

Welcome to the CNSPY Newsletter. Here, we report the most recent networking events sponsored by CNSPY and provide a preview of upcoming events. This issue highlights a number of firsts for CNSPY, as many of our events in the last quarter have taken new directions and brought in fresh perspectives. From workshops to recruitment sessions, we hope you've enjoyed these new initiatives, and we hope to continue improving the programs that we bring to you in the coming quarter! This issue also advertises a call for applicants to join our leadership team, particularly the communications team. Let us know if you're interested - we'd love to have you! Finally, we close this issue with our Career-in-Focus section, which highlights a career as a Medical Science Liaison. Learn how you can use your knowledge and soft skills to make a career out of relaying information to those who need it most!

- Victoria Schulman, SPYglass Editor-in-Chief and CNSPY Blogger

In This Issue

Jan 2016

CNSPY in Focus

- Welcome New Team Members
- Small Group Discussions
- Panel Discussions
- CNSPY Podcast/Blog
- Site Visit - Thermo Scientific
- Networking Events & Workshops

Career in Focus

- Medical Science Liaison
- Interview with Dr. Damon Love

CNSPY in focus

CNSPY was established to provide graduate students and postdocs with a platform to explore diverse career options and build an extensive professional network of peers, career mentors, and faculty advisors. Our events allow our members to meet and learn from career mentors while simultaneously building a community of peers and colleagues. We aim to establish new avenues for collaboration, business ventures, and job opportunities while also supporting an entrepreneurial environment among science trainees at Yale.

Welcome New Members of the Leadership Team

In the fall, we advertised new openings in the CNSPY Leadership Team, and since then, we have welcomed two new members to the team!

We welcome **Ira Kukic**, who joined the Events Team, demonstrated her dedication to CNSPY, and quickly rose in the ranks to the Executive Board.

We also welcome **Aritra Pal**, who joined the Events Team and has already helped plan a number of upcoming events that you won't want to miss!

President, Prabitha Natarajan, Ph.D., Postdoc

Executive Board Members

Claudia Bertuccio - Director of Events,
 Victoria Schulman - Director of Communications,
 Tenaya Vallery, Daniel Mori, Seongseop Kim,
 Lie Ma, and Ira Kukic

Business Team

Lie Ma, Daniel Mori, and Seongseop Kim

Communications Team

Elaine Guevara and Victoria Schulman

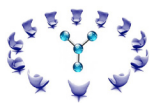
Events Team

Claudia Bertuccio, Sophie Dutheil, James Havey, Ira Kukic, Leo Ma, Aritra Pal, Sofia Espinoza Sanchez, Nayi Wang, and Tenaya Vallery

We are always looking for dedicated individuals who are interested in exploring new career avenues and sharing that passion with our members. If you are one of those people, we want to hear from you! Apply to join the team!

Currently, we are looking to expand our Communications Team. If you are interested in a career in communications, apply today and add great experience to your resume/CV!

JOIN THE TEAM! Apply [here](#) or email us



Small Group Discussions

Last fall, we paired our most popular event with an introductory seminar to bring a unique perspective - on communicating science in the news in this case - to the Yale community. This new format allowed attendees to get a better idea of this particular career path before beginning the informal discussion with our guests.

Dr. Joe Palca, Science Correspondent for National Public Radio (NPR)

and

Dr. Robert Bazell, former NBC Science Correspondent and Yale adjunct professor

In collaboration with the Poynter Fellowship in Journalism, CNSPY hosted Joe Palca, Ph.D., science correspondent for NPR, for a seminar on science communications on Friday, October 23rd, 2015.

The seminar opened with a short presentation by Dr. Palca on the impact and influences of science communications. He pointed out that very few science stories make it to mass media. For example, “water on mars” and “CRISPR” are only two stories, whereas we can recall many political and social stories, including “Black Lives Matter” and Trump’s “The Wall,” that consume the popular press much more readily.

