



Medical and Scientific Communications Network

Welcome to this week's newsletter. We offer the chance to pause, take stock as we share a few things that caught our attention over the past few days—ideas, articles, and observations worth a moment of consideration before the next deadline calls. In a field rarely short of information our aim is to filter out the background noise and share topics that deserve a second look.

In the news

US agencies aren't ready for the rising cost of making research papers free, report warns: Science agencies could soon face nearly \$1 billion publishing bill, Congressional analysts find ([more...](#))

What is a conflict of interest within the context of scientific publishing? Conflicts of interest, sometimes known as competing interests and often shortened to COIs, are part of everyday academic life. Researchers collaborate, receive funding, consult for industry, sit on advisory boards, and build long-term professional networks. None of this is inherently problematic ([more...](#)).

Making scientific knowledge free for all: Scientific research publishing is a particularly lucrative industry. The most recent estimates suggest

that it generates around 19 billion U.S. dollars (or 16.67 billion euros) in annual turnover, with margins of around 40%. These staggering figures largely reflect the fact that the "Big Five" commercial publishers, such as Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley, Taylor & Francis and SAGE, are capitalizing on work that is largely funded by public money ([more...](#)).

AI promised to democratise academic publishing – the evidence says otherwise: Generative AI has been widely embraced as a tool that could level the playing field in academic publishing, giving non-native English speakers and researchers in under-resourced settings a fairer chance. A growing body of evidence shows the reality is more troubling ([more...](#)).

Behind the Editors' desk: How AI is reshaping scientific publishing: From manuscript preparation to peer review and editorial decision-making, AI is rapidly transforming every stage of scientific publishing. That evolution ran like a thread through every discussion at this year's Editors' Forum, traditionally organized by the Editors-in-Chiefs of four flagship journals in the field ([more...](#)).

What Do Scientists Think About Open Access Publishing? The main purpose of open access publishing is to increase the visibility and reuse of academic research. However, the model is not without its disadvantages. While articles are free at the point of access, the research authors do have to pay a fee to publish in open access journals. This can make it harder for research groups with fewer resources to publish in high-visibility journals ([more...](#)).

AI-Written Research Is Forcing A Reckoning In Publishing: A new "Academic Humanizer" tool is sparking debate in academia by removing AI writing patterns from research papers and grant proposals. While developers claim it enhances clarity and voice, particularly for non-native English speakers, critics view it as a form of academic dishonesty in an ongoing "AI detection arms race." AI writing is already widespread, with over 13% of biomedical abstracts potentially LLM-processed ([more...](#)).

Do You Have to Be Fancy to Get Published in 'Science'? No, not necessarily. But scientists who work for a prestigious university are three times more likely than their peers who don't to get published in the top-tier journal, according to a new independent analysis of Science's manuscript data ([more...](#)).

Who and what can we trust? Building trust in scholarly publishing: Ever catch yourself thinking, 'Can I trust this?' - whether it's an article you've read, a researcher you've reached out to, or even the cheap flights you're looking at for your next holiday. In today's world, trust is hard-earned. We're all pretty good at spotting when something feels a bit 'off', but what about the quiet, positive signals that truly earn our trust ([more...](#))?

Can we stop AI from flooding scientific journals? AI detectors may never beat fraud. Changing how science rewards its researchers might be the only fix that does ([more...](#)).

What 110,000 Rejected Papers Reveal About Science's Biggest Journals: Getting a paper published in one of the world's most selective science journals is supposed to be a pure meritocracy, the best science wins, full stop. But a sweeping new analysis of 110,303 manuscript submissions reveals that an author's institution and team size carry enormous weight in acceptance rates, weight that dwarfs almost every other measured factor, gender included ([more...](#)).

QED: An AI Tool for Smarter Manuscript Review: A team of researchers developed QED, an AI-powered system designed to deliver rigorous and constructive feedback on scientific manuscripts in minutes ([more...](#)).

AI-induced never-skilling in medical education: The integration of AI into medical training is accelerating faster than the educational frameworks designed to govern it. This Perspective identifies a risk that has received insufficient attention: that trainees who rely on AI during the early formative years of clinical education may fail to develop the foundational reasoning skills that safe, independent practice requires ([more...](#)).

