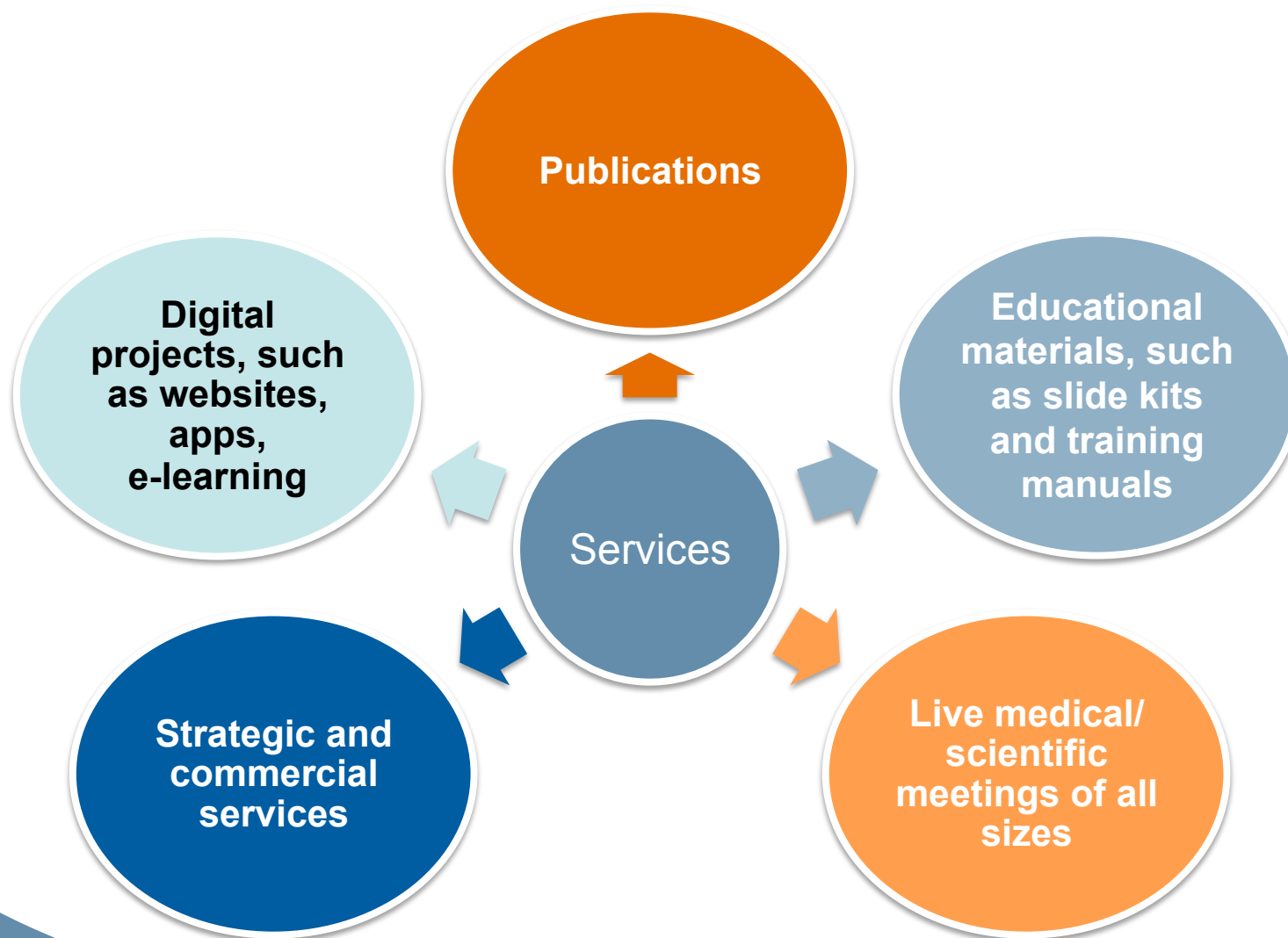
- Helps pharmaceutical* companies to communicate about their drugs to healthcare professionals**
- Writes high-quality, scientific copy
 - in many different therapy areas
 - in many different formats