The few science stories that make it to mass media are usually stale for scientists because of the lag between the discovery and the news release. The scientific community has known about water on mars over a decade, but new footage gives a more compelling testimony to this old claim, which makes it relevant to the public now. Another example is that research for the recent 2015 Nobel Prizes was completed six or more years ago, whereas the general public is just now learning about it. Scientists often throw their hands up and cannot fathom why the lay people are so far behind.

However, Dr. Palca highlights that the most important aspect of science communication is the day of the news release. Science happens every day and moves slowly, but to effectively release science news and garner the public’s interest, it often has to coincide with an important date, such as a publication date, the Nobel Prize announcement, etc. Alternatively, without an important calendar date, the story has to coincide with something that shakes the entertainment world. For example, BRCA did not become a big news item until Angelina Jolie came out about having the mutation.

While scientists are often frustrated with this delay in communication and generally harbor feelings of ‘us vs. them’ or ‘scientists vs. lay people,’ what we need to remember is that human interest is important for

communicating science to lay people who are primarily guided by entertainment.

But not all hope is lost. Following the seminar, which was co-sponsored by the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS), the Yale Center for Teaching and Learning, and the *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* (YJBM), Dr. Robert Bazell, former NBC science correspondent and Yale adjunct professor, joined Dr. Palca to host 15 of the 45 seminar attendees in a small group discussion about careers in science communication.

During the discussion, Dr. Bazell mentioned a new study at Yale about the perception of science news. This study found that people still hold scientists in high esteem and a significant percentage (~30%) of them will choose to read a science news piece over ones about politics, economics, celebrities, etc.

Dr. Bazell went on to explain that people often hold beliefs as a way to associate with a social group. People may believe certain false truths about science because of society, but it is important to look at how they act and what they know (<http://www.law.yale.edu/news/19377.htm>). Case and point, as the governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin signed an order to prepare for climate change, even though she stood against the belief of ‘man-made’ climate change in the 2008 election.

So don’t be discouraged. Connect with the press to bring science stories to lay people!

If you’re not sure how to do this or don’t feel as though you have strong communication skills, take heed to Dr. Palca’s take-home message – practice! The only way to get better at something, in this case science communication, is to try it. Dr. Palca offered attendees the opportunity to become a ‘Friend of Joe Palca’ and contribute science stories for his new project, “Joe’s Big Idea.” Join him on his Facebook page, which seeks to relay science news to lay people in ways that they can understand that will help them grasp the broader impact of research discoveries. If you would like to learn more about this opportunity, email [Tenaya Vallery](mailto:Tenaya.Vallery).

Other opportunities around campus that will help you gain experience in science communications include “Science in the News” by the Science Diplomats, GPSS’s TED-like talks or “Open Labs,” and joining CNSPY’s communications team. Take advantage of the opportunities available to you to start building your career in science communications now!





Panel Discussions

In conjunction with the *Yale Journal of Biology & Medicine* and Elsevier Publishing Group, CNSPY hosted a Publishing Workshop and Panel Discussion about careers in publishing this past fall featuring three individuals with very different roles in the field of academic publishing.

Elsevier Publishing Workshop & Panel Discussion about Careers in Publishing

On Thursday, October 1st, 2015, CNSPY and YJBM welcomed the Elsevier Publishing Group and three distinguished invitees to Yale: **Emilie Marcus**, CEO, Cell Press; **Cathleen Sether**, Publishing Director, Physical Sciences Books, Elsevier; and **Paul-Andre Genest**, Associate Publisher, Life Sciences, Elsevier.

The event began with presentations by Drs. Sether and Genest that focused on how to publish with Elsevier and the different types of publications that Elsevier supports, including traditional primary research articles, reviews, text books, and short informational articles that academics can contribute to Elsevier's repertoire of educational and research materials.

Regarding the publication process, the Elsevier representatives highlighted the discrete steps involved in taking a manuscript from concept to print. Additionally, they discussed the many ways you can get your work noticed after it is published. They also discussed Elsevier's open access policies and how to manage ethical issues, such as author disputes, conflicts of interest, and plagiarism. If you missed the event, you can download freely available guidebooks for each of these topics [here](#).

