



# Market Access – Is Your Healthcare Communication and Data Dissemination Strategy the Missing Piece?

## Planning Efficient and Effective Data Presentation, Dissemination, and Uptake

**Kimberly Cash, MSN, RN**  
Vice President and General Manager, Medical Writing and Healthcare Communications, Evidera

**Tamara Murry, PharmD**  
Senior Manager, Medical Writing and Healthcare Communications, Evidera

**Purvi Suthar, PharmD**  
Associate Director, Medical Writing and Healthcare Communications, Evidera

**Robin Watts, PharmD**  
Program Manager and Principal Medical Writer, Medical Writing and Healthcare Communications, Evidera

### Introduction

In the healthcare arena, market access traditionally refers to scaling the hurdles of payer reimbursement so that a product (drug or device) is included on insurance and hospital formularies. However, market access also depends upon healthcare providers having information to guide them in prescribing the product and patients having information to guide them in using the product. These two pieces of the market access puzzle are largely driven by healthcare communications such as journal manuscripts and medical information responses. Similar to the way payers need to understand the factors that differentiate a product for reimbursement purposes, healthcare providers need to understand how a product fits into their treatment armamentarium, and patients need to understand the proper use and suitability of a product for their needs.

Advances in technology have changed the way healthcare providers, payers, patients, and caregivers locate and



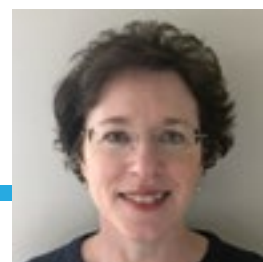
Kimberly Cash



Tamara Murry



Purvi Suthar



Robin Watts

interpret information. Providers and patients routinely turn to online sources for disease state and product information in their quest to learn about current and emerging treatment options. Since even a single online search may yield a variety of product information sources, it is critical that data generated about a product be developed, reported, and disseminated in a manner that provides the end user with reliable and consistent information in a format that is easy to understand. Data sources in the public domain that use outdated formats or provide incongruent information can ultimately hinder provider and patient access. If your product was researched today, would the information found be consistent across all sources and easy to understand? Would questions about product use be answered? Is the right information published in the right source and the right format to reach the right audience at the right time? These questions highlight the importance of having a strategic healthcare communication and data dissemination plan in place from the early stages of product development to address access factors for all stakeholders.

## Healthcare Communications

### What are the Current Communication Expectations of Healthcare Providers?

In today's healthcare environment, time is a highly valuable commodity for the provider. With minimal time to stay

abreast of medical information, healthcare providers expect access to timely, relevant, and concise clinical information, as confirmed by the findings from a survey of 260 healthcare providers.<sup>1</sup> Data from this survey also showed that, when making treatment decisions, providers preferred sources of clinical information that were prospective studies, practice guidelines, and meta-analyses.<sup>1</sup> Increasingly, this information is being used to make clinical decisions at the point-of-care using mobile devices such as tablets or smartphones through internet-based, self-service portals.<sup>2,3</sup> Thus, the two critical pieces (e.g., medical information and manuscripts) used for healthcare communication and data dissemination should be compatible across different electronic devices and applications to complete the market access puzzle (Figure 1).

