



Medical and Scientific Communications Network

Newsletter

22 September 2026

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

Tensions Boil Over at Diabetes Journal Amid Ongoing ADA Boycott: Diabetes Care editors suspended manuscript reviews as a part of the boycott of the American Diabetes Association, but the ADA insisted reviews would go on. Researchers wonder how ([more...](#)).

Does AI Need a Psychologist? AI may have an "artificial psychology" we're only beginning to understand. AI can extend human thought and even replace the thinking itself. Psychology needs to study the machine's emerging mind and what it's doing to ours ([more...](#)).

AI tool turns any paper into an 'agent' that can collaborate and answer complex queries: The Paper2Agent system makes it easier for researchers to reproduce papers and understand work in unfamiliar fields, authors say ([more...](#)).

Gestures influence the way our brains process grammar: Our hands may do more than complement what we say. They can also help our brains process grammar. In a new neuroimaging study ([more...](#)).

Large language models as human proxies: The idea of computationally approximating human behaviour is being reshaped by the emergence of large language models (LLMs). Although LLMs do not explain the mechanisms of human behaviour, they can potentially stand in for humans - giving rise to new applied and scientific uses ([more...](#)).

Why This Common Punctuation Mark Is Suddenly Disappearing From Our Language: A recent study has revealed a dramatic decline in the use of the semicolon in English literature, nearly 50% in just two decades ([more...](#)).

Expressive Punctuation and Subjective Adjectives in Biomedical Abstracts for Scholarly Communication: This study examined how small markers of feeling and stance appear in biomedical abstracts, focusing on expressive punctuation marks and subjective adjectives ([more...](#)).

Punctuation on Trial: A eulogy for the em dash: In our efforts to avoid sounding like ChatGPT, we're abandoning classic literary tools, making human prose flatter and more machine-like than ever ([more...](#)).

A single mysterious sentence is shaking trust in scientific research worldwide: A bizarre and meaningless phrase is quietly undermining trust in scientific research worldwide. It's not a new

conspiracy theory or a breakthrough discovery, rather, it's an odd, nonsense expression, the digital equivalent of a fossil ([more...](#)).

Suspicious phrases in peer reviews point to referees gaming the system: Hundreds of scientific papers bear signs of reviewers using templates to quickly churn out reports for personal gain ([more...](#)).

MIT cognitive scientists reveal why some sentences stand out from others: Sentences that are highly dissimilar from anything we've seen before are more likely to be remembered accurately ([more...](#)).

Manuscripts-turned AI agents can now 'talk' to each other, make new discoveries: Stanford Medicine researchers converted scientific papers into artificial intelligence agents that can answer questions, run analyses and collaborate to make new discoveries ([more...](#)).

Is science journalism dying? Comparing a "science crash" 40 years ago to today: That three of the oldest and best-known publications, Scientific American, Popular Science, and National Geographic, have all faced cutbacks in recent years surely points to something deeper afoot ([more...](#)).

Secondary use and scholarly impact of a portfolio of clinical trials with shared individual participant level data: cross sectional study: This study assessed the number, timing, characteristics, and scholarly impact of secondary publications generated using individual participant level data (IPD) from a portfolio of clinical trials shared with external investigators through a data sharing platform ([more...](#)).

What makes a meta-analysis believable? Meta-analyses address what existing studies collectively allow to be inferred, rather than answering a primary research question. The use of meta-analysis has expanded rapidly, with more than 400 000 meta-analyses indexed in PubMed between 1980 and 2025 (appendix p 9). Yet the trustworthiness of meta-analyses varies widely ([more...](#)).

Save the Date



Unlock the Art & Science of Medical Communications!

Building on the incredible momentum, creative spark, and vibrant insights of our past MSCN gatherings, we are thrilled to host our **Pre-Christmas Meeting on 9th December 2026** at Vestry House, London!