The representatives also highlighted a new initiative at Elsevier. The [Elsevier Publishing Campus](#) is a brand new resource for academics that provides free interactive online training courses, online lectures, free tools for document management, career guides, and direct links to other organizations that can enhance your professional development. This online "campus" is divided into six colleges: 1) the College of Skills Training, 2) the College of Big Ideas, 3) the College of Networking, 4) the College of Research Solutions, 5) the College of Career Planning, and 6) the College of Recommended Organizations. Check out these amazing free resources!



Following the Publishing Workshop, the Editor-in-Chief of *Cell* and CEO of Cell Press, **Emilie Marcus**, gave a detailed presentation on the career track required to become an editor for an academic journal. She specifically noted that these positions are different from the editorial role of a PI. Editors in her position are full-time staff that work strictly for the journal or publishing company. They do not simultaneously conduct their own research.

She highlighted that most editors have a greater breadth than depth of knowledge across many scientific disciplines. For this reason, many candidates seeking editorial positions often have a few years of postdoctoral research experience before securing their positions because postdoctoral work is usually somewhat different from one's graduate work. She noted that another way to demonstrate your interest in a broad field of disciplines is to blog about research that does not relate to your specific field of study. In the application process, this type of extracurricular activity demonstrates not only an interest, but also an understanding of science that is outside of your speciality, a skill that will be necessary when you are asked to make decisions about whether or not to send 7-10 papers on different topics out for review per day.

Dr. Marcus also discussed the different types of in-house editors at a journal. These include research editors, reviews editors, book editors, and science writing editors for the popular press. The traditional route for career progression as a journal editor typically goes from a postdoc in academia to Assistant Editor (1-2 yrs), to Associate Editor (3+ yrs), to Senior Editor (5-7 yrs), then Deputy Editor, and finally Editor-in-Chief. However, she pointed out that while there can be multiple individuals at each lower level, there is only one Editor-in-Chief for a given journal. Thus, after reaching Deputy Editor status, there is little room for career advancement until the existing Editor-in-Chief steps down or retires.

After Dr. Marcus' detailed presentation on careers in publishing, our three distinguished guests joined together in a Panel Discussion to answer questions from the attendees about the publishing process and careers in publishing. The discussion brought up some great topics and led to interactive discussions that carried over into the final open networking portion of the event.

In closing, we thank Tenaya Valley of CNSPY and Ryan Bailey at Elsevier for organizing a great event!





CNSPY Mixers

Quarterly mixers bring together former, current, and prospective CNSPY members. Our mixers are held at Kelly's Gastro Pub with free appetizers and chances to win free drinks! We also invite guests with CNSPY success stories who are willing to share their experiences. Look for details about our next mixer in the CNSPY emails!

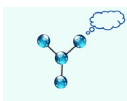


SPYcast

SPYcast, the official podcast of CNSPY, features exclusive interviews with career mentors from a variety of backgrounds and gives CNSPY members the opportunity to learn from career mentors remotely. With SPYcasts, you can listen in at any time that's convenient for you!

SPYcast continues to thrive in 2016! We've recently recorded our [third episode](#), which features Dr. Michael Bradley who works at Syros Pharmaceuticals as a Senior Scientist in the Biochemistry and Biophysics Department. He completed his postdoc with Professor Enrique De La Cruz in the Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry Department at Yale University. During his time at Yale, Dr. Bradley was an active member of CNSPY and is continuing to offer his support for our organization. He has great tips and advice for career advancement in this interview, and we hope you enjoy it!

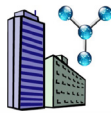
Send your requests for future SPYcast interviews from certain fields or specific individuals to CNSPY President, [Prabitha Natarajan](#).



CNSPY Blog

The CNSPY blog continues this year with biweekly posts offering advice to help improve your networking and interpersonal skills. Every other Wednesday, CNSPY Blogger, Victoria Schulman, highlights many small things that could make a big difference. To get direct access to this content, subscribe to the [CNSPY Blog](#).

