Working with a Medical Writer

Topic: General overview of the Medical Writer offerings and what we can and cannot do for you.

Summary: The goal of the Medical Writer is to improve the accessibility of your writing to the layperson and non-subject matter experts. While we do not have expertise in your specific field, we can assist with copy editing, manuscript organization and review, and other writing projects like grant proposals. We can work with you at any stage of your writing but may be most useful in the later stages once you have a good working document.

Types of Documents

- Abstracts for conference submission; poster formatting and review
- Manuscripts in preparation for publication
- Resident/student research proposals or papers
- Grant applications – main body of grant and associated documents
- Ethics applications – adapting/revising protocols into ethics applications, navigating the application process

Types of Assistance

- Writing Support
  - Copy Editing – minor revisions to grammar, spelling, etc.
  - Detailed Editing – check for internal consistency, comments and minor edits
  - Organizational Review – internal consistency, major reorganization of sections, comments and editing

- Administrative Support
  - Correspondence and collection of Authorship information, disclosures, signatures
  - Formatting to Journal, Granting Agency, or Conference submission specifications (e.g. to comply with Instructions to Authors)
  - Administrative Review of (e.g.) grant application package

Things to Consider

- It is highly recommended that you meet with the Medical Writer (by phone or video conference) to establish expectations and timeline
- Medical Writer is not medically trained nor are they specialists in your field.
- Western REB requires a 'stand alone' protocol as part of the ethics application

- Word documents are easiest to edit, but Word isn't perfect. Some of the 'track changes' editing in Word produces an overwhelming amount of red ink. This isn't a reflection on your writing, but a function of editing formatting in Word.
- Some more substantive reviews (organizational review, formatting to Journal requirements etc.) may include re-organizing or re-formatting your citations/reference list.
  - Managing citations is easiest if you use a reference management tool – either the 'citations and bibliography' option available in Word, or another 'plug-in' option like EndNote, RefWorks, Mendeley or others.
  - The Western Library has some information about citation management options (https://www.lib.uwo.ca/essayhelp/index.html). There are other possibilities.
  - Reference software is an evolving space (e.g. EndNote used to have an academic free version that appears to have recently evaporated).
  - We will highlight challenges with citations if they overwhelm our capacity to assist with the editorial process. It may be easier for you or someone who has a better understanding of your literature and field of study to manage citations once a reorganization is complete.

Finaly, please remember that any work ultimately remains your writing. You are welcome to accept or reject any suggestions, edits or comments.

If you have any questions or comments about our work, please feel free to speak with us or email. You can also speak to POEM Administration (poemadmin@lhsc.on.ca) about questions or concerns.