

Introduction to Medical Writing



Topic 1

What is Medical Writing?

“**Medical writing** is the activity of writing scientific documentation by someone who is a specialized writer (a **medical writer**) and is generally not one of the scientists or doctors whose research it was.”

Accurately presenting and **effectively communicating** information for any medical document is of paramount importance

A **medical writer** is the writer engaged in communication in the medical or allied professions and sciences



Examples of Medical Writing

- Journal articles
 - Original research
 - Review articles
 - Editorials, case reports, etc.
- Abstracts
 - Publication in journals
 - Submission to medical meetings
- Posters
 - Presentation at medical meetings



Examples of Medical Writing (contd)

- Slide presentations
 - Original research
 - Symposia
 - Roundtables
 - Advisory boards
- Medical education materials
 - Monographs
 - Training materials
 - Prescribing information



Examples of Medical Writing (contd)

- Regulatory documents
 - Clinical Trial Reports (CTR)
 - New Drug Applications (NDA)
 - Investigational New Drug Application (IND)
- Marketing materials
 - Advertisements
 - Public relations materials
 - Internet documents
 - Patient education

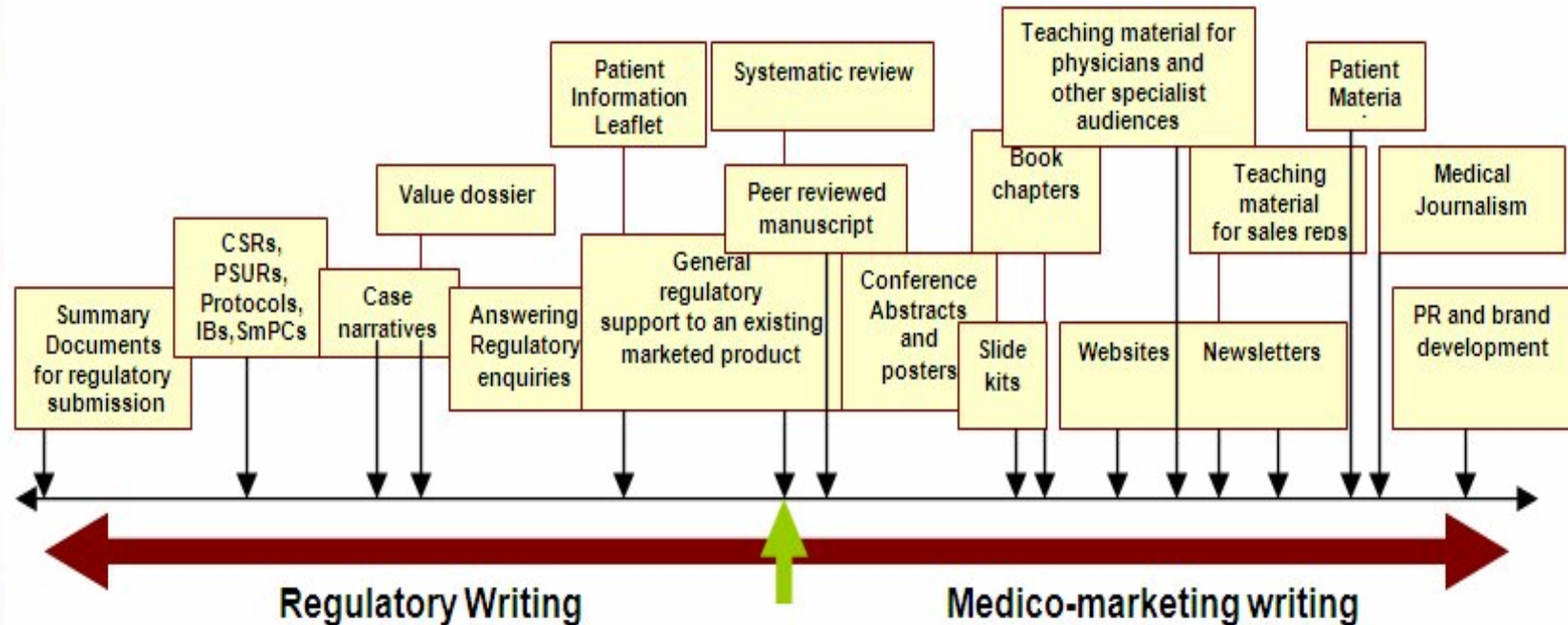


Good medical writing include:

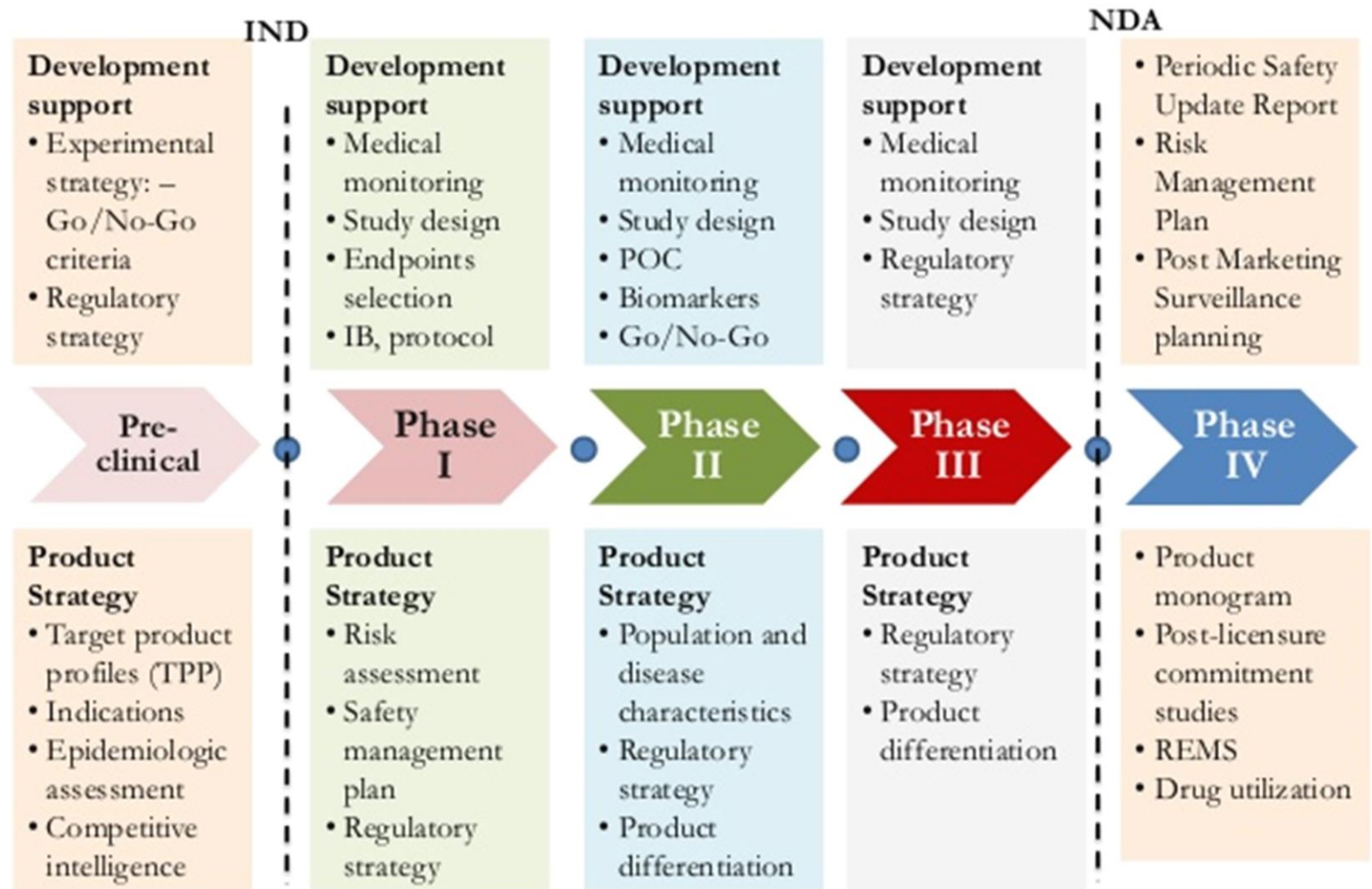
- Thorough research
- Accuracy
- Logical organization
- Clear thinking and writing
- Readability



