



AMWA e-news

February 2008

Greetings! I've just caught up with some fascinating research from the University of NSW [Centre for Health Informatics](#) on how people can get things seriously wrong when they go searching for health information on the Internet. It's partly because they tend to absorb only information that matches their existing biases. And there's so much info out there that people are likely to take heed of the first or last document that they have opened. As part of her [doctoral work](#) Annie Lau has been exploring whether it is possible to correct for biases and improve health decision making as a result. Researchers at the centre are now designing an [interface for search engines](#) which is aimed at overcoming these biases, and it should be publicly available in about a year.

Feel free to email newsletter editor Rada Rouse rada@medicalwriters.org.

What's new

Australia's Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance 11th annual [freelance journalism convention](#) is in Brisbane this year, 15–16 March.

New Zealand's 3rd national freelancers' convention, [Freelance 2008](#), is to be held in Auckland 7–8 May.

For those members who write or review research articles, the US National Institutes of Health has funded a resource centre dedicated to improving reporting of research. The EQUATOR network www.equator-network.org includes reporting guidelines and information on training courses for authors and editors. Its plans include annual assessment of how journals implement reporting guidelines and an annual audit of reporting quality across the health research literature.

Nominations close 29 February for entries in the third annual media awards run by the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia. Info from Andrea Plawutsky on 0419 970 984.

Short documentary or drama films featuring 'a message of hope' for people with mental illness may be eligible for entry in the 2007/08 [Hope Awards](#), a collaborative venture between the Mental Health Council of Australia and Eli Lilly. Entries close 28 March.

Congratulations to the [Copyright Agency Limited](#) which is having a little party this week to celebrate a major milestone: they have paid out over \$500 million to member authors, publishers and creators.

Biotext science and training courses. A two-day course on communicating complex information, understanding the role of an editor and using editing skills to improve publications. The first one is in Canberra in March. For more information click [here](#).

The next Australian certification examination of the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences will be held in Sydney on 5 July 2008. For information, see www.bels.org or contact Rhana Pike, rhana@australianeditor.com.

The National Prescribing Service has produced a press release entitled: 'NPS clarifies issues related to the Stilnox, a brand of Zolpidem' (go to www.nps.org). NPS also has a Sleeping Medicines Fact sheet which can be downloaded at: <http://web.nps.org.au/media/zolpidem.pdf>.

Jobs spotted

Manager, medical information

For a not-for-profit organisation that provides independent evidence-based drug information to health care professionals and consumers. Reporting to the executive manager, you will have the following responsibilities:

- Provide support, supervision and performance management to the medical writing team
- Contribute to the strategic planning of the organisation
- Oversee the development of written materials for key publications
- Oversee the continued streamlining of the phone line services via the senior project manager
- Oversee the implementation of one of the organisations core contracts.

For further information contact Anne-Marie O'Keeffe on 02 9431 2544 or click [here](#).

Communications and development officer

Monash University School of Biomedical sciences. A maternity leave position. Duties include:

- Implementing and managing the public relations plan of the School.
- Producing the thrice-yearly Biomed Benchmark publication.
- Managing the School website, including publishing school news stories on the homepage and driving the new school content management plan.
- Providing communications support to staff and the head of school.

Obtain a position description by contacting School Manager, Doug McGregor on 03 9905 3870, or e-mail: doug.mcgregor@med.monash.edu.au.

Getting to know one another

Serina Stretton, Medical Writer, ProScribe Medical Communications, Sydney



Ten years ago, I sat at my desk while writing my thesis thinking.....'If I could do this for a living, I'd be in heaven'. Since then, I have left the academic world of lab-based research, manic grant writing and zero life-work balance behind and am totally immersed as a full-time, work from home, medical writer.

My main areas of expertise are preparing documents for peer-reviewed journals and government, and ensuring that these documents adhere to the many guidelines and regulations that are now beginning to govern how research is reported. My shift in career has given me the freedom and flexibility that I greatly valued in research as well as the luxury of being completely absorbed in medical data that I do not have to generate.

The career paths for medical writers such as myself are innumerable and varied. There are so many of us out there, from many different backgrounds: academic research, health workers and journalism, but we barely know one another. For many years I worked as the sole writer for a medical research institute...and thought I was alone in my battle to prevent the misuse of the comma and the split infinitive. I joined AMWA because it put me in touch with a diverse group of people with similar interests to mine and has kept me in touch with the major issues surrounding health research and reporting in Australia .

[NB: Serina is a member of the executive committee of AMWA.]

AMWA executive committee

The committee met by teleconference on 4 February.

We welcome new members Vanessa Simpson, Jane Carstens, Anne Jones and Lesh Karan.

We are currently planning the dates and venue for the 2008 Annual Conference to be held in Brisbane later this year. We will keep you posted.

-----Vale Dr Doris Brownlee (nee Zonta) 25/3/53–8/12/07-----

The AMWA executive committee was saddened to hear of the death of Doris Brownlee in early December. Doris had worked for 27 years in the Australian health system; both as clinician and as bureaucrat. After graduating with an MBBS from the University of Western Australia in 1979, she spent time working in general practice and then became a Commonwealth Medical Officer.

Doris moved to the Blue Mountains in 1999 and wrote a report on 'Public Health in NSW' for the NSW Department of Health. The following year she went back into general practice and worked as a GP in Parramatta, Leura, Katoomba and Lithgow. After being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003, she began working part-time as a locum, while studying for a Grad Dip in Anti-ageing Medicine through Swinburne University. In recent times Doris was self-employed, writing medical book reviews and embarking on a *Wellness Workbook*, which will be completed by a colleague. Our condolences to Doris's husband, Ian, and her son, Steven.



Websites we like

[Cancer Media Service](#) This site is for European journalists but it includes handy summaries of international cancer research and analysis of how findings might impact clinical practice. You can register for weekly emails.

To unsubscribe to this newsletter please email treasurer Katherine Baverstock:
treasurer@medicalwriters.org

www.medicalwriters.org

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