**Medical Writing for Patient Education – An informed approach to health communications**

Patient education means communicating specific medical/health information in a clear, concise, and simple language to the patients and caregivers to empower them with the appropriate knowledge to help them make decisions about their healthcare. A medically accurate and relevant patient education material can make a patient:

* More aware and responsible for their health
* Comply to the prescribed treatment
* Make an informed decision about their health and wellness
* Manage their chronic illness and minimize associated complications
* Stay informed about their rights to access health data

Physicians, nurses, and pharma companies must ensure that their consumers/patients are well-informed about their health by providing high quality and medically accurate information resources.

*The American Medical Association (AMA) and U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommend that patient education materials not exceed a sixth-grade (11-year-old) reading level.* Therefore,

a writer responsible for developing patient education materials must know the techniques of explaining complex medical concepts in simple language. The various patient education materials include:

* Printed materials like brochures, posters, charts, models, care guides, books and pamphlets
* Online information such as in podcasts, YouTube videos, PowerPoint presentations, infographics
* Websites, blogs, forums, patient news and newsletters
* Training materials and e-learning programs

**Tips for Creating Good Patient Education Content**

The usage of complex language in patient education material may leave the patient confused. Below are some guidelines that can help in preparing engaging and coherent patient education materials:

**Know your target audience** – Be in a patient’s shoe and note down every basic question that a patient might want to know. Write in a similar tone that you would use while communicating with the patient orally.

**Use simple words** – Do not assume that word hypertension is widely known, replace it with high blood pressure to make it less complicated for the target audience. Make sure every medical jargon in the file is simplified. Examples: Haemorrhage – bleeding; Myocardial infarction – Heart attack; Hyperglycaemic – High blood sugar.

**Follow an easy format**: Keep the sentences and paragraphs short. Let a paragraph focus on one single idea. Divide the content into headings and subheadings and always use active voice in the sentences.

**Stay focussed**: Remove any extraneous information from the writings. Stay focussed to what do you want to communicate. For example, a brochure about cardiac biomarkers need not explain the cardiac diseases.

**Make the presentation engaging:** It is also important that the patient education materials have the content that is informative and engaging, and is supported with with creatives likes graphs, images, and figures. These components make the material more impactful and easier to understand.

Medical writing is a key skill that enables a writer to create well-written patient education materials that can have a great impact on patients in improving their general health and well-being.