



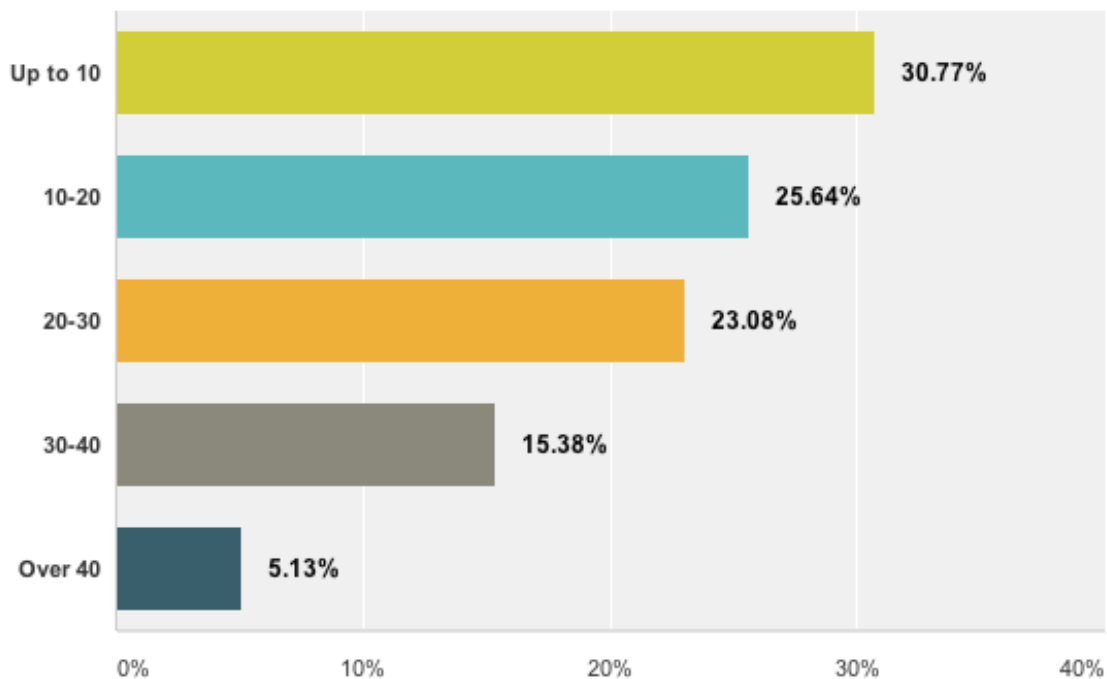
Freelance Rates Survey Results

2014

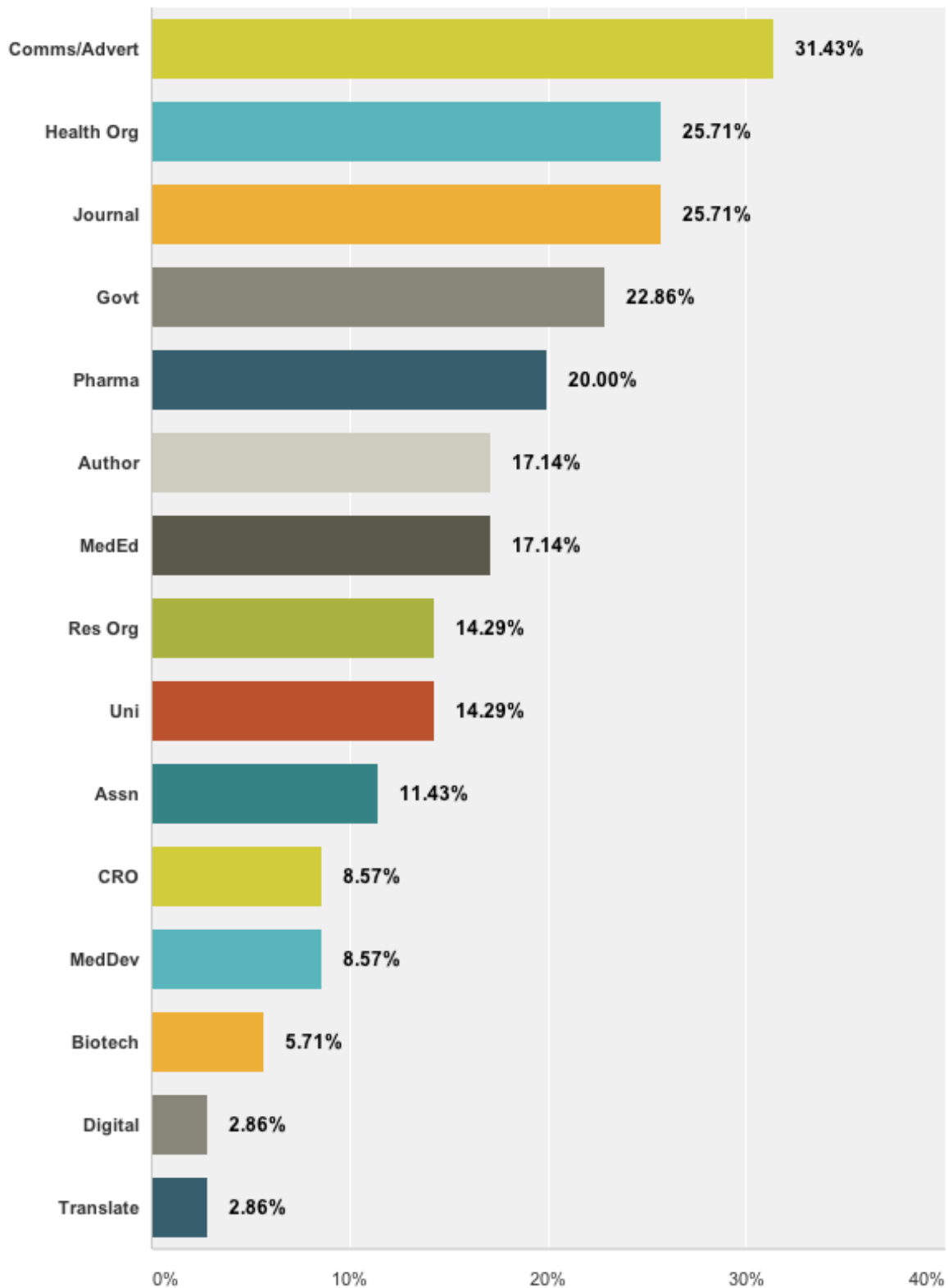
How many years have you been working in medical writing and as a freelance medical writer? (42 responses)

Years	Medical Writing (%) n=42	Freelancing (%) n=41
0-5	26	63
6-10	21	12
11-15	24	10
16-20	17	12
Over 20	12	3

On average, how many hours per week on average do you work for clients, EXCLUDING hours spent on administrative tasks and other non-billable hours? (39 responses)



Check the statement below that best describes your client/clients (35 responses)