Controlling AI Hallucinations: Building Evidence- First Trust in Medical Information and Medical Writing Workflows: Can AI outputs be trusted? This is one of the most important questions healthcare professionals ask about generative AI. This question is especially important in medical information and medical writing ([more...](#)).

Why bad health information can seem so convincing – and five ways to resist it: Recent reports have highlighted AI-generated “doctors” spreading dubious health advice to millions of social media users. Fabricated wellness trends can travel just as quickly ([more...](#)).

AI agents are checking the scientific literature — and spotting decades-old errors: The technology is proving adept at finding faults in decades-old papers and reference databases ([more...](#)).

How vaccine sceptics use storytelling effectively to create powerful but medically inaccurate messaging: As long as there have been vaccines, there have been people who doubted their science and safety. Dumb ([more...](#)).

Exclusive: the science papers that patents cite the most: Nature reveals the studies that are mentioned most often in patent filings — and why ([more...](#)).

‘A waste of time for all of us’: caught in the crossfire of the peer-review wars: Review mills — researchers who write fake referee reports with coercive citation requests — are setting off a war in academic publishing. What happens to those caught in the middle? ([more...](#)).

The Power of Small Words: The words that change lives rarely come from Plato. They're from small moments ([more...](#)).

Is your playlist secretly sabotaging your focus?

THE DOPAMINE ADVANTAGE: WHEN TO PLAY		MUSIC AS A SHIELD		THE MULTITASKING BOTTLENECK: WHEN TO STOP	
● REPETITIVE & WELL-LEARNED TASKS (e.g., Data entry, email triage) (Lesiuk 2005; Kämpfe et al. 2011)		 MUSIC AS A SHIELD ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING: OPEN-OFFICE NOISE ELEVATES CORTISOL. Choose INSTRUMENTAL, STABLE TRACKS (e.g., ambient, nature sounds, video game scores) to mask disruptive speech. (Evans & Johnson 2000; Haapakangas et al. 2014; Hongisto 2005; Cassidy & MacDonald 2007)		● DEEP READING & WRITING (Drafting reports, analyzing documents) (Salamé & Baddeley 1982; Perham & Vizard 2011)	
● MOOD REPAIR & MOTIVATION (Boosts energy) (Ashby et al. 1999)				● LEARNING NEW SKILLS OR CONCEPTS (Training, onboarding) (Moreno & Mayer 1999; Bjork et al. 2013)	
● MODERATE SKILL LEVEL (Task is familiar but not boring) (Kämpfe et al. 2011)				● HIGH-STAKES REASONING (Strategic planning, ethical decisions) (Bjork et al. 2013)	
PRACTICAL TIPS & ETIQUETTE					
1 	USE HEADPHONES. Signal a Do-Not-Disturb state, respect others' focus. (Colquitt et al. 2001)	2 	CHOOSE FAMILIAR MUSIC. Reduce novelty load, free up cognitive resources. (Han et al. 2026; Huron 2006)	3 	MATCH MUSIC TO TASK TYPE. Situational selection for routine vs. complex work. (Lesiuk 2005; Kämpfe et al. 2011)
		4 	CHECK COMPANY POLICIES. Align with shared norms, ensure mutual respect. (Colquitt et al. 2001)		

RESEARCH-BASED

While 71% of professionals rely on music to power through the workday, neuroscience reveals a surprising double-edged sword.

The right soundtrack can ignite dopamine, elevate mood, and turn monotonous tasks into seamless flow states. But drop in complex lyrics or unfamiliar beats while attempting deep, high-stakes reasoning, and your brain hits a severe cognitive bottleneck.

Music isn't a simple productivity hack—it's a precision tool. Here is the science-backed guide on when to press play, when to hit pause, and how to engineer your auditory environment for peak focus: <https://niche.org.uk/music-ii>

Upcoming Events

[Redefining Healthcare in the Age of AI](https://natureconferences.streamgo.live/healthcare-ai/lobby), September 8 - 10, 2026, Paris, France, <https://natureconferences.streamgo.live/healthcare-ai/lobby>

Health optimisation conference: 11-13th September, London <https://uk.healthoptimisation.com/>

[A Question Time Panel on Weight-loss Drugs and the Future of Obesity Care](#), 14th September from 5:30-7:30PM. Organised by the RSM, London, UK.

