

Presentation time

Wednesday 6 April, 10.30 am



Impact of a structured training programme on development of medical writers

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Objectives

On-the-job (OTJ) training is essential for trainee medical writers (TMWs), but it is often difficult to identify appropriate development opportunities in a busy agency environment. Reasons include availability of suitable projects, risk avoidance, increased turnaround time to allow for slower working, and time for feedback and monitoring.

We introduced a 6-week structured training programme to establish baseline skills in a risk-free environment that would prepare newly recruited TMWs for effective working on live accounts.

Research design and methods

We mind-mapped the key skills for professional medical writers and identified the baseline skill requirements. A bespoke training course, including tutorials and practical exercises, was designed and delivered. Exercises followed existing standard operating procedures and were subject to standard quality control and feedback mechanisms. The primary outcome measurement was client-chargeable time during the first 6 months of employment, compared with the previous intake of TMWs who had received mainly OTJ training.

Results

Interim analysis at 4 months of employment showed mean chargeable time for each successive month to be 3%, 37%, 72% and 93% with structured training and 51%, 71%, 55% and 62% with OTJ training. The first two complete post-training months (3 and 4) after structured training averaged 83% chargeable time, compared with 58% for the OTJ trainees for the same period.

Conclusions

A structured training programme appears to reduce the time taken for TMWs to achieve an acceptable level of chargeable time.

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