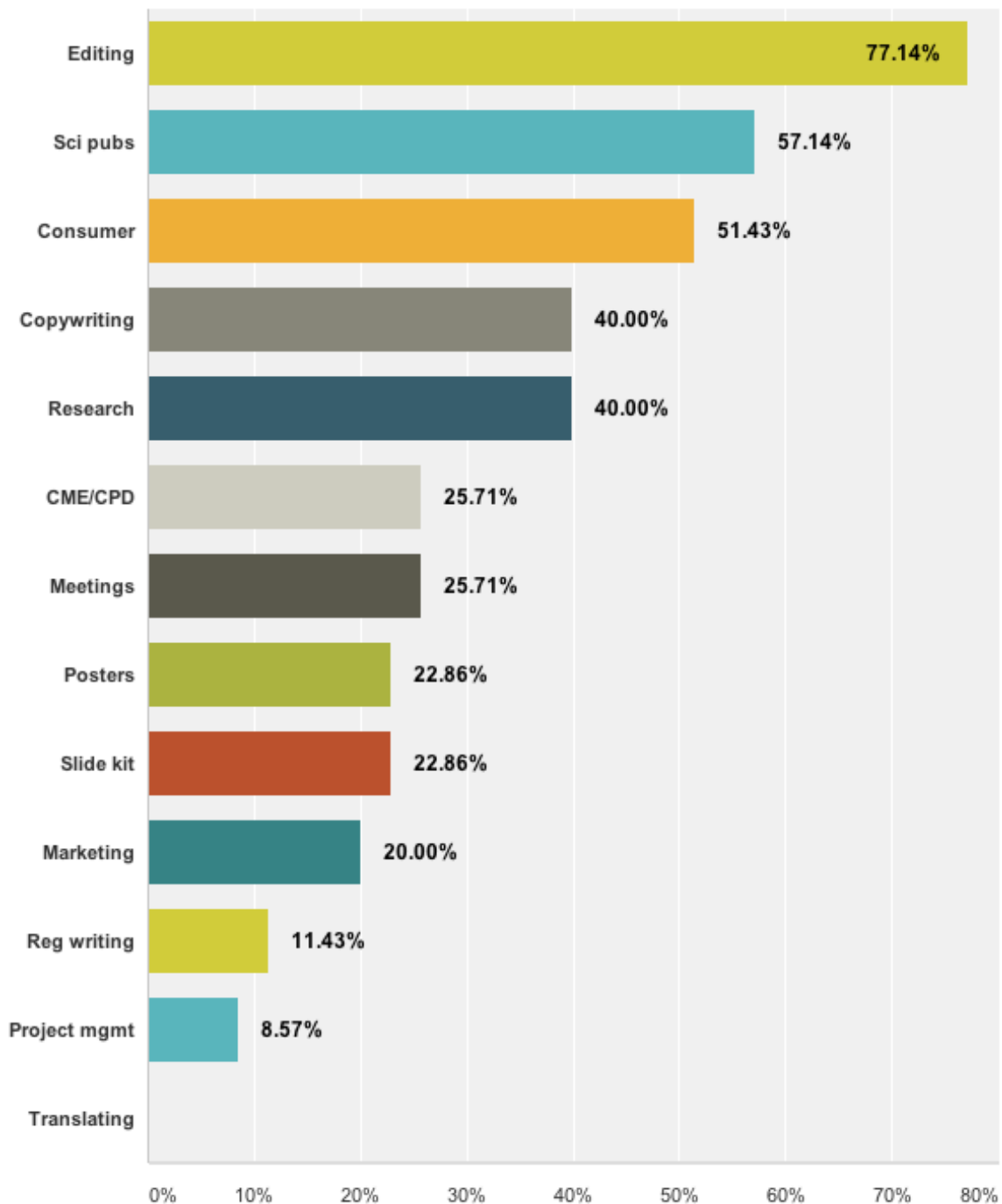


Key: Communications firm/marketing or advertising agency (Comms/Advert), Healthcare Organisation or Provider (Health Org), Journal or publisher (Journal), Government (Govt), Pharmaceutical company (Pharma), Individual researcher or author (Author), Medical education company (MedEd), Research or educational organisation (Res Org), University (Uni), Association or Professional Society (Assn), Clinical or Contract Research Organisation (CRO), Medical device company (MedDev), Biotechnology company (Biotech), Digital agency (Digital), Translating company (Translate)

Comments:

- “Very occasionally pharma”
- “TAFE colleges”
- “Professional editing service”
- “Health websites, health insurance organisation”
- “Mixture of veterinary and biotech companies”