Types of Medical Writing



Drug development stages and MW involvement

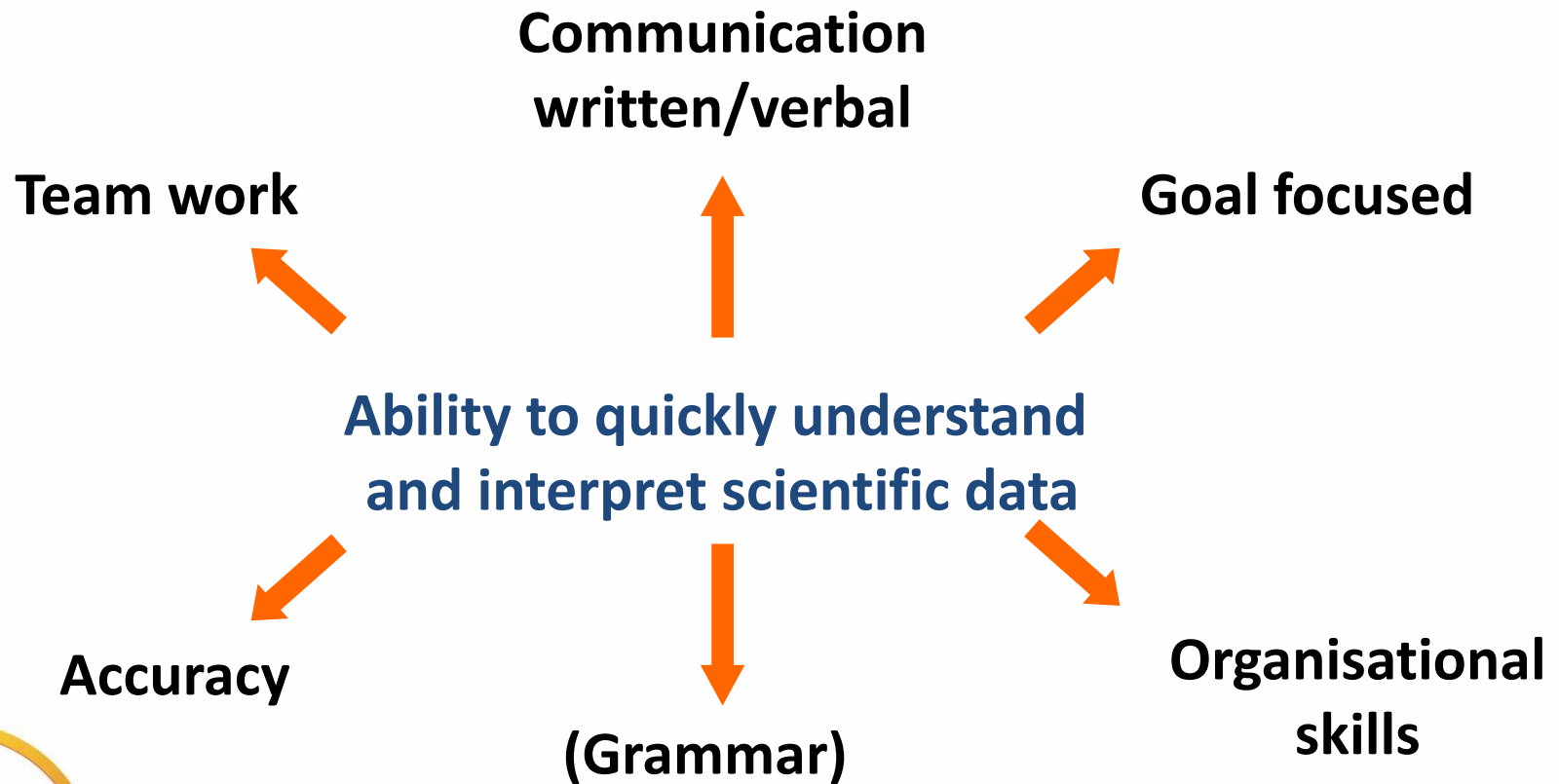


Medical Writers - Different Backgrounds

- BSc/MSc – medical/life science
- PhD (and post-doc/lecturers)
- Pharmacy (BPharm/MPharm)
- Pharma / Industry (Experience)
- Medicine (BAMS/MBBS/BDS/MD/MS/DM)
- Other, Science (Mathematics/Chemistry)



