Acknowledgment of Medical Writers in Medical Journal Articles: A Comparison from the Years 2000 and 2007

Susan A. Nastase, MS*

Pfizer Inc, Collegeville, PA

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Authorship and use of unacknowledged medical writers are important issues for journal editors, scientists, research funders, and publication professionals.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to determine whether the acknowledgment of medical writers' contributions in papers published in medical journals has increased over time.

METHODS: Articles from nine medical journals were selected. Articles from 2000 and 2007 were reviewed to determine whether the contributions of a medical writer were acknowledged. Information collected included whether the article delineated the author(s)' affiliation to a medical writer and whether financial support was acknowledged. The trend of acknowledgment of medical writers was examined.

RESULTS: Results were obtained for 581 articles reviewed. Of the 334 articles reviewed that were published in 2000, 11 (3.3%) included an acknowledgment of a medical writer. Of the 247 articles reviewed that were published in 2007, 28 (11.3%) included an acknowledgment of a medical writer. The authors' specific contributions to the manuscripts were listed in 24% of the articles from the year 2000 and 59.1% of the articles from the year 2007. The frequency of acknowledgments of funding sources for the study was 20% in 2000 and 34.1% of the articles from the year 2000 and 2007 were selected. Table 1 shows the distribution of articles by journal.

CONCLUSIONS: Results from this study suggest that the acknowledgment of medical writers in medical journal articles is increasing. Awareness of the importance of appropriately acknowledging medical writers is increasing. More research is warranted to confirm the findings from this study.

REFERENCES


Figure 1. Frequency of Medical Writer Acknowledgment by Journal and Year

Figure 2. Description of Medical Writer Acknowledgment

Table 1. Comparison of Articles by Medical Journal, Funding Disclosure, and Medical Writer Acknowledgment, Submission, and Review

CONCLUSIONS

• Results from this study suggest that the acknowledgment of medical writers in medical journal articles is increasing.
• Awareness of the importance of appropriately acknowledging medical writers is increasing.
• More research is warranted to confirm the findings from this study.

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