*Also biotech, diagnostics and device companies


**And other audiences!

Overview of some medical communication services

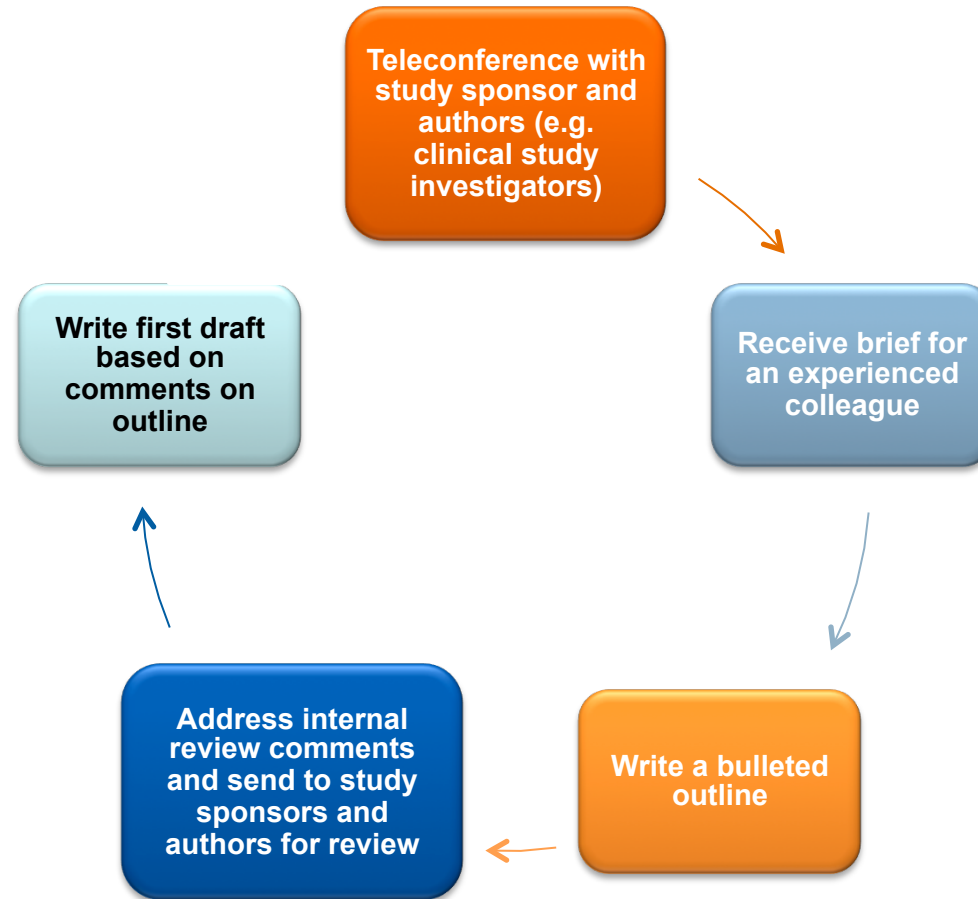


Publications



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

Clinical study manuscript: how it works in practice



Publication guidelines

Annals of Internal Medicine RESEARCH AND REPORTING METHODS

Good Publication Practice for Communicating Company-Sponsored Medical Research: GPP3

Wendy P. Battisti, PhD; Elizabeth Wager, PhD; Lise Baltzer; Dan Bridges, PhD; Angela Cairns; Christopher I. Carswell, MS; Leslie Citrome, MD, MPH; James A. Gurr, PhD; LaVerne A. Mooney, DrPH; B. Jane Moore, MS; Teresa Peña, PhD; Carol H. Sanes-Miller, MS; Keith Veitch, PhD; Karen L. Woolley, PhD; and Yvonne E. Yarker, PhD

Ann Intern Med. 2015;163:461-464. doi:10.7326/M15-0288 www.annals.org


2.4: Professional Medical Writers

2.4.1: Role of the Professional Medical Writer. Professional medical writers may assist authors in preparing publications and presentations. Properly trained and experienced writers can help authors with the development of publications in a compliant, complete, and timely manner, particularly when authors have limited time or knowledge of publication ethics and current publication and reporting guidelines (7, 21-23). In addition to technical expertise, medical writers should have a good understanding of publication ethics and current publication guidelines. Training programs are provided by various organizations (for example, ISMPP, American Medical Writers Association, European Medical Writers Association, and Drug Information Association), and certification programs with enforceable codes of conduct have been introduced (ISMPP certification Web site, www.ismpp.org/certification; American Medical Writers Association certification Web site, www.amwa.org/certification).