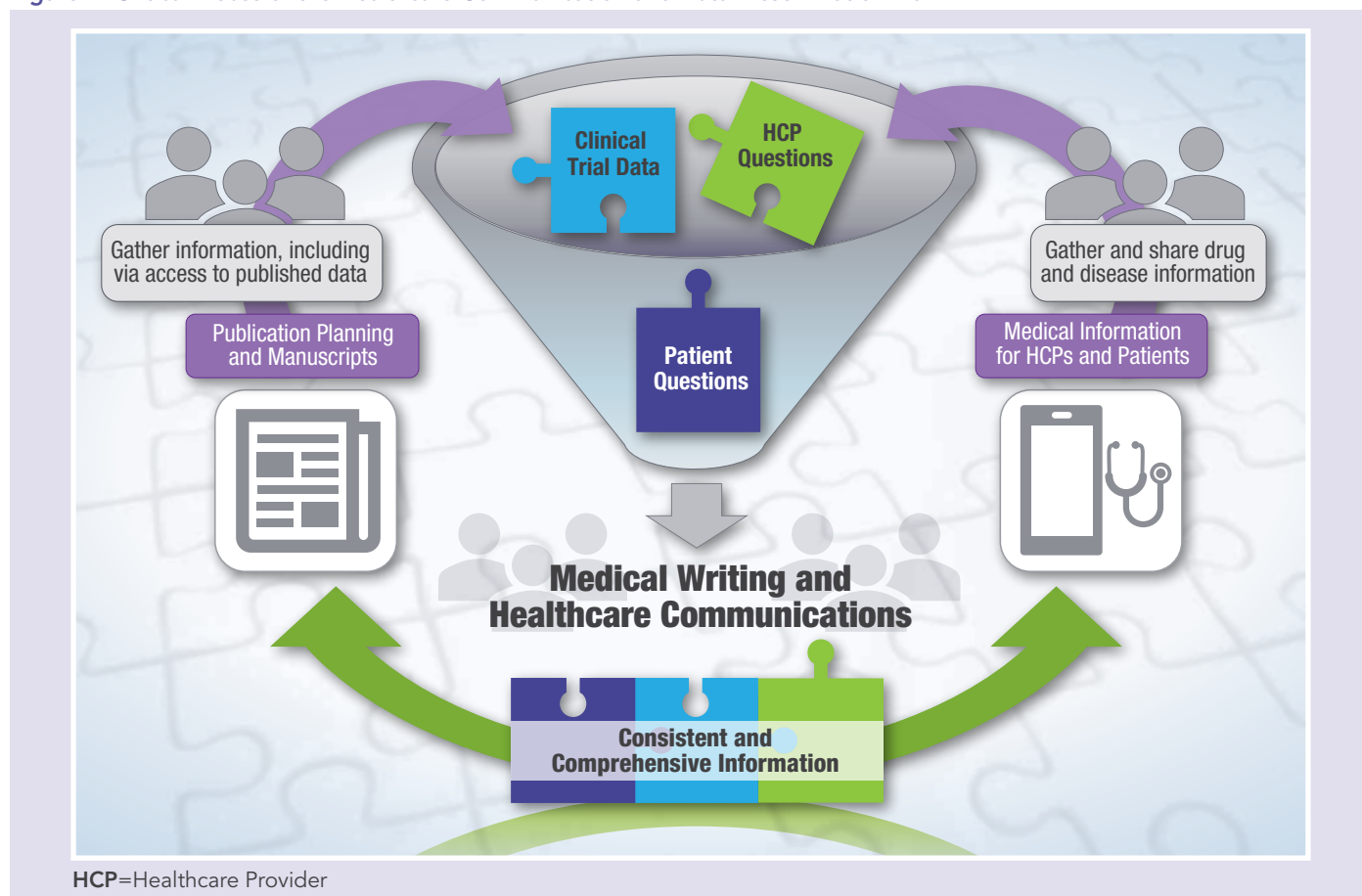
### What Factors are Affecting the Communication of Medical Information?

Trends affecting the communication of medical information are associated with the following three factors.

#### Preference for shorter, focused responses

As medical information departments at pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies have evolved to meet the changing needs of healthcare providers, there has been a push to reduce content length. A recent survey of 25 pharmaceutical companies showed that, for the majority

Figure 1. Critical Pieces of the Healthcare Communication and Data Dissemination Plan



HCP=Healthcare Provider

of companies, the average length of standard medical information response documents is less than five pages.<sup>4</sup>

### **An evidence-based approach to content selection**

In order to provide concise, relevant information, an evidence-based approach is critical and expected by providers. Healthcare providers and academic researchers prefer information developed from the strongest evidence<sup>1</sup> available on a topic and place greater trust in peer-reviewed<sup>5</sup> sources.

### **Global utilization of information and documents**

Globalization of medical information capabilities is now common among pharmaceutical companies.<sup>6</sup> Ideally, this involves development of core content that provides consistent communication and messaging across the organization, but allows some local revision to meet the specific needs of each regional affiliate.<sup>6,7</sup> Thus, strategic development of core content with input from all stakeholders is necessary to ensure that all local regulatory and compliance needs are met.<sup>6</sup>

### **How has the Utilization of Data Evolved?**

With technological advances, the rise of global internet access, and open-access journals, information is available to anyone with an internet connection; the result is a shift in the way data are used within the healthcare system.<sup>8</sup> Although a document may be intended for use by a specific audience, the ultimate end user on the internet may be anyone, including a provider, payer, patient, or caregiver. When feasible, a customer-centric approach for document development should be used, with the same data summarized in multiple documents, each for use by a specific targeted audience. With this approach, the information intended for payers focuses on product comparisons and health economics and outcomes data that are needed to differentiate products when making formulary decisions. Similarly, information intended for providers focuses on clinical outcomes, safety, and health economics and outcomes data that are used to make treatment decisions. For patients or caregivers, information focuses on proper use of drugs/devices, safety information, product comparisons, and disease-state education. Although a customer-centric approach to document development is still preferred,<sup>7</sup> use of the information by unintended audiences should be proactively considered during the document development and publication planning processes. Developing content that is designed for ease of reader uptake and adoption by payers, providers, and/or patients is one piece of the market access strategy.