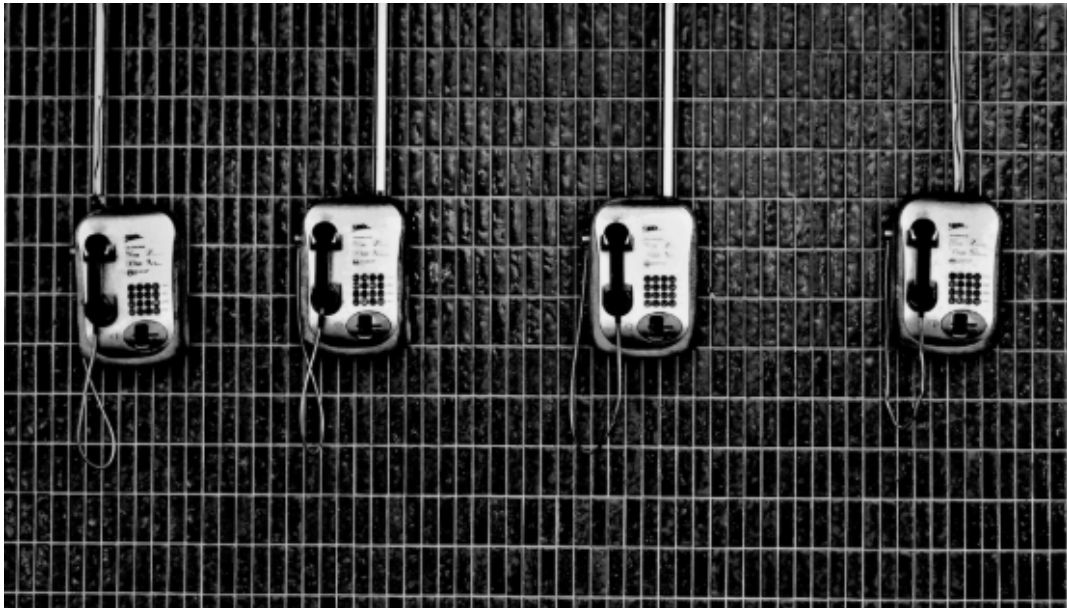
Medical communicators aren't just writers - we are storytellers, strategists, and vital leaders turning complex science into meaningful human connection. Join top minds across the industry for an inspiring afternoon exploring the perfect intersection of strategic narrative, visual design, and regulatory clarity.

▣ **Vestry House, London**

▣ **Afternoon Session**

Save the date - **details coming soon!**

Medically unexplained symptoms: four perspectives



Managing persistent symptoms without a clear diagnosis is a common healthcare challenge. Persistent physical symptoms (PPS), or medically unexplained symptoms (MUS), describe enduring complaints where investigations have yet to identify a cause.

Those affected may experience repeated medical appointments, inconclusive tests and unsuccessful or potentially harmful interventions, creating a significant socioeconomic burden. Many feel lost within the healthcare system and are at risk of deteriorating health and mental wellbeing.

This article presents four perspectives from patients and healthcare professionals, highlighting the challenges faced by those living with PPS/MUS ([more...](#))..

MedSciCommsNet is supporting the team at Forgotten Patients!



MedSciCommsNet is supporting the team at Forgotten Patients, Overlooked Diseases charity (www.forgottenpatients.org) as they take part in the Royal Parks Half Marathon on Sunday 11th October.

Jo, a consultant cardiologist in Oxford, Lylah, a cancer researcher at the University of Sussex and Amar, an equity portfolio manager here in London will be running 13.1 miles. Too many patients spend months or even years searching for answers, often feeling overlooked, unheard or unsure where to turn. Forgotten Patients is working to change this - giving patients a voice, raising awareness, supporting research and education, and encouraging better, more compassionate care.

We all know someone - a family member, a relative, a friend, a friend-of-a-friend - who's been through exactly this. Do help us by funding our brave runners ([more...](#)).

Upcoming Events

23 September 2026 - NHS Communications Forum

<https://thenhsalliance.org/training-and-events/nhs-communications-forum-september-2026>

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

8 October 2026 - 18th Annual Healthcare Investor Conference

<https://www.optimumcomms.com/irconference2026/>

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, 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>

The European Conference on Digital Transformation & Data in Medical Technologies

26 - 27 October 2026 in Munich, Germany. <https://dtd2026.com/conference-program/>

29 - 30 October 2026 - BMJ Future Health Europe

<https://futurehealth.bmj.com/bmj-future-health-europe>

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

18 November 2026 - 7th Annual Pharma Communications Conference

<https://thepharmaconference.com/>

9 - 21 November 2026 - EMWA 62nd Virtual Conference, Autumn 2026

<https://emwa.org/conference>

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>

19 November 2026 - Making STEM Engagement Accessible

<https://www.big.uk.com/event-6759327>

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

Creating the building blocks of life: From constructing cell-like systems to creating genomes from scratch, synthetic biology is having a moment. What will it mean for health? Talha Burki reports ([more...](#)).

Methodology standards for usual care as a comparator in patient centred, comparative, clinical effectiveness research: This article describes the development of new methodology standards for usual care comparators, presents the final text for the new methodology standards, and describes a high level case example of how a recent PCORI funded investigator met the criteria for these standards in a proposed research project ([more...](#)).

Scientists Turned Ordinary Shiitake Mushrooms into Living Computers: Your next computer might grow in a compost heap ([more...](#)).

Decades of male-focused medical research could bias healthcare AI: The lack of female representation can have consequences. In a US study of 19,331 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests, 39% of women who collapsed in public received bystander CPR, compared with 45% of men ([more...](#)).

The Human Brain Isn't Meant to Be Awake Past Midnight, Scientists Warn: According to the researchers behind it, the human body and mind run on a roughly 24-hour cycle that doesn't just decide when we feel tired - it reshapes how we feel, and how we're inclined to act ([more...](#)).

We Listen with Four Ears, with a Whole Inner Team: German psychologist Friedemann Schulz von Thun's communication models have helped millions of people. With one sentence, we are delivering and hearing four different messages. We can harness the different voices in our head, our inner team, for better outcomes ([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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