Key Attributes To Fulfill The Role



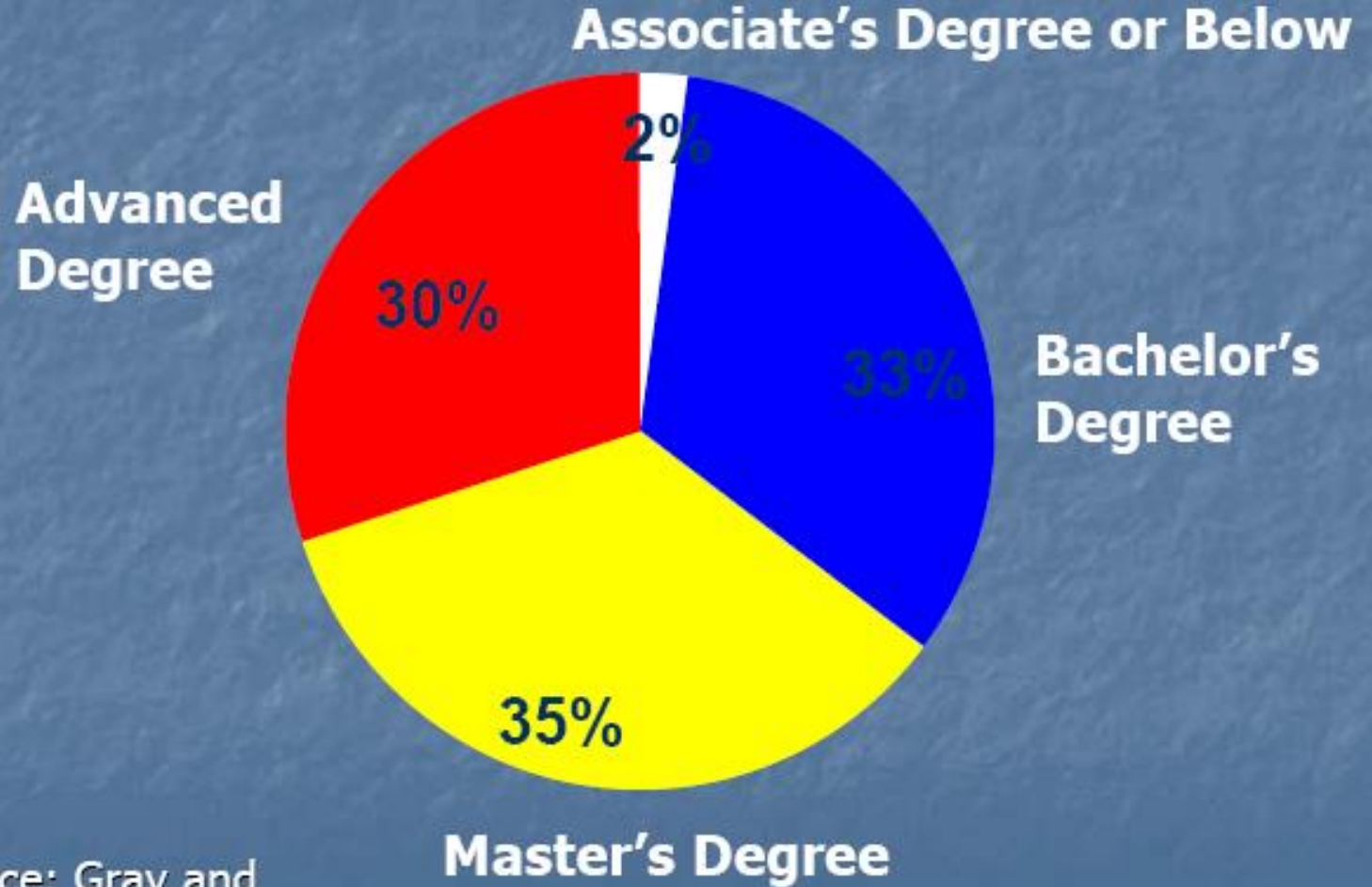
**Flexibility, commitment, attention to detail, ability to
work under pressure, business awareness**

Qualifications and Skills

- Ability to write and enjoy writing!
- Life sciences degree
- Ability to assimilate information quickly
- Enjoy working with huge amounts of data
- Attention to detail
- Work under pressure and meet deadlines
- An understanding of statistics
- Proficiency in Microsoft Word