### **The Art of Publication Planning**

As technology continues to advance, sponsors must adapt and ensure that clear plans and structures are in place so data are disseminated in a timely and efficient manner.

### **What Factors Contribute to Creating a Strategic Publication Plan?**

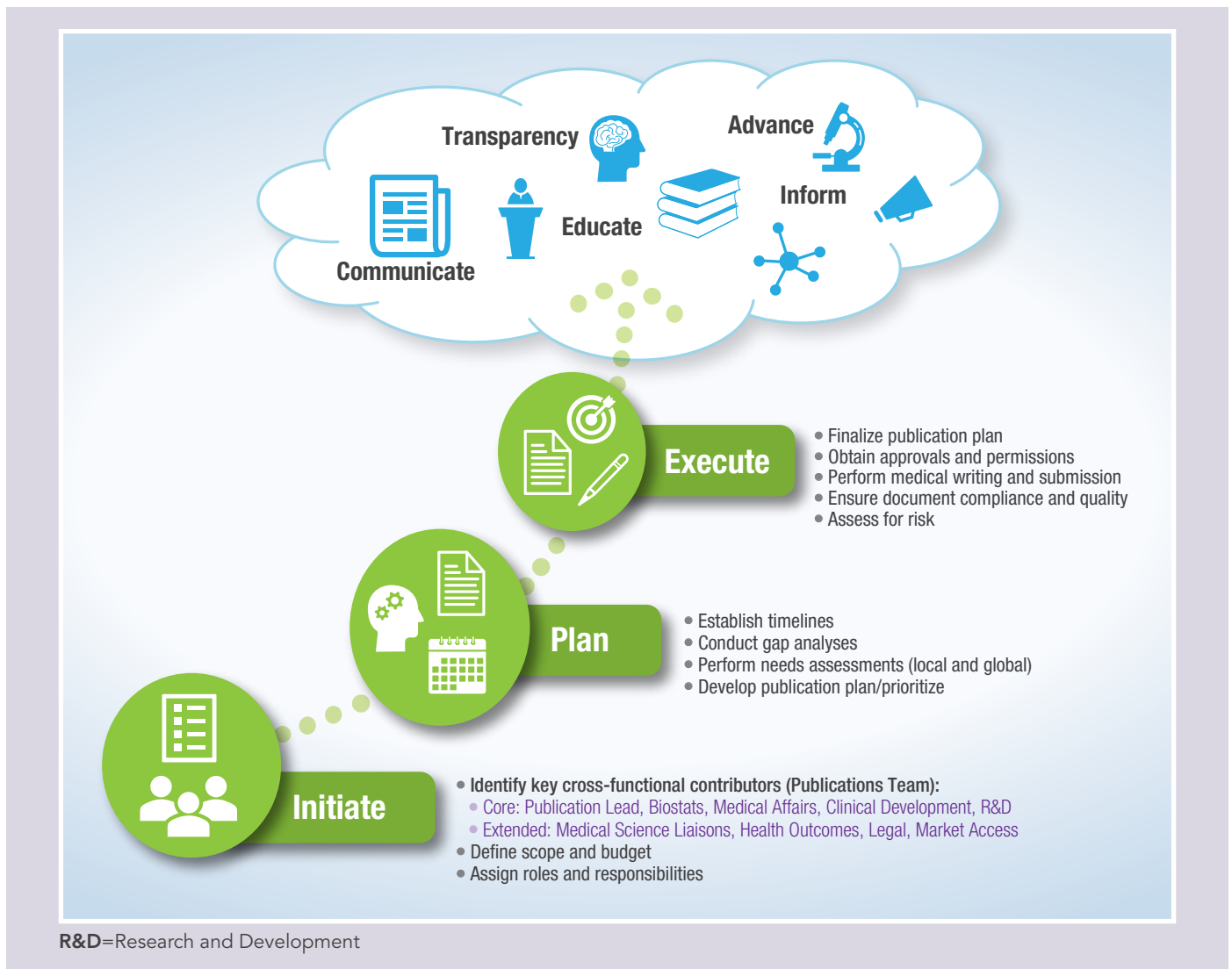
From the initial discussions at a small retreat organized by the Council of Biology Editors in 1998,<sup>9</sup> publication practice has evolved to include more definition and guidance. There are several publication-focused guidelines and best practices now available, including good publication practice (GPP3),<sup>10</sup> recommendations of the International Council of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE),<sup>10</sup> and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) guidelines,<sup>11</sup> that help guide sponsors on preparation and submission of manuscripts, authorship criteria, and ethical standards. There are also additional guidelines available based on specific study types, such as the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT), STrengthening the Reporting of OBservational studies in Epidemiology (STROBE), and Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA).<sup>10</sup>

