

Ralph M. Myerson, M.D., FACP

has won the 2001 AMWA Eric W. Martin Award for the Best Published Article on a Pharmaceutical Subject for: "Irritable Bowel Syndrome: Serotonin Antagonists and Agonists Will Spur Market Growth." Spectrum; July, 2000 pp 10-12.

Dr Myerson's career has stretched from earning his medical degree in Boston, serving in the US Army Medical Corps in Africa (1943 to 1946), working as an academic internist at the University of Pennsylvania, directing a laboratory for SmithKline and French, consultant medical writer to Medex, and freelance medical writer.

He has authored or co-authored over 150 articles, some of which have appeared in the New England Journal of Medicine, JAMA, Annals and Archives of Internal Medicine, American Heart Journal, Gastroenterology, etc. Books include Synopsis of Cardiology (Mosby), Congestive Heart Failure (Mosby), a nursing book on Coronary Care Units (Mosby), and four books entitled Drugs in Medicine.

He was also recognized by AMWA in 1994 for his J Pharm Med article which won the Rose Kushner award for the Best Published Article on Breast Cancer for his article: "Oral Contraceptives and Breast Cancer; a Retrospective View."

Dr. Myerson can be contacted at MdRalph@aol.com.

AMWA Conferences

Spring is heralded in the Delaware Valley by the arrival of a flyer about the Princeton Conference. If you need your AMWA certification and absolutely cannot make it to Princeton, other chapters will welcome your participation. For a full list of AMWA conferences, look up the AMWA.org website. And make sure you clear your calendar for the annual conference in Norfolk, VA from 24th to 27th October, 2001. *The Editor.*

Ad rates:
\$1 per word up to 150 words; inquire about rates for >150 words.

News of the Delaware Valley Chapter
c/o Susanna J Dodgson, Ph.D.
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DELAWRITER

News of the Delaware Valley Chapter

May 2001



Chapter Meeting June 5th, 2001

2001 AMWA-DVC Election of Officers

AMWA-DVC members attending the Sheraton Bucks County Hotel dinner meeting on June 5th, 2001, will elect our next President-Elect and our next Treasurer. The Nominating Committee has submitted the names of **Terry Ann Glauser, M.D.**, as our candidate for President-Elect and **Robert Hand** as our candidate for Treasurer (2001-2003). The Committee also recommended **Eileen Moran's** appointment as AMWA-DVC Delegate with **Ann Saul** as her Alternate.

Additional nominations for the listed Board positions may be submitted in writing to Lori De Milto, AMWA-DVC Secretary (2000-2002) at least 30 days before the annual business meeting. Such nominations must be signed by at least ten AMWA-DVC members and must be accompanied by a letter from the candidate stating willingness to serve if elected.

Nominating Committee Members:

Chuck Sutherland, Kate Casano, Susanna Dodgson, Roderick Sayce.

Program and After-Dinner Talk

Dr. Harold G. Koenig

Duke University Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina
will give the after-dinner talk at 7:30 p.m. on:

"Religion/Spirituality and Health: History, Relationships, and Clinical Application"

5:30 p.m. Networking

6:15 pm Dinner

7:15 p.m. Business (elections -- see above)
at Sheraton Bucks County Hotel
400 Oxford Valley Road, Langhorne, PA 19047

Dr. Koenig's presentation is sponsored by
the John Templeton Foundation.

For information: contact Chuck Sutherland: 215-453-9084
skimmer@mail3.enter.net. *Charles Sutherland, Ph.D.*

Inside:

The Winner of the 2001 Eric Martin Award.

Contact information for AMWA-DVC.

A trilogy of haiku.

March meeting talk.

Princeton Conference update.

Plea for your e-mail address.

The **Eric W. Martin Award** is presented in honor of Eric W. Martin, Ph.D., 1971 AMWA president and author of AMWA's Code of Ethics.

- Entry must be an article, brochure, or monograph published during 2000 (print media only).

- Subject must deal with the pharmaceutical sciences.

Medical Writers sought by

Aerotek for contract jobs around

Philadelphia. If you have experience with IND/NDA submission

please contact Rich Goldbeck at 610-254-5423.

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Dear Editor

For the past seven years I've been using haiku as part of my course "Writing the Final Report of a Clinical Study." My premise has been that clinical study reports and submissions in general could be much more succinct than most people make them out to be.

Consequently we should consider summarizing the results of a clinical study or an NDA in a simple, haiku format. It would be to the point, easier for the FDA to review, and would not confuse the issue with lots of facts.

Here are some that my wife and I wrote to describe some regulatory projects of which we've been a part:

Larry and Geri Liberti
Pharmaceutical Information
Associates, Ltd
www.pialtd.com

Stinking little drug
Makes our patients sick
This compound will never pass!

