

AMWA, EMWA, and ISMPP Promote Ethical, Professional Medical Writing in *JAMA Oncology* Letter to the Editor

Thomas M. Schindler, PhD¹ and Gail V. Flores, PhD² / ¹Head Innovation Medical Writing, Boehringer Ingelheim Pharma GmbH & Co KG, Biberach, Germany; and ²2020–2021 President, AMWA; Encore Biomedical Communications LLC, Encinitas, California.

In March 2021, Del Paggio et al. published an article in *JAMA Oncology* that included disparaging comments about medical writers. American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) leaders, in partnership with representatives from the European Medical Writers Association (EMWA) and the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP), immediately and swiftly drafted and submitted a letter of response to this article, which was published on August 26, 2021, along with 2 other letters and the authors' response to all 3 letters. Del Paggio et al.'s article reported on multiple aspects of randomized clinical trials in oncology, including the use of professional medical writers. Specifically, the authors stated, "There is reason to be concerned that medical writers may unduly influence the interpretation of trials, ... as it is unlikely that medical writers have a neutral effect on the clinical trial reporting."¹

Although we all share an understanding of the value of medical writers, it is imperative that we respond publicly to these attacks to safeguard the reputation of our profession. As highlighted in our letter, the use of our profession's expertise improves accuracy, timeliness, and adherence to ethical conduct. Evidence from independent research on the benefits of working with medical writers was included in the response. The commitment of medical writers to adhere to Good Publication Practice (GPP3) guidelines and to ethical principles in scientific publishing as well as to the professional codes of conduct of their professional organizations was also identified as a significant benefit of working with professional medical writers. Although the letter is behind a paywall, *JAMA Oncology* has granted the authors free access to the [full text](#) to share with our members; note that this link should not be shared outside of the AMWA membership.

Author declaration and disclosures: *The authors note no commercial associations that may pose a conflict of interest in relation to this article.*

Author contact: *thomas.schindler@boehringer-ingelheim.com; gflores@encorebiomed.com*

References

1. Del Paggio JC, Berry JS, Hopman WM, et al. Evolution of the randomized clinical trial in the era of precision oncology. *JAMA Oncol.* 2021;7(5):728-734. doi:10.1001/jamaoncol.2021.0379