These guidelines support the premise that all clinical data – positive, neutral, or negative – should be published responsibly, timely, and ethically.<sup>10</sup> Transparency and ethical behavior related to publications has come to the forefront of good publication practice as the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has issued corporate integrity agreements to several pharmaceutical companies over the last 10 years because of questionable publication planning activities.<sup>12</sup> The increased demand for integrity, clarity on authorship, and dissemination of available clinical data over the last 20 years has contributed to a more regulated and systematic approach towards publication planning. Publication planning plays a significant role in the success of marketing a product because it serves as the foundation for conveying a consistent value story, from laying the foundation of the disease state all the way through to the post-marketing outcomes data. In this way, publication planning is a critical piece of the market access strategy.

### **What are the Key Elements of Publication Planning?**

A well-developed publication plan (*Figure 2*) ensures that key cross-functional contributors are involved in the planning process, which can start as early as the proof-of-concept stage<sup>13</sup> or Phase II<sup>14</sup> of a clinical development program. Obtaining input from the various contributors helps identify and address data gaps while ensuring that scientific and clinical data are presented to the correct audience. It is also important to designate clear roles and responsibilities for the publication planning team members, which includes discussions about authorship and journal selection.<sup>10</sup> Journal selection alone involves multiple factors such as audience, circulation, indexing, impact factor, open access versus paid access, and time to publication. The importance of early planning cannot be overemphasized, as this clears the way for rapid communication of the data to the preselected outlet points once data become available.

**Figure 2. Data Dissemination: Key Steps for Comprehensive Publication Planning**



Publication tools such as gap analyses and needs assessments help the planning team prioritize the order and value of presenting critical background information, primary data, and secondary data. Other benefits that can be derived from a well-outlined plan are early external expert engagement, circumvention of redundancies, minimization of the risk of plagiarism in data presentation, and compliance with good documentation practices.<sup>10</sup> All of these factors, when addressed proactively, result in rapid and effective healthcare communications as part of the product life cycle support strategy.

Dissemination of data through a comprehensive publication plan can have an effect on current medical practices, lead to better treatment decisions, and better educate caregivers and patients.<sup>10,14</sup> As the number of publications continues to grow,<sup>11</sup> technology advances,<sup>11</sup> and more open-access data<sup>15</sup> become available, it is evident that sponsors must master the art of publication planning to better communicate product value stories not only to healthcare providers but also to payers, patients, and caregivers.

### The Future of Communications

Patient centricity is driving change within the pharmaceutical industry, and this change includes the way data from clinical trials are presented, summarized, and disseminated to healthcare providers, patients, and/or caregivers.<sup>16,17</sup> Thanks to technological advances, patients and/or patient advocates are empowered to investigate medical needs and to bring their discoveries into dialogues with providers.<sup>16,18</sup> These interactions are affected by different mediums (e.g., infographics, plain language summaries) being used to communicate directly with patients and to aid providers as they educate themselves and their patients. Even though healthcare providers can assimilate knowledge equally well from text-based and infographic sources, many prefer infographics because of the overall reading experience (e.g., they are interesting and user-friendly).<sup>19</sup> Infographics can benefit patients by helping them understand and recall information they receive during interactions with healthcare providers.<sup>20,21</sup>

## Why Infographics Over Text-Based Information?

- More interesting, use of color and graphics are engaging and innovative<sup>22</sup>
- User-friendly, easy to navigate and read<sup>19</sup>
- Increase attention and improve information recall<sup>20</sup>
- Improve comprehension and understanding (mainly for patients)<sup>21,22</sup>

Providers use the information they research and gather to educate themselves and inform their conversations with patients at the point-of-care,<sup>1</sup> with over 75% of patient consults including the use of a digital resource by the provider during the interaction.<sup>2,23</sup> Given this, it is important that the communication medium's format is compatible across different types of digital devices.