What services do you provide as a freelancer (35 responses)



Key: Editing (including copy editing, proofreading), Scientific publications (including journal articles, chapters in books, review article), Consumer writing including print or digital), Research (including systematic reviews, literature reviews), Meetings (including conducting, coverage, planning, reporting), Poster presentations, Marketing (including advertising copywriting), Regulatory Writing, Project Management

Comments

“Course development for government / global and Australian media”

“Writing news for medical audience, training editors and writers”

“Engagement/communications strategies, policy development re content governance etc”

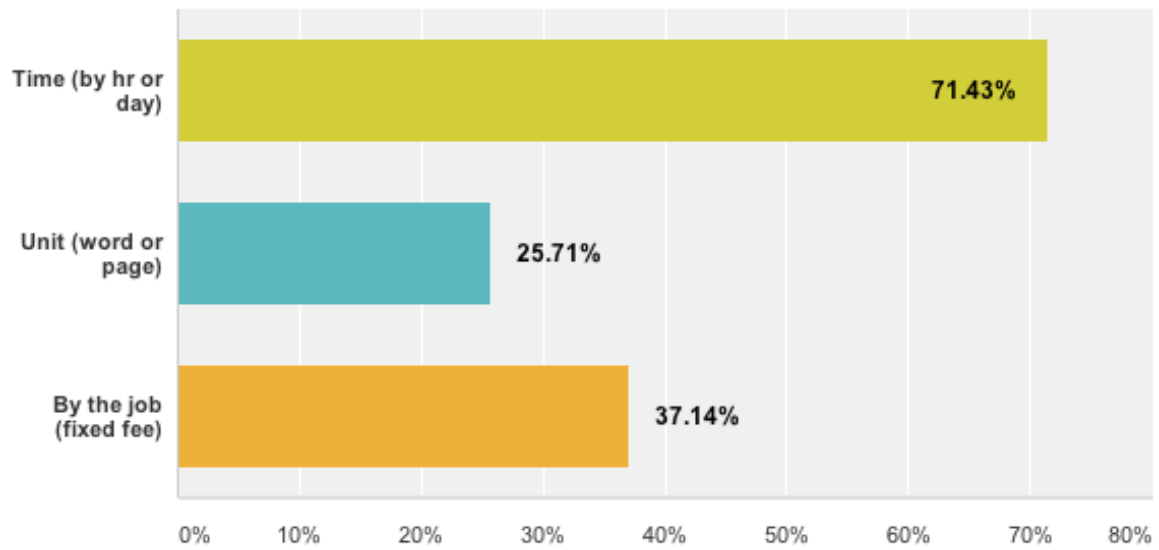
“Competitor intelligence, database management, quality control”