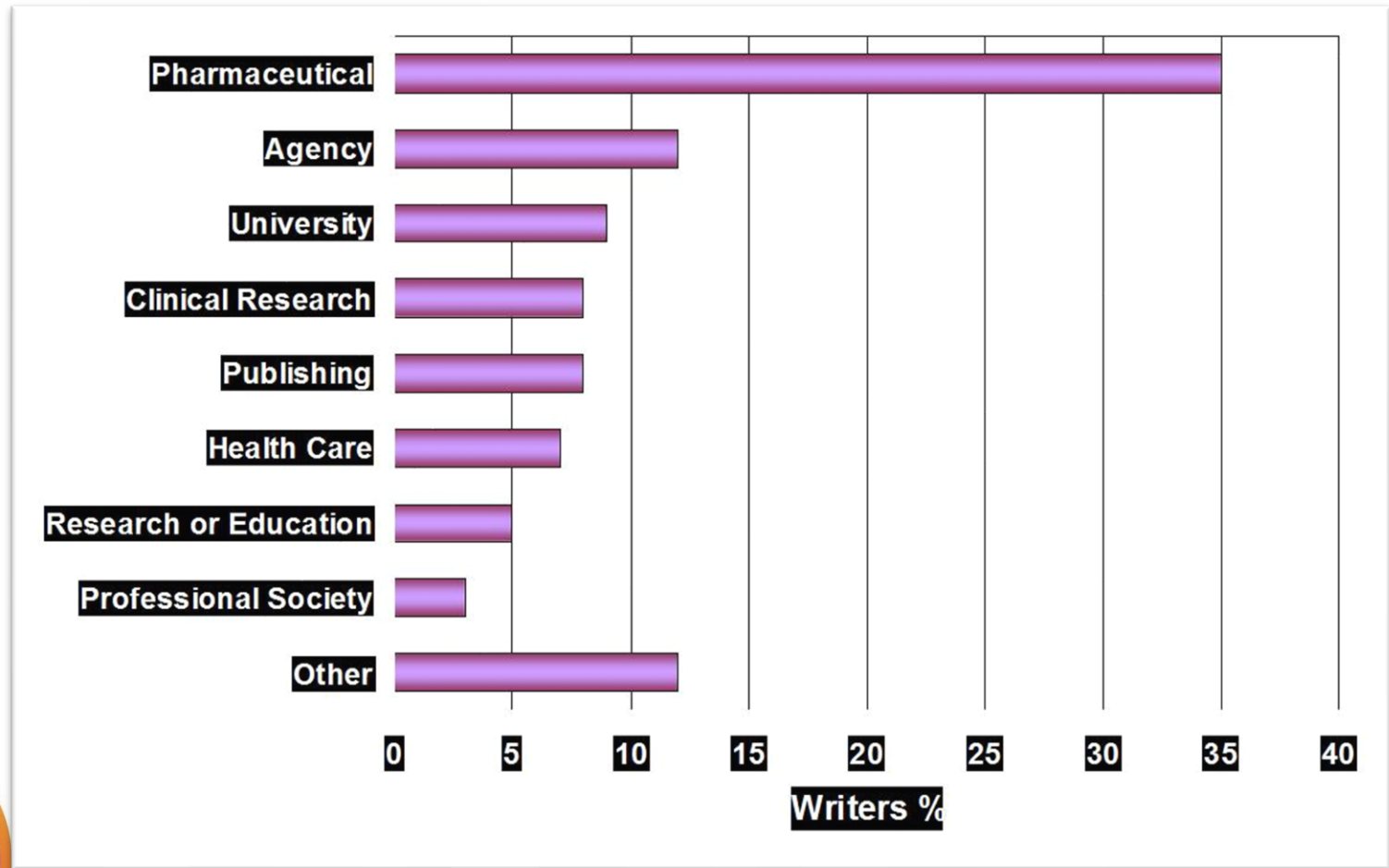
Highest Educational Level



Source: Gray and
Hamilton, 2004



Primary Employers of Medical Writers

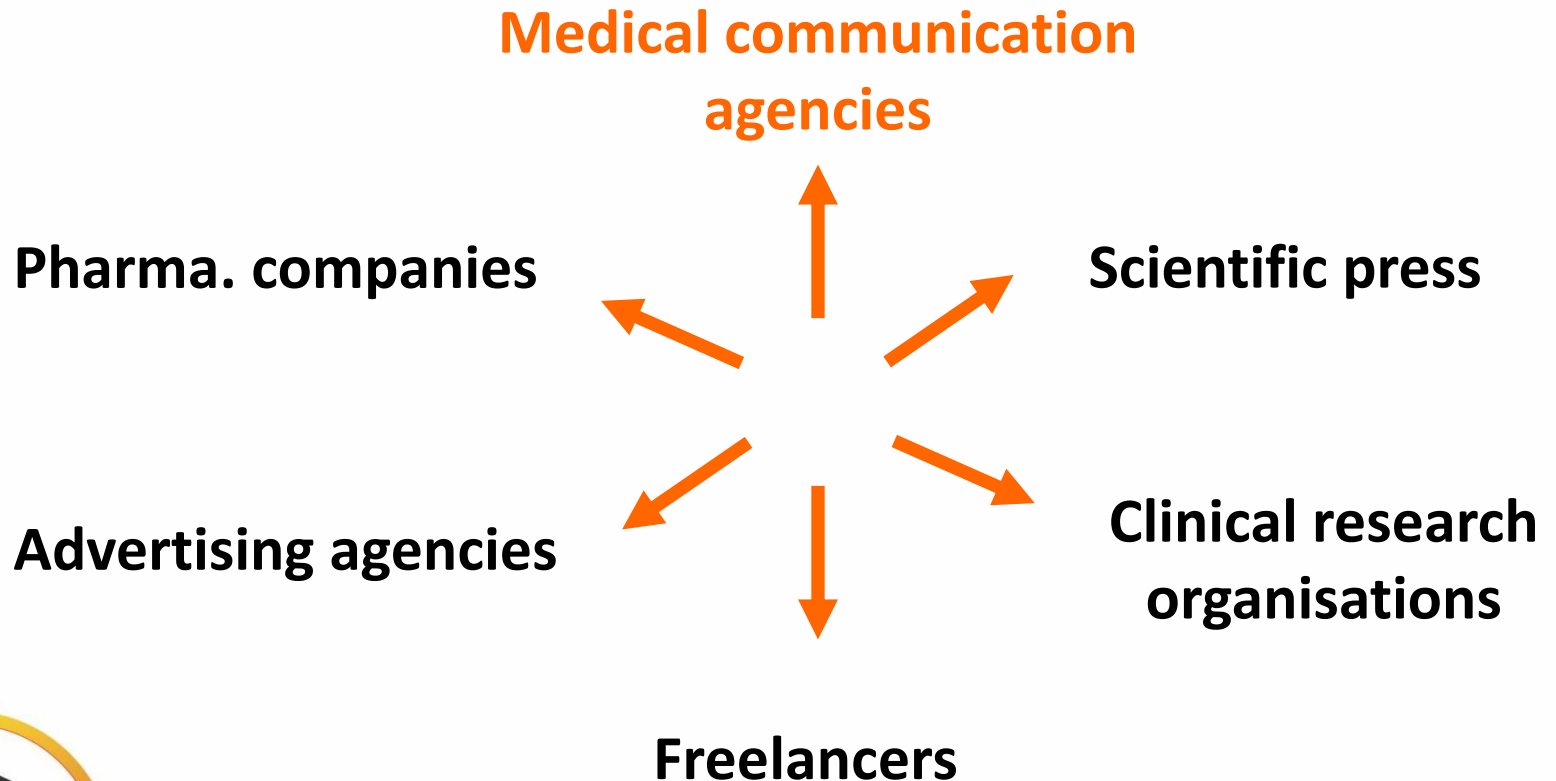


What Employers Look For:

- Experience
- Ability to do the Job
- Initiative
- Self-Confidence
- Leadership
- Compatibility
- Attitude
- Social Skills
- Involvement
- Integrity
- Communication