Because patients are central to and involved in their healthcare decisions, the availability of plain language summaries of clinical trials<sup>18</sup> and medical information letters written specifically for patients has recently increased. A public summary of a clinical trial, made available within one year of the trial ending, will soon be a requirement in Europe.<sup>17</sup> Dissemination of information generated during clinical trials is critical for providers and patients, as well as to ongoing and future research,<sup>24</sup> and scientists ultimately benefit as the reach of their research expands to a wider audience and has a greater impact within both the research and healthcare communities.<sup>25</sup> Since access to scientific publications has increased over time because of open-access policies, it is not surprising that scientific journals are listed among the top three resources patients seek out for information on diseases.<sup>18</sup> Access to information they can use and understand empowers patients and patient advocates to be active and important members of the healthcare decision-making team.<sup>26</sup>

## Summary

As technology drives changes in product development, it also drives changes in communications and data dissemination. Broadened data access to providers and patients, through online sources, has created a need for

intricately coordinated publication planning that anticipates the data points that will be relevant to these end users and presents them in a consistent manner.

In addition, formats for publishing data are evolving to keep pace with the way technology is changing readers' expectations for rapid access, brevity that does not compromise data integrity, and infographic presentations. In response to such changes, many industry-based medical information departments have begun adopting digital and social media channels to generate awareness, improve access, and provide relevant information in easy-to-use (practical) formats using these channels.<sup>23</sup> At least one biopharma company has kick-started a new mandatory open-access program for study manuscripts as a way to shorten time to publication and broaden access to product information to healthcare providers and patients.<sup>15</sup> From firsthand experience, Evidera is also aware of a sponsor who made the bold decision to initiate a program to provide medical information letters to patients, not just to providers, in an effort to provide patients with easy-to-understand product data.

These are a few examples of the ways in which healthcare communications and data dissemination are evolving to meet the dynamic needs of those who seek product data to inform patient care. These trends are expected to continue and will provide opportunities for both sponsors and medical writers to innovate in how we can partner together to meet the increasing demand for concise, consistent, and timely product information in an environment where data sources are plentiful. Thus, the delivery of consistent and comprehensive scientific and medical information requires a strategic plan that takes these factors into account from the early stages of product development. ■

---

*The authors thank Meredith MacPherson, Medical Writer, for her gracious and excellent support in the quality review of this article.*

---

*For more information, please contact [Kimberly.Cash@evidera.com](mailto:Kimberly.Cash@evidera.com), [Tamara.Murry@evidera.com](mailto:Tamara.Murry@evidera.com), [Purvi.Suthar@evidera.com](mailto:Purvi.Suthar@evidera.com), or [Robin.Watts@evidera.com](mailto:Robin.Watts@evidera.com).*

## REFERENCES

1. Fung SM, Chang DY, Patel-Romero R, Suchodolski M. Survey of Health Care Practitioners' Preferences for Medical Information. *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. 2016;50(5):569-576. doi:10.1177/2168479016641719.
2. Ventola CL. Mobile Devices and Apps for Health Care Professionals: Uses and Benefits. *P T*. 2014 May;39(5):356-364.
3. Helmich M-L. Reducing Call Volume at Medical Information Centers by Switching to a Web-Based Self-Service Facility - What to Consider? Providing Customers with Digital Medical Information on the Internet. *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. 2017;51(3):327-331. doi:10.1177/2168479016682061.
4. Bundra K, Hermes-DeSantis E, Toscani M, Barone J, Weingard R. Medical Information Standard Response Structure across Global Pharmaceutical Companies. Poster presented at: 9th Annual European Medical Information and Communications Conference; November 10-11, 2015; London, UK.
5. Nicholas D, Watkinson A, Jamali HR, et al. Peer Review: Still King in the Digital Age. *Learn Publ*. 2015;28(1):15-21.