“Strategy, policy, clinical guidelines, working with project officer/working party”

“Transcripts from recordings”

“Sales training”

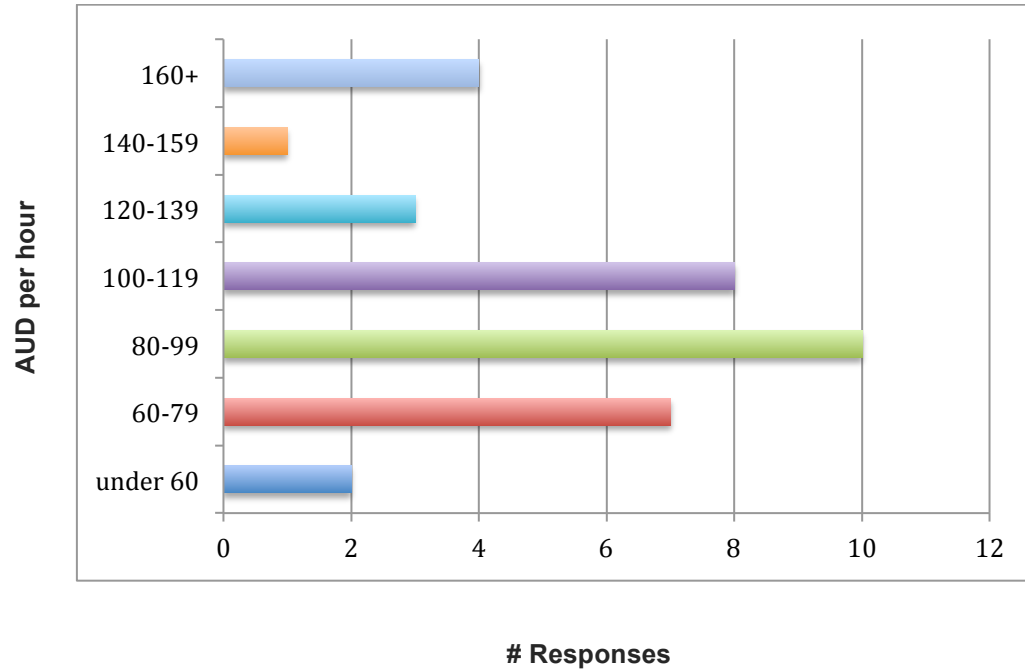
How do you generally charge for your freelance jobs? (35 responses)



Comments:

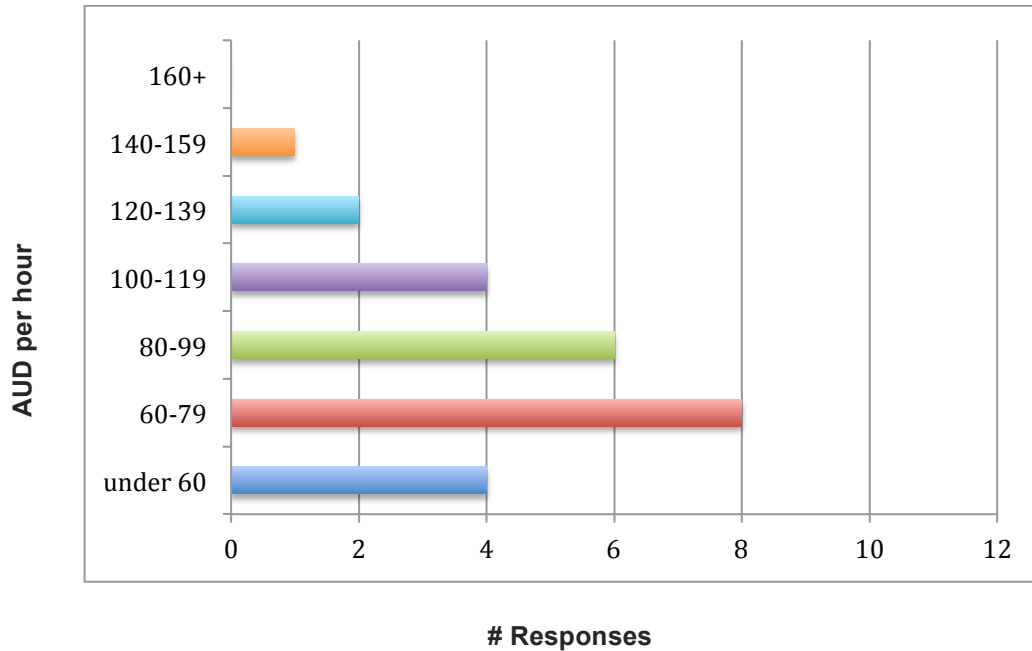
- “Sometimes by word”
- “Anything and everything - every client has different needs and I try to go with that.”