CONSORT 2010 Statement: updated guidelines for reporting parallel group randomised trials

Kenneth F Schulz,¹ Douglas G Altman,² David Moher,³ for the CONSORT Group

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2010;340:c332
doi:10.1136/bmj.c332



**How did I get into medical writing?
(and what can you learn from my
experience?)**



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)

Journal of Physiology (2002), 543.2, pp. 455–464
© The Physiological Society 2002

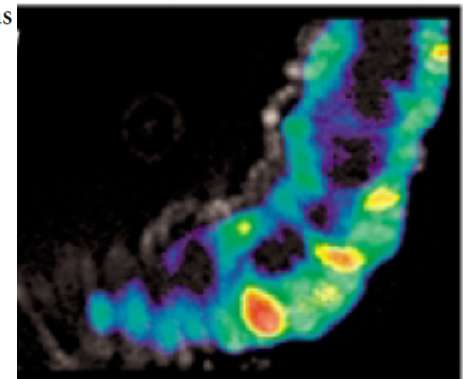
DOI: 10.1113/jphysiol.2002.023366
www.jphysiol.org

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



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...**

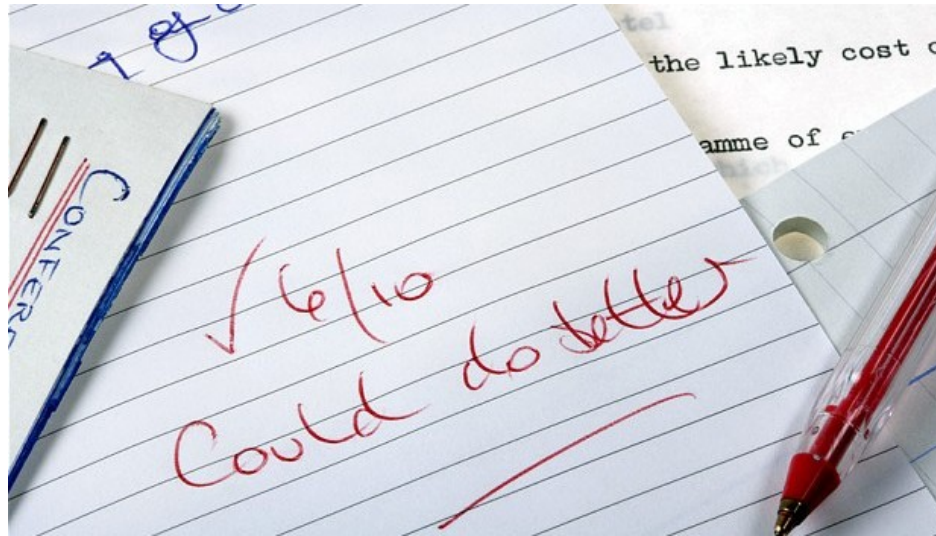


‘Ups’ and ‘downs’ of MedComms

Challenges: deadlines



Challenges: criticism




Challenges: writing treadmill



Upsides: variety



- Epilepsy
 - Oncology
 - Spinal devices
 - Thrombosis
 - Men's health
 - Plus lots more...
- 

Upsides: teamwork

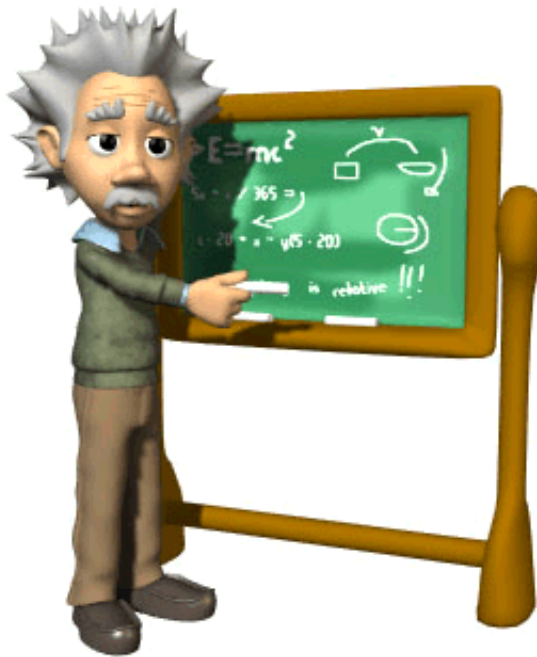


Upsides: travel

- New York
- Chicago
- San Francisco
- Stockholm
- Prague
- Paris
- Florence
- Munich



