



Stepping up: Sustainability and medical writing

Welcome to this special issue on sustainable communications. Sustainability is a key focus area across all economic sectors, including the pharmaceutical, medical technology, and healthcare industries. Scientific communicators and medical writers are well-positioned to contribute to current debates on environmental problems and their impact on human and planetary health.

The 17 sustainability development goals (SDGs) listed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of United Nations (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>) are relevant for us personally and professionally. In particular, the SDG 3 to promote “health and well-being for all at all ages”; the SDG 4 to “ensure

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inclusive quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunity for all” and the SDG 12 on “sustainable production and consumption patterns” strongly resonate with the daily activities of medical writers and communicators. In this issue, we are pleased to present a collection of articles that focus on some of these SDGs.

Sustainable production and consumption

Biomedical research is resource-consuming and has an impact on the environment. In the first article of this issue, **Raquel Billiones** reviews the literature on the carbon footprint of clinical trials. **Kimi Uegaki** and **Raquel Billiones** explain ways to prevent biomedical research waste and opportunities for medical writers in contributing toward making our industry sustainable.

Environmental risk assessments (ERA) evaluate the effects of drugs for human use on the environment and are part of the new requirements for marketing authorisation of drugs in Europe. **Archana Nagarajan** and **Kimi Uegaki** discuss the current ERA

guidelines and highlight challenges in writing this document. **Louisa Marcombes** provides an overview of sustainability in the veterinary world and the role of medical communications professionals in engaging all stakeholders.

Also check out the roadmap towards sustainability created by the **EMWA infographics team**.

Equity, education, and inclusion

In the area of ensuring equality and inclusive quality education, and promoting lifelong learning opportunities, **Jennifer Bell** delves into strategies to ensure quality education for all. **Erika Ornago, Elisa Sala, and Massimo Zaninelli** discuss the role of health literacy in the healthcare decision-making process. Fake news cannot be combatted without sufficient investment in resources to promote public health literacy. **M. Ayelén Milillo, Soledad Gori, M. Victoria Ennis, and Pablo M. Méndez** describe the initiatives taken up by the Science Anti-Fake News team in Argentina to fight the infodemic. **Rossella Ferrari** tackles diversity and equity by giving an overview of race and ethnicity in biomedical literature.

The financial sustainability of the healthcare industry needs to be seriously considered. This is one of the aims of the updated "Consolidated Health Economic Evaluation Reporting Standards: CHEERS 2022". **Michael Drummond, Chris Carswell, and Don Husereau** describe the role of medical writers in using the CHEERS guidance and its accompanying checklist. Next, **Alex Schuman** shares her inspiring career journey in corporate sustainability.

Don't miss the article on a medical writing primer for oncology dossier by **Julia Forjanic Klapproth** and **Maurice Lowens**. And in the Medical Communications and Writing for Patients section, see **Simon Linacre's** report on a survey on predatory journals.

We would like to thank all the authors for their valuable contributions. We hope that you find this issue interesting and thought-provoking, with insights into how you can contribute to the exciting and critical field of sustainable communications.



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