What is your standard or average hourly rate for freelance WRITING jobs?
If you bill by the job, enter the amount you factor in as an hourly rate for
determining your price. (35 responses)



Prices in AUD. Note that this was a text response, and many rates were given as a range (e.g. \$60-80), the median value (e.g. \$70) was counted.

What is your standard or average hourly rate for freelance EDITING jobs?
If you bill by the job, enter the amount you factor in as an hourly rate for determining your price. (25 responses)



Prices in AUD. Note that this was a text response, and many rates were given as a range (e.g. \$60-80), the median value (e.g. \$70) was counted.

Does your freelance rate vary by client/industry/project? If so, please comment here on how you determine your pricing strategy.

- No (two responses)
- My hourly rate is the same for all work, whether it is writing clinical review papers or generating bibliographies. I also charge travel time and car-parking costs if I need to visit clients as part of the project.
- To some extent (e.g. we charge NGOs less than government and industry clients) and this is determined by market forces as we are often in a competitive quote. Price varies more depending on the complexity of the job (eg researching and writing about a topic from scratch is a higher rate than rewriting/collating/summarising provided information).
- Yes it does, for big companies I tend to charge more. I have only just increased my fees for one company after working for them for 4.5 years so well overdue. But I feel a quality job with good, clean copy and with references and submitted early or on time warrants a higher rate. But I'm mindful that off shore copywriters can look very tempting for companies and I feel we need to look after ourselves.
- Yes. My price for a prior employer for whom I do casual work is lower (AUD\$50 per hour), simply because of a historic and loyal arrangement.
- Yes it depends on what I negotiate
- I'm a small scale freelancer, I have only one client thus far and as I also have a regular part time job and a young family, I am not chasing further work. I would definitely charge less for students or more for commercial clients, should those situations arise.
- Yes, regular clients get better rates
- Some large organisations have set rates, which are generally good: one writing job was \$200/hr. Individuals with one-off jobs pay the worst, as they have no idea about industry rates.
- Yes. Determined by complexity of the job and my perception of the client's ability to pay.
- Yes. I do some casual work for a company for which I get paid per hour. The other work I do as freelancer I usually bill per project, assuming an amount of hours for the kind of work, amount of data, etc.
- I would charge more if writing/editing for pharmaceutical companies but haven't done this for about 10 years
- Higher for rushed jobs

- It is rarely a scientifically-determined costing. I have been working in the system long enough to know what the going price for different organisations is and I charge accordingly. Writing and editing are not considered to be important aspects of a final product and this aspect is reflected in what people are willing to pay to support having clear, correct scientific writing.
- Pricing strategy is determined by variables on my side (how busy I am, do I want to do the work, how long it will take, what risks there are). On client side its determined by their budget (out of my control), the relationship I have with them and how well I know their company, How well I convince them of the value I will add.
- What the market will bear -- so I charge less for friends, neighbours, local businesses and PhD students
- I work mainly for a UK company so my rate is based on UK writer rates
- Pricing differ across clients. It depends on geography (Europe vs. Asia), client size, amount of work provided and its regularity, type of service required (urgency vs. advance notice), skill requirement required
- A bit less for not-for-profit organisations
- Yes depending on the needs of the client
- Yes commercial work I charge more \$200 ex GST an hour, publishing they pay 50c a word
- Based on word count needed
- Varies a little depending on perception of what the client will think is reasonable
- Yes, my rate does vary by client. Sometimes I can charge my usual rate, but sometimes I just have to take what they offer
- Yes. Australian clients are notoriously cheap and will try to chisel you down. I charge what I think a particular client will bear. I have not put my rates up for 13 years.
- Yes: Pharma \$150/hour Charities \$80/hour
- I charge 5-10 p.h. less for NFPs and charities

Any other comments gleaned from your experience as a freelancer. e.g. your tips for beginning freelance medical writers on how to price for their services, or advice on raising prices.