Medical Writers



Pharmaceutical companies



Medical community

Publications

- Journal articles
- Book chapters
- Abstracts

Congress activities

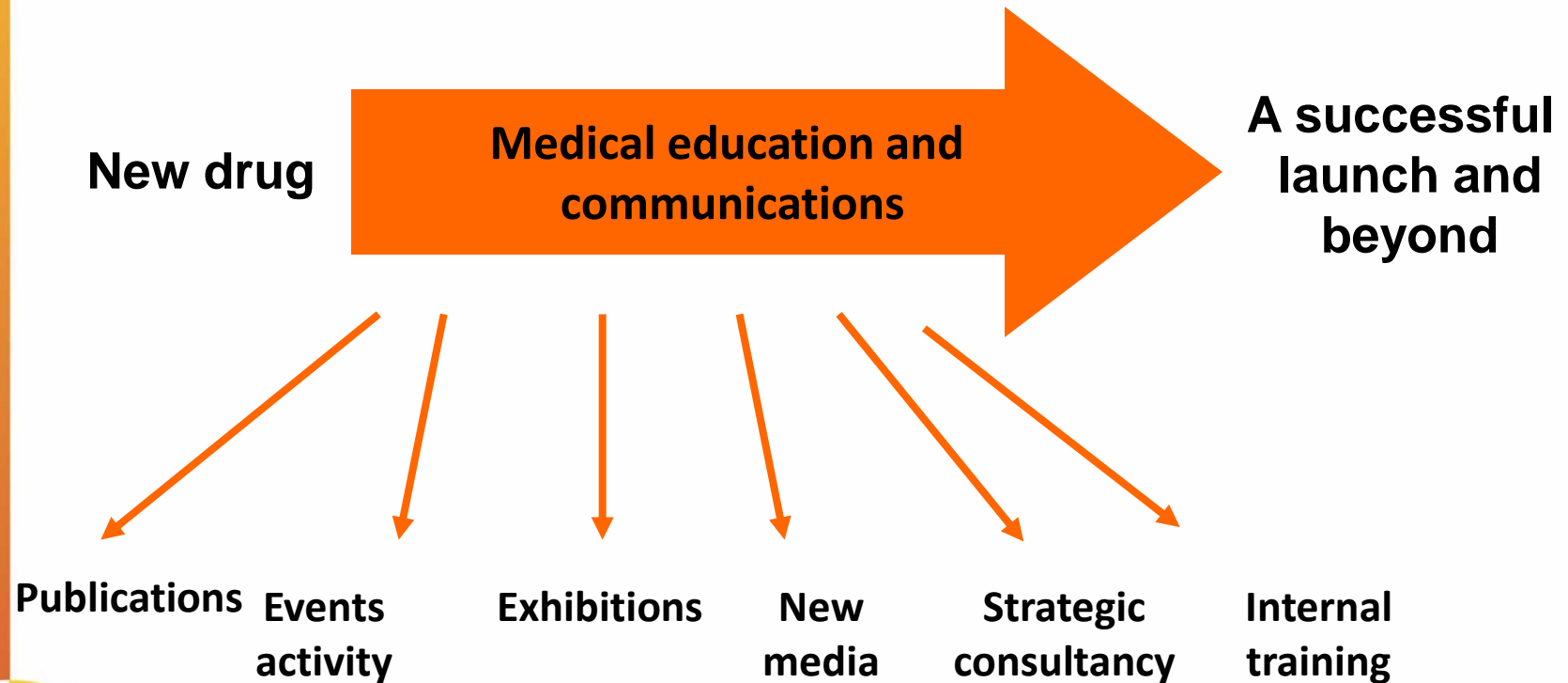
- Oral presentations
- Posters
- Booth panels

Training & education

- Physician slide sets
- Sales Rep. training
- Newsletters



Product/publication managers clinical scientists





Sample Jobs



- Medical writer for medical communications firm: to create pharmaceutical/health care educational programs
- Scientific medical writer for medical communications company: to prepare clinical and pre-clinical manuscripts, abstracts, and posters; clinical trial reports; and medical education materials
- Director of scientific editing for a biotech company: to edit and/or re-write scientific papers and grant applications, and educate and train staff in scientific writing and editing

Source: AMWA-DVC Web site, 2004



Career Paths to Medical Writing

- There are two main career paths to becoming a medical writer:
 - Writers who learn to write about medicine
 - Scientists who learn to write

Newer path is to study to become a medical writer (e.g. University of the Sciences in Philadelphia Masters in Biomedical Communications)





How to Get Started?

- Contract Research Organizations/ Companies willing to take on those with aptitude
- Written a thesis
- Published papers
- Be prepared to take a test
- EMWA
 - A career guide to Medical Writing. Published on EMWA website summarises this whole topic beautifully



Informal Medical Writing Training

- Read medical and pharmaceutical journals
 - Subscribe to online newsletters (e.g. National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health)
 - Develop an understanding of basic statistics
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- Obtain and be familiar with style guides and medical dictionaries (e.g. AMA)
 - Keep up to date with
 - FDA guidelines
 - Software skills (MS Word, PowerPoint, Acrobat)
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Source: AMWA-DVC Web site, 2004



Formal Medical Writing Training

- Complete a course in statistics, pharmacology or life sciences
- Enroll in AMWA's continuing education certification program
- Undertake a medical writing program through college or university



Source: AMWA-DVC Web site, 2004



Medical writers Association

- American Medical Writers Association (AMWA)
- European Medical writers Association (EMWA)
- Australian Medical Writers Association (AuMWA)



Career Structure