Upsides: working with the experts




Upsides: demand for your services



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NextMedCommsJob is dedicated to putting job seekers looking for jobs in the medical education, medical communications and medical publishing sector in touch with recruiters and employers.

Job Type

Medical Writing and Editorial [X](#)

[Start Again](#)

Business Type

[Medical Communications Agency](#) (196)

[Medical Education Agency](#) (121)

[Advertising Agency](#) (25)

[Public Relations Agency](#) (4)

[Publishing Company](#) (1)

Location

[United Kingdom](#) (206)

[United States of America](#) (7)

[Netherlands](#) (5)

[China](#) (3)

[Singapore](#) (2)

[Australia](#) (1)

[Switzerland](#) (1)

[Rest of Asia](#) (1)

Search Results: 222 jobs found

Medical Writing and Editorial jobs

[Experienced Medical Writers - London - AXON](#)

London

None

Are you passionate about science and excited about the opportunity to work with some of the most highly esteemed Key Opinion Leaders in healthcare? Do you want to work with some of the most ta[...]

[Recruiter: AXON | Posted: 27/09/2016 | Jobcode 170793 | [More...](#)]

[Senior Medical Writer - Central London](#)

London

Senior Medical Writer - Central London Salary: £38,000 - £52,000 p/aFollowing consistent and successful growth across many of their accounts, an independent medical education agency in Centr[...]

[Recruiter: SEC Pharma | Posted: 05/10/2016 | Jobcode 171270 | [More...](#)]

[Junior/ Associate Medical Writer - PhD - MedComms - Oxford](#)

South East, United Kingdom

None

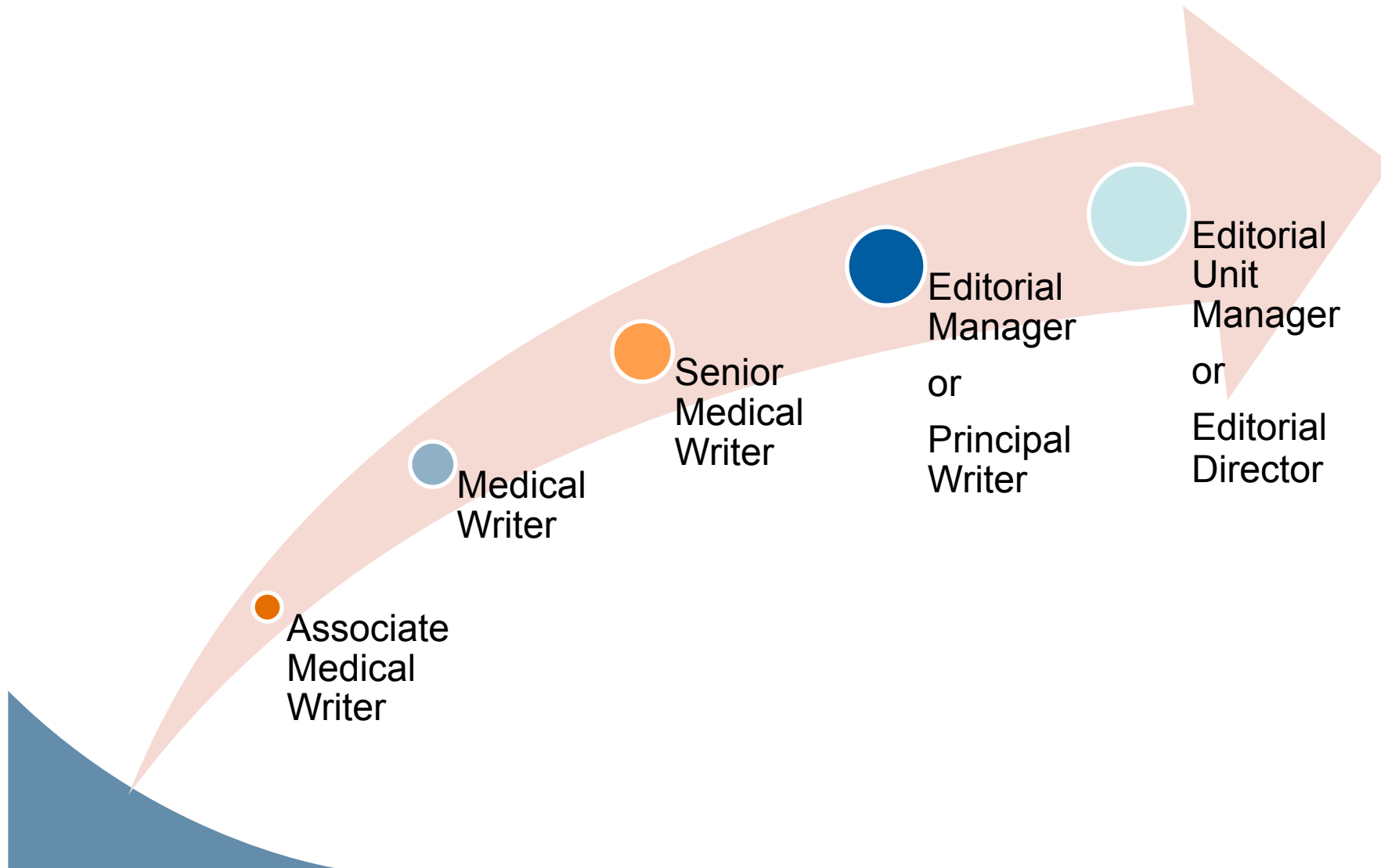
CLR is looking to find PhD Graduates for a number of exciting Medical Writer opportunities within Healthcare Communications! These exciting roles are with a Leading Healthcare Communications agencies [...]

