

Medical Writing Doesn't Have to Be Complicated.



**Looking Ahead:
Newsletter Ends, Blog Starts Soon**



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As my Doximity Op-Med Fellowship draws to close, so will this newsletter. My final article as a Doximity Op-Med Fellow will run sometime this summer. The

fellowship taught me a great deal about myself, my writing, and the kind of writer I aspire to be as I continue growing and evolving. The program also helped me further define my target audiences. I enjoy writing for both medical professionals and general audiences, and it has inspired me to write for broader audiences while interweaving my voice as a pharmacist.

Like my fellowship, my newsletter has run its course. Over the last 9 months, things have gotten so busy that it's made maintaining this newsletter a bit more challenging than I'd anticipated. I originally planned for this to be a monthly newsletter. Initially, I managed to do that, staying on track for about a year. Scheduling became pretty difficult after I took the freelance medical director role during the fourth quarter of 2019.

Even though that role has since played out and I've moved on to new opportunities, my cup still runneth over this year, too. Believe it or not, I'd drafted issues earlier this year that I didn't get a chance to run before February and March drew to a close. Where does the time go?

In my efforts to produce content more efficiently, I am transitioning to blogging. You'll still be able to find back issues of my newsletter on my website. For future blog articles, please check my [website](#) for new content starting this summer.

COVID-19 and Vaccine Development

These days, you can't go *anywhere* without seeing or hearing something about the pandemic, and I certainly don't want to disappoint.

COVID-19 has brought the world to its knees and has certainly altered the direction of some of my projects for sure. On the journalism front, many of my non-COVID-related projects have been tabled or modified to include a COVID angle. My article about sickle cell anemia still ran in last month's issue of [O, The Oprah Magazine](#), but many of my other pitches have gotten canned or tabled until further notice.

On the corporate side, recent projects include writing about liquid biopsy in cancer screening and detection, summarizing presentations for an upcoming rheumatology conference, advisory board work, and some technical writing. My COVID-19 journalism coverage has focused mainly on how the virus affects people with certain conditions, such as heart disease, epilepsy, and HIV.

I also recently wrote about vaccine development for a trade publication. The race to develop a vaccine has highlighted a few key issues:

In it for the long-haul: Vaccine development is generally a lengthy process. In the pre-COVID-19 era (which wasn't so long ago), vaccines took a long time to develop, averaging about 10-15 years. Even so, vaccine development does not usually take as long as pharmaceutical drugs, which run about 20 years on average. However, there are some outliers. For example, Merck spent 23 years developing its Meruvax vaccine, according to Dennis Gross, MS, PhD, CEO and treasurer of the Pennsylvania Drug Discovery Institute in Doylestown, PA.

A hastened race to the finish line could make waste. Based on numerous news reports, it looks like the FDA and a few regulatory bodies in some other countries may be modifying the approval process in efforts to address the pandemic. Still, Gross warned that accelerating development may cause some safety concerns downstream. Exactly how this scenario will play out nobody really knows.

Sources vary in terms of how many COVID-19 vaccines are currently in development. According to [this report](#) from the Regulatory Affairs Professionals Society, as of May 22, 2020, it appears there may be at least 70 in the works.

Bringing a vaccine to market can be just as challenging as bringing a drug to market--maybe even more. Even if the vaccine makes it to market, many things can still go wrong. As Nitin Goel, a senior manager of early commercial portfolio strategy at GSK explained during an interview, feeding the supply chain is a huge issue in vaccine manufacturing and development. Batches may spoil during the initial phases drug development. Even without product loss, meeting consumer needs becomes extremely difficult when demand is extremely high, such as during a pandemic.

To read more about how vaccines are made, check out [this link](#).

I don't consider this writing the final issue of my newsletter to be goodbye, as I'll be blogging soon. I have truly enjoyed sharing newsy updates and look forward to creating new content for my blog.

If you're interested, feel free to check my website's [blog page](#) in the summer for updates.

Until then, stay tuned...



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