- I feel my rates are a bit low, but I also have employment. Sometimes I charge more, but I always warn them. New clients are usually cautious about the rate but established clients willingly pay what I ask.
- I set my hourly price based on a full-time wage, including super and annual leave, based on level of experience. I provide a quote based on what my experience has told me the number of hours or days it would take to complete a project with the caveat that if it takes less time I would charge less, and if it is going to take longer then we renegotiate early on when the work starts.
- Medical writing is a very skilled job - make sure you charge accordingly and do not undersell yourself.
- Never underestimate the value of having a professional relationship with the companies you write for. Prompt attention and replies to their emails, being available and helping them out if they want copy written quickly counts for a lot. There is no such thing as an overnight success and it pays to have thick skin. Rejection is the name of the game so it helps to have a fair bit of resilience as well. Just keep at it and eventually the work comes.
- Work out your worth and charge accordingly.
- I'm very new to this, but when advising your client on how long the work will take, add at least a week or two! And don't be afraid to ask questions so that there are no misunderstandings down the track.
- Need to be specific with quote what is in and how many proofs provided, and discuss expectations before accepting work.
- Most jobs entail heaps of emails and fiddling around, so factor those into your hours.
- Ask others about what they charge and how much time is required for various tasks. Estimate the time expected for each job carefully. Ask to see a sample/example of the writing or expected final product before quoting. Establish well in advance with the client what is/what is not covered (e.g., checking references, hyperlinks, information for accuracy). It's easy to be caught out by different expectations between you and the client. Make it clear to the client the differences between writing, copyediting, substantive editing, proofreading, and establish in advance exactly what is required/expected.
- None. I landed in this "blind" and in my case the work came to me. I got no work from advertising, sending CVs out, etc. It was through word of mouth from people who knew me and my work rather than me actively looking for it. I based my hourly rates on other freelancers working in the same industry (clinical research),

but not the same kind of work (e.g., statisticians, etc). I took a change with my first quote and they accepted, so I based my following projects in the same principal.

- I wish I could provide something positive here but I haven't been able to put my freelance rate up for many years as traditional publishers continue to struggle. In fact I'm under a certain amount of pressure to reduce my rate, which I don't intend to do.
- My understanding is that there is always someone who will undercut your price. Most clients do not understand the writing or editing process and do not value it as an integral part of scientific communication; most writers and editors starting out are happy to accept very low pay just to get into the field and to get experience. Unfortunately, they often lock themselves into an unsustainable payment. They also lock others working in the field into an equally unsustainable situation. In an unregulated market, this is what happens. A lot of what I do is trouble-shooting projects that have been done by someone else for a cheaper price and are then given to me to redo and make acceptable. I also find that when I lose a job as a result of price, more often than not, I get that client back after some experience for them with the cheaper writer/editor. I'm not sure what the answer is. Valuing the need for clear, accessible scientific information would be a start.
- Ask colleagues if you are not sure, ask a mentor or executive coach for advice on negotiating pricing and contracts.
- Offer a range of services even if you outsource some of them -- clients value being able to give an entire project (e.g. including design) to one person.
- You're probably going to have your initial rate dictated to you, so you need to look to build it up to an acceptable rate with annual rate increases. Likewise, factor in time for email correspondence, billing, admin etc. into your timings as you wouldn't have to do it if you weren't servicing your client, so you need to bill them for that time.
- Need to be adjusted from time to time.
- Don't sell yourself too short as it brings the value of the entire profession down when some are under charging.
- Freelancing hasn't been the balance between earning potential and flexibility that I had hoped. I've found myself working more for less, and it's as much effort looking for more work as it is actually working. With more time spent networking to build a larger base of clients and contacts, I could probably find the balance I'm looking for. At this stage, though, I could probably have a better work-life balance as an employee than as a freelancer.
- Don't charge by the hour! It is hard to calculate a fixed fee at first, but hourly rates seem unprofessional and clients will be wary.