6. Giffin SA, Baumeister P, Bowers D. Review of the Evolution of Medical Information in Light of Changes in the External Landscape. *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. 2014;48(6):NP6-NP14. doi:10.1177/2168479014547935.
7. Bordoloi P, Gažo A, Savulich D, Verzosa C. Medical Information Services: How Are We Trending? *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. 2014;48(6):NP15-NP21. doi:10.1177/2168479014546334.
8. Doherty M, Myers NB, McNickle AP. The Impact of Innovation: How the Changing Nature of Data Will Challenge FDA's Regulatory Framework. *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. 2017;51(3):352-354. doi:10.1177/2168479017700680.
9. Wager L. Developing Publication Guidelines for the Pharmaceutical Industry: Follow-up on the "Common Aims/Different Languages" Retreat. *CBE Views*. 1999;22(5):158.
10. Battisti WP, Wager E, Baltzer L, et al. Good Publication Practice for Communicating Company-Sponsored Medical Research: GPP3. *Ann Intern Med*. 2015 Sep 15;163(6):461-464. doi:10.7326/M15-0288.
11. Auti P, Pandey R, Shah V. Project Management in Medical Publication Writing: A Less Explored Avenue in Pharmaceutical Companies and Clinical Research Organisations. *Med Writ*. 2016;25(1):36-44.
12. Rodino FJ. Corporate Integrity Agreements: What They Say about Publications, Publication Planning, Transparency, and ICMJE. *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. 2013;47(1):50-56. doi:1177/2168479012470648.
13. Sismondo S, Nicholson SH. Publication Planning 101. *J Pharm Pharm Sci*. 2009;12(3):273-279.
14. D'Angelo G, Baronikova S, Scheckner B. Publication Planning at One Pharmaceutical Company: A Guidance Document Creation to Ensure Compliance with Industry Best Practices and Laws. Poster presented at: 8th Annual Meeting of the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals; April 23-25, 2012; Baltimore, MD.
15. Adams B. Shire Goes Open Access on Research Papers. Available at: <https://www.fiercebitech.com/cro/shire-goes-open-access-research-papers>. Published January 24, 2018. Accessed March 13, 2018.
16. du Plessis D, Sake J-K, Halling K, Morgan J, Georgieva A, Bertelsen N. Patient Centricity and Pharmaceutical Companies. *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. 2017;51(4):460-467. doi:10.1177/2168479017696268.
17. Raynor DK, Myers L, Blackwell K, Kress B, Dubost A, Joos A. Clinical Trial Results Summary for Laypersons: A User Testing Study. *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. [Published online ahead of print Feb 5, 2018] doi:10.1177/2168479017753129.
18. Pushparajah D, Manning E, Michels E, Arnaudeau-Bégarde C. Value of Developing Plain Language Summaries of Scientific and Clinical Articles: A Survey of Patients and Physicians. *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. [Published online ahead of print Nov 15, 2017] doi:10.1177/2168479017738723.
19. Buljan I, Malicki M, Wager E, Puljak L, Hren D, Kellie F, West H, Alfirevic Z, Marusic A. No Difference in Knowledge Obtained from Infographic or Plain Language Summary of a Cochrane Systematic Review: Three Randomized Controlled Trials. *J Clin Epidemiol*. 2017 Dec 18. pii: S0895-4356(17)30490-0. doi:10.1016/j.jclinepi.2017.12.003. [Epub ahead of print]
20. Houts PS, Doak CC, Doak LG, Loscalzo MJ. The Role of Pictures in Improving Health Communication: A Review of Research on Attention, Comprehension, Recall, and Adherence. *Patient Educ Couns*. 2006 May;61(2):173-90. Epub 2005 Aug 24.
21. Eustace KL, Kitterman E. Revolutionize Your Data: The ABCs of Data Visualization Concepts. Poster presented at: 10th Annual European CME Forum; November 8-10, 2017; Dublin, Ireland.
22. McCrorie AD, Donnelly C, McGlade KJ. Infographics: Healthcare Communication for the Digital Age. *Ulster Med J*. 2016 May;85(2):71-75.
23. Albano D, Soloff A, Heim K, Mavila S. A Theory on the Relativity of Factors Impacting the Utilization of Medical Information Services from the Pharmaceutical Industry. *Ther Innov Regul Sci*. 2016;50(5):554-559. doi:10.1177/2168479016640019.
24. Udovicich C, Kasivisvanathan V, Winchester C. Communicating Your Research (Part 1) – To the Scientific Community. *J Clin Urol*. 2017;10(4):396-399. doi:10.1177/2051415816668941.
25. Tennant JP, Waldner F, Jacques DC, Masuzzo P, Collister LB, Hartgerink CH. The Academic, Economic and Societal Impacts of Open Access: An Evidence-Based Review. Version 3. *F1000Res*. 2016 Apr 11 [revised 2016 Sep 21];5:632. eCollection 2016.
26. Ansah D, Hoyme D, Divekar A. "Doctor Google" and the New Era of Patient Empowerment through Internet. *J Am Coll Cardiol*. 2017;69(11):2417. doi:10.1016/s0735-1097(17)35806-0.