Due to the success of our guest blogging program, we will continue to accept proposals for blog ideas from guest bloggers. If you have an idea or a strategy for successful networking, interviewing, or communicating in general, consider guest blogging for CNSPY! If you'd like to write for the CNSPY blog, contact [Victoria Schulman](#).



Site Visits

CNSPY-sponsored trips to local companies in the industry sector became popular last year. This year, our site visit program, led by James Havey, continues to enable students and postdocs to preview the facilities and benefits that accompany a career in industry.

Thermo Fischer Scientific, Guilford, CT

On Thursday, November 5th, 2015, a group of 10-12 CNSPY members visited the Thermo Fisher/Ion Torrent facility in Guilford, CT, a facility that occupies the entire first floor of a shared office building. The group was greeted by four members of the Ion Torrent team, each representing a different research department.

The event began with a presentation about the Ion Torrent technology and a history of the company. The event's hosts had been with the company from the early stages, one of whom was part of the original start-up group. They shared the story of how the company was created, how the Ion Torrent technology was developed, and how Thermo Fischer ultimately acquired the company.

The Ion Torrent representatives spoke about their career trajectories and the work they do at Ion Torrent. The main point they highlighted was that the work environment at Ion Torrent is highly collaborative and multidisciplinary with shared goals, somewhat dissimilar from academia.

After the presentation, our hosts provided a tour of the facility. The group visited several different labs within the company and heard about the work that is performed in each of the labs/departments. Following the tour, the event concluded with free time to network. Many of the department heads were present at the networking session and accepted resumes from the attendees.

CNSPY is very grateful to our hosts at Thermo Fischer Scientific and Ion Torrent for organizing such a wonderfully beneficial event. CNSPY looks forward to working with them again in the future!



There are always new developments, opportunities, events, and programs hosted by CNSPY. Stay tuned by signing-up on our [website](#), joining our [LinkedIn](#) group, or following us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter @cnspy](#)

Annual Networking Event

CNSPY organized its fourth Annual Networking Event (ANE) and brought together over 100 PhD candidates and postdoctoral fellows and 15 career mentors from a variety of career paths on Thursday, November 5th, 2015. The ANE provides Yale trainees the opportunity to network with professionals in fields such as Academia, Science and Medical Communications, Pharma, Industry, R&D, Biotech, Tech Transfer, Science Policy, Consulting, and more.

The event opened with a short introduction from Prabitha Natarajan, CNSPY president, who spoke about CNSPY, the evening's program, and future CNSPY events. Subsequently, graduate students and postdocs participated in two round robin-style Small Group Discussions. During this portion of the event, one career mentor lead each discussion table and shared their career experiences from life as a grad student to their current positions. Following the Small Group Discussions, the unstructured networking session allowed attendees to mingle and exchange information with those who shared similar professional interests.

Additionally, new this year to the ANE, CNSPY invited representatives from The Jackson Laboratory (JAX) to meet and recruit potential job candidates from the Yale community for future employment. Prior to the event, eligible candidates submitted their CVs and a short application to JAX representatives, were pre-screened by the JAX hiring team, and met with recruiters on event day for an informal interview. Many candidates were then invited to the JAX campus for further interviews at a later date. Due to the success of this program, CNSPY will strive to invite additional companies to participate in similar recruiting sessions at future networking events, so be sure to attend next year's ANE and other events!

This year, the Annual Networking Event was graciously co-sponsored by the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS), the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS), and the Office of Career Strategy (OCS). CNSPY is extremely thankful for their continued support!



Networking 101 Workshop

At CNSPY, we believe that networking is an important part of forming new relationships and planning your future career. Thus, as a pairing to the ANE, CNSPY organized a Networking 101 Workshop earlier in the day on Thursday, November 5th, 2015 – the day of the ANE.

