

CONFERENCE

Session Report

Next-Level QC Review and Editing in Medical Writing

Speaker

April Welch, ELS

Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Boston, MA

By Angela Trenkle, BS

When working in quality control (QC) in medical writing, it can be helpful to learn ways to ensure that all mistakes are caught. In this education session, April Welch shares some of her tips and tricks for taking your QC reviewing and editing to the next level.

KEEP TRACK OF COMMON ERRORS

April began by sharing some examples of common errors while also emphasizing that although these examples are specific, she wanted the audience to take away the concepts behind them and how they might show up in other ways in any documents the audience members review. The concepts behind these examples included being aware of absolute statements in your writing and trying to find exceptions, keeping an eye out for missing units and information, and figuring out ways to change statements from vague to specific. She then went over some of the more common grammar and punctuation errors and inconsistencies that she notices the most when editing and gave the audience a refresher on some of these rules. These included commas, hyphens, colons, and abbreviations.

THINK LIKE A WRITER

April began by mentioning that it's important to think about the way the document was written, whether it was from a template, an approved document of the same type in a different therapeutic area, or a global module with some country-specific updates, because it can help you get into the mindset of thinking like a writer. She then went over particular things to keep an eye out for in each of these document types. These included template text that contradicts de novo text, incorrect key terms, including the therapeutic area, and checking items such as dosing and endpoints because they can vary depending on the country.

ERROR-PROOF YOUR PROCESS

April began by stating that the best way to error-proof your process is to follow a consistent process that plays to your strengths and allows you to move through a document quickly and consistently. She then talked about making use of the electronic tools at your disposal, including customizing the Word toolbar, using keyboard shortcuts, and getting autocorrect to type your frequent comments for you. She then brought up the topic of checklists and touched on how to use them to your advantage and the importance of keeping track of certain metrics within these checklists and what they can be useful for.

BE CURIOUS AND OPEN TO FEEDBACK

April began this section by showing a table that showed 3 categories for training options that can be helpful for both new hires as well as seasoned veterans in the QC field: Collaborative, Self-Study Essentials, and Self Study Over Time. After going over the various choices under each of these categories, she delved into the Lessons Learned training option under the Self Study Over Time section and recommended doing this by meeting as a team and going over the processes together. She then emphasized the importance of being curious and included ways that you could build upon your skillset with things that you can do before and after document review as well as various helpful topics to delve into to expand your knowledge. She then closed the presentation with some call-to-action items for specific issues that may come up and what you can do to fix these for the future.

Angela Trenkle is a preclinical technical writer at BIOQUAL, Inc, and is based in the Washington, DC, area.

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Author contact: *angelatrenkle@gmail.com*