Medical journalism

This page outlines opportunities in medical journalism, including the skills you will need and how to maximise your chances of getting in.

What opportunities are there?

- there are opportunities in press, radio, television and on-line journalism
- there is fierce competition (from people from both media and medical backgrounds) for a limited number of posts
- many doctors take on these roles as an addition, rather than an alternative to their clinical work
- there are benefits to working as a clinician as well as a freelance medical journalist; you can maintain professional credibility and recognition as well as keeping your knowledge up to date by researching and writing news articles and features

What skills and qualities do I need?

You need to be able to write clearly and quickly, and adapt your style to suit a variety of publications. Ways to develop these skills include:

- getting research papers published
- writing articles for medical journals
- copy-writing or journalism courses

Getting in

- make contact with editors of relevant journals, medical publications and websites and submit articles for publication. If you are unsuccessful ask for feedback and use this to improve your submissions
- become a member of the Medical Journalists Association – editors often use this organisation to source freelance journalists
- copy-editing or proof-reading for a medical publisher, medical communications agency or a pharmaceutical company can be a way to gain valuable experience for medical journalism
- The University of Westminster offers a Medical Journalism BA Honours. This is a one-year course designed for intercalating medical students who have successfully completed a minimum of two years of a basic medical sciences BSc Honours (pre-clinical). This course is designed to prepare you for a career in medical journalism alongside working as a doctor
Medical Journalists Association [1]

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