The Networking 101 Workshop was hosted by **Dr. Heather Claxton-Douglas** who currently works in the Office of Technology Management at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Dr. Claxton-Douglas is also the founder of Science Solved L3C, a website that connects scientists with volunteer software developers to expedite research endeavors by playing to the strengths of each member of the collaboration. By using her own experiences as examples, Dr. Claxton-Douglas coached numerous graduate students and postdocs on how to implement effective networking, which many attendees put to good use hours later at the ANE.

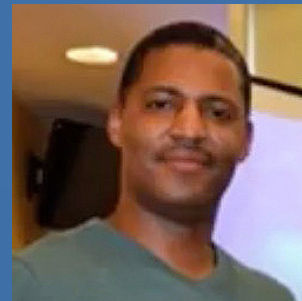
Medical Communications Workshop/Recruitment Session

Ashfield Healthcare Communications, a global leader in medical communications, had a number of open positions and sought to recruit the best and the brightest PhDs, MDs, and PharmDs for various levels of medical writing positions in the Life Sciences. Thus, on Wednesday, November 11th, 2015, Ashfield Healthcare Communications sponsored a medical communications workshop followed by a recruitment session at Yale.

The two-hour event opened with a presentation by **Judith Barclay**, Corporate Recruiter, who provided information on careers in medical writing and an overview of Ashfield Healthcare Communications. Following the workshop, which focused on the skills needed to be successful in medical communications, Ashfield Healthcare Communications employees in entry level positions as well as those in management/executive level roles participated in a panel discussion and answered questions from attendees. The panel included: **Ellen Lewis**, VP of Medical and Scientific Services; **Michael Fiedler**, Medical Writer and Yale alum; **Edwin Thrower**, Senior Medical Writer and former Senior Research Scientist in the Department of Internal Medicine at Yale University School of Medicine; **Stephanie Vadasz**, Associate Medical Writer; and **Darlene Bressack**, HR Director. They provided testimonials on their roles and their educational and career paths in medical communications. The event concluded with an informal networking session during which attendees exchanged business cards and resumes with members of the panel.

Career in focus: Medical Science Liaison

This issue highlights a career as a Medical Science Liaison (MSL). For this, we interviewed Dr. Damon Love, PhD, Oncology MSL at Eli Lilly & Company in New York, NY. Dr. Love went to Princeton University, majored in Neuroscience, and after working for the Institution for International Research where he developed and hosted conferences and workshops to benefit the biotech and pharma industries, he applied to Stony Brook School of Medicine and earned his PhD in Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology. He then accepted a postdoctoral fellowship with a co-appointment at Weill Cornell Medical College and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, NY. From there, he was recruited to Eli Lilly & Company. Learn more about careers as an MSL below, and continue reading for an exclusive interview with Dr. Love!



FAQs

What is a Medical Science Liaison?

Medical Science Liaisons (MSLs) are medical professionals who are generally affiliated with the Medical Affairs Departments of pharmaceutical and biotech companies. MSLs serve as scientific resources for key opinion leaders (KOLs) in various fields of study by responding to their research and information needs. Additionally, MSLs provide connections to scientists and resources within, and external to, their respective companies. They also utilize their deep therapeutic area expertise to respond to unsolicited requests for medical/scientific information received from research physicians and other health care professionals. MSLs are valuable resources to pharmaceutical companies because they identify opportunities for research collaborations, support medical initiatives, engage in scientific training activities for colleagues, and share insights based on their interactions with KOLs to better inform their company's strategic direction for research and commercialization.

Why consider a career as an MSL?

A career as an MSL can be particularly rewarding for a basic science researcher who may be looking for an alternative approach to clinical and translational science away from the bench. In this role, you represent the company as a scientist who will be developing peer-to-peer relationships with KOLs in various disease fields. You will also be exposed to cutting-edge research, both from the basic science as well as the clinical and translational levels at various stages of development. You'll be exposed to clinical research from discovery to market, and you'll be responsible for a diverse amount of information, both disease-state specific as well as pipeline-specific. This role is also great for those who are extremely self-sufficient and organized, since MSLs work in a field-based environment in which you structure your own schedule with a fair amount of travel – up to about 70%. However, consider that, unlike academic science in which you have proprietary ownership over your project, you will not focus solely on one area. Rather, you'll be in a team environment in which your objectives are largely dictated by the company.