[Recruiter: CLR Healthcare Ltd | Posted: 04/10/2016 | Jobcode 171234 | [More...](#)]

[Associate Medical Writer / Junior Medical Writer - Medical Education - KENT](#)

London

Upsides: clearly defined progression





My career in MedComms



My career in MedComms

2003

- Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Macclesfield

My career in MedComms

2003

- Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Macclesfield

2005

- Senior Medical Writer, MedComms Agency, Knutsford

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- Editorial Manager, MedComms Agency, Knutsford

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- Editorial Manager, MedComms Agency, Knutsford

2008

- Freelance Writer & Consultant

2011

- Co-founder & Director, Medical Writing Agency (Aspire Scientific)



Aspire Scientific is a boutique **medical writing agency** led by experienced professionals and supported by a select team of talented and highly educated writers



We deliver an extensive range of high-quality medical writing projects



Looking for paid work experience in medical communications/medical writing?



Aspire Scientific offer paid work experience to talented and suitably qualified UK-based individuals who have or are working towards a PhD.

If you would like to find out more, then please email Jane Woodrow (jane.woodrow@aspire-scientific.com), with a copy of your CV and, to showcase your writing skills, a 250-word summary of your current research focus.

Quote from a former member of our team, now working for a medical communications agency:

"Working with Aspire alongside my academic role has been a fantastic experience. I have been involved in a range of oncology-based medical writing projects, which has given me a unique insight into the industry. I thoroughly enjoyed completing each assignment and really benefitted from the constructive feedback I received from Aspire. I am now leaving academia having been offered a position with a MedComms agency. My time with Aspire not only helped to confirm my career choice of medical writer, but I believe really helped with my interviews, allowing me to demonstrate a genuine interest in MedComms and my familiarity with the industry."

What can you learn from my experiences in MedComms?

- Your PhD and/or post-doc are valued!
- But you have to be prepared to start again ‘at the bottom’ and prove your worth in a new, unfamiliar environment
 - Once you have done that, however, there are a lot of opportunities
- Before applying for jobs, try to ensure you can demonstrate the following skills
 - Writing experience and talent
 - Research skills
 - Scientific accuracy
 - Ability to work in a team
 - Knowledge of industry codes and guidelines

Feel free to contact me



rick.flemming@aspire-scientific.com



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