Innovation in MedTech and Diagnostics Conference: 6th October 2026, London <https://shorturl.at/cyHs4>

CancerCare 2026: The NHS Oncology Conference: A Strategic Conference on Advancing Oncology Pathways Across the NHS. 6TH OCTOBER 2026 <https://sehta.co.uk/Events/?permalink=cancercare-2026-the-nhs-oncology-conference>

[Crick Cancer Symposium 2026 Monday, October 5-Tuesday, October 6, 9 AM-5 PM](#), London, UK

Life sciences and the NHS: delivering the next generation of health innovation: 13th October,
London: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/events/life-sciences>

[Reframing Precision Medicine: Innovation to Implementation](https://precision-medicine.conferences.nature.com/), **October 13-15, 2026, The Royal Institution, London, England**, <https://precision-medicine.conferences.nature.com/>

[Delivering cancer care now and for the future \(in-person conference\)](#), **Wednesday 21 October**, London, UK

ESMO 2026 Madrid, Spain, on 23-27 October 2026, <https://www.esmo.org/meeting-calendar/esmo-congress-2026>

AMWA 2026 Medical Writing & Communication Conference, November 4-7, 2026, Washington
USA <https://www.amwa.org/event/2026annualconf>

Extracellular Vesicles: Engineering the Future of Precision Medicine Porto, Portugal, 13-14th November
<https://targeting-exosomes.com/>

Medica 16-19 November 2026: Dusseldorf, Germany <https://www.medica-tradefair.com/en/Visit>

[The King's Fund Annual conference 2026: good health for all](#): 17th November ,
London: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/events/annual-conference>

Conference: London Biotech 2026 Conference: 18-19th November Excel [Register For The Leading Global Biotech Event | London Biotechnology Show](#)

DIA-MHRA Global Summit November 16-17, 2026 | London, UK: *Developed in collaboration with the MHRA, is designed to showcase how the UK ecosystem brings innovation to life across the full pathway.* <https://shorturl.at/qQ9nU>

International Celiac Disease Symposium: 17-20 November 2026, Melbourne, Australia [ICDS2026 - International Celiac Disease Symposium](#)

The MAD World Summit 2026, The UK's leading event dedicated to workplace culture, health and wellbeing. **Thursday 26th November 2026 | Convene, 155 Bishopsgate, London** <https://madworldsummit.com/venue-2/>

Shaping the future of Diabetes Prevention Sitges, Spain, 30th November -2nd December 2026 [Home - The Lancet Summit: shaping the future of diabetes prevention](#)

Titbits

How DNA forensics is transforming studies of ancient manuscripts: Scientists are exposing the biological information hidden in ancient parchments without leaving a mark ([more...](#)).

How AI Just Brought 32,000 Medieval Manuscripts Back to Life: Four months. That's all it took for artificial intelligence to decipher 32,763 medieval manuscripts—an achievement that astonishes paleographers, who often devote years to a single document. The CoMMa project has just rewritten the rules of historical archiving, and its impact is hard to overstate ([more...](#)).

AI translates 5,000-year-old cuneiform tablets into English: Researchers have found hundreds of thousands of texts written in cuneiform, many of them in the Sumerian and Akkadian languages. Now, they've also trained a neural network that can translate digitized Akkadian cuneiform into English ([more...](#)).

Science-backed tips on how to avoid distractions: Struggling to stay focused in the lab? Attention researchers offer some advice ([more...](#)).

Your bedroom could be the unhealthiest room in your home: Close the door, shut the windows and turn up the heating, and you have all the

ingredients for a sick bedroom in your home – and you spend about 8 hours in there every night ([more...](#)).

Are People Actually Getting Dumber? Introducing The Reverse Flynn Effect: Composite cognitive scores declined over time, with the trend appearing across age groups, education levels, and in both men and women. The steepest declines were seen among adults aged 18 to 22 and among participants with lower levels of education ([more...](#)).



Steven and Tim

Two friends, each running a business on opposite sides of the pharmaceutical and medical communications industry, have joined forces to rescue and sustain the MedComms networking group. Our shared vision is not just to preserve the community but to create a lasting legacy that supports future generations of communicators.

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