What kinds of skills are needed to be successful as an MSL?

Key attributes necessary for MSL positions include strong organizational skills, attention to detail, ability to work in a team environment, ability to communicate complex ideas to diverse audiences, and excellent networking, leadership, and presentation skills. Additionally, a terminal degree is generally required – MD, PhD, PharmD, RN, etc. – so a strong scientific aptitude is a definite requirement.

Opportunities while you're at Yale:

If you're interested in exploring a career as an MSL, there are many ways to better prepare yourself for this field:

- 1) Network with other researchers - particularly clinical researchers - at conferences and symposia.
- 2) Develop an appreciation for your own research in a clinical context and practice presenting it in this manner.
- 3) Familiarize yourself with clinical publications and ongoing clinical trials in your disease state of interest.
- 4) Join LinkedIn groups, such as the [Medical Science Liaison Society](#).
- 5) Read "[The Medical Science Liaison Career Guide: How to Break into Your First Role](#)" by [Samuel Dyer](#).

How did you get interested in Medical Science Liaising?

I was actually introduced to the role by a family friend who worked in sales at a big pharma company, AstraZeneca. It didn't hold much appeal to me at the time because I was preparing for graduate school, and it sounded too far removed from my research interests at the time. Later, as a postdoc, I received an unsolicited call from a recruiter with Amgen on LinkedIn, and after a lengthy interview with the hiring manager, I became intrigued by the role and the potential for growth and career development. By this time, I was looking to transition from my postdoctoral fellowship, and I was specifically looking at either a traditional bench scientist position in R&D or an MSL position, so I applied for them simultaneously and found that I was more immediately marketable for MSL roles. I had two subsequent interviews, the first with Bristol Myers-Squibb, that got as far as the final round of interviews, and then eventually with [Eli Lilly & Company](#).

Can you share your career path with us from graduate student to MSL?

I did my undergrad at Princeton University, where I majored in neuroscience in the Department of Psychology.

For the next three years, I worked with the Institution for International Research, where I developed and hosted conferences, workshops, and symposia geared towards topics and issues that were specific to the biotech and pharma industry. This experience sparked my interest in the clinical applications of science, and I knew I needed to go to grad school for a terminal degree to stay in this field.

I did my graduate work at Stony Brook School of Medicine in the Pharmacology Department, where I received my doctoral degree in Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology. My graduate work was in the lab of Ken-ichi Takemaru, where we examined the role of *chibby*, an antagonist in the canonical Wnt/ β -catenin signaling pathway. Because this pathway is a key developmental pathway that is dysregulated in a number of diseases – most notably cancer – I was drawn to this lab, thinking that *chibby* was a tumor suppressor and that I'd be working on cancer signaling. As it turned out, *chibby* knockout mice didn't develop tumors, though their developmental deficiencies were quite severe, but one of the defects I discovered was in lung morphogenesis, so I examined its role in pulmonary development, function, and mechanics.

After graduating, I had a co-appointment with Weill Cornell Medical College and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) for my postdoctoral fellowship. At Cornell, I was in the lab of Anthony Brown, PhD, in the Department of Cell and Developmental Biology, where I used RNAi to target an oncogene in the canonical Wnt/ β -catenin signaling pathway that is implicated in

hepatocellular carcinoma. At MSKCC, I studied in the lab of Yuman Fong, MD, FACS, in the Department of Surgery, where I examined the efficacy of oncolytic viruses in colorectal cancer tumor-initiating cells.

In all this, there were two key factors that contributed to determining my career path. The first was a certificate program, Fundamentals of the Bioscience Industry, which was a six-month program taught by industry professionals in regulatory affairs, R&D, and business development. During the program, I gained an understanding of the regulatory, clinical, and legal landscape surrounding drug development while simultaneously establishing