The patient he died
It was very sad
Our drug is pretty worthless!

Our drug is the best
It cures everyone
Approve it now! It works fine!

L&G Liberti (c) 2001

Update 5th Annual Princeton Conference

This year's Princeton Conference will be held in The Nassau Inn on Palmer Square, directly across from Princeton University on May 5th and 6th.

On the program are three Core Curriculum courses, one Advanced Curriculum course, plus seven non-credit workshop topics. Over 50 writers have registered in advance.

The Core and Advanced Curriculum courses are now closed. However, seats are still available in the noncredit workshops for late registrants.

More information from Brian Bass, Chairperson, at bam509@optonline.net.
Brian Bass.

How to get information or volunteer to help:

1. Look up the Delaware Valley Chapter website: amwa-dvc.org.
2. Look up the AMWA website: amwa.org.
3. Call anyone on the steering committee or send them an e-mail (addresses on websites).
4. Send an e-mail to the Editor.

Who are you?

This space is reserved for news about you, our members. Send in your picture and your news and we'll feature you. Even if you are far too shy to have anything published about yourself, we'd love to hear from you anyway.

The Editor.

The *Delawriter* is the newsletter of the Delaware Chapter of the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA).

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856-795-2359.

Articles, haiku, news, advertising: submit to the Editor.

Please send address changes and membership information to AMWA at 40 West Gude Drive #101, Rockville, MD 20850-1192 or by email to contacts listed at AMWA.org

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*The Editor thanks
Julie Barlow
(jbarlow@managedcaremeasures.com)
for help with Quark and design,
and
Robert Hand and Margaret Tau
for copy-editing.*

Why does AMWA-DVC need my e-mail address?

To contact you and get your feedback immediately.

Feedback?

Last November we moved into the new Millennium when Roderick Sayce downloaded members' addresses from our website (AMWA-DVC.org), wrote some code to extract the e-mail addresses and sent a broadcast e-mail about the December meeting on Medical Genetics. I read it, stuck it on my bulletin board and was delighted a second time with a second e-mail a week before the meeting.

Did you get both e-mails? Did you also get two emails before the March meeting on Statistics? What about an email in late March about the nominations for board positions? If you did not, Rod wants to hear from you. By e-mail. From your most reliable address. *The Editor.*

Can I have a p-value with that, please?

A record crowd turned out on March 13th to hear Christopher J. Miller's entertaining and often irreverent primer on the fundamentals of statistics. Miller, associate director of the Biostatistics Project Team at AstraZeneca LP, offered an overview of biostatistics, and highlighted some bizarre, yet common, statistical practices.

Using a liberal dose of quotes from British statistician Steven Senn, Miller entertained and informed attendees. For example, Senn labels a biostatistician: "One who has neither the intellect for mathematics nor the commitment for medicine, but likes to dabble in both." Senn calls biometrics: "An alternative name for statistics, especially if applied to the life sciences. The advantage of the name compared to statistics is that the general public does not understand what it means, whereas with statistics, the general public thinks it understands what it means."

Miller said that p-values and confidence intervals are often misinterpreted,

and that they don't necessarily answer a relevant question. These misunderstandings lead us to present analyses that are nonsensical.

He highlighted two things that make no sense to him: baseline differences and *post hoc* power calculations. Baseline differences, according to Miller, do not necessarily mean that meaningful treatment inferences cannot be made. He also noted that the p-value for baseline tests has no relation to the ability to make valid treatment comparisons after the trial ends. Solutions to baseline differences include using ANCOVA, which makes an average allowance for imbalance, and stratification, which allows for a valid treatment comparison to be made within each strata. Senn also had something to say about baseline differences: "The fact that baseline tests are commonly performed without much apparent harm is not more of a defense than saying of the policy of treating viruses with antibiotics that most patients recover."

Post hoc power calculations are used for well-designed and adequately-powered studies that "fail"; they are a way of saying that the study was underpowered and that the drug probably does work. But selecting correct and incorrect assumptions when recalculating power is arbitrary and ridiculous on the basis on one study's results, according to Miller. Senn made a statement about power which Miller supports: "The power of a trial is a useful concept when planning a trial but has little relevance to the interpretation of its results."

In concluding, Miller advised us to be careful when applying statistical results. For those interested in learning more, he suggested two references:

Lang T, Secic M. How to Report Statistics in Medicine. 1997.
Senn S. Statistical Issues in Drug Development. 1997.

*By Lori De Milto.
lorid@voicenet.com.
Lori is a freelance writer.*

Medical Haiku

This space is reserved for medical haiku - the challenge of describing anything related to medical writing in seventeen syllables.

This month's haiku is not one but three: a trilogy. The haiku are reproduced in full with the letter from the authors on the opposite page.

Keep the haiku coming! You too can be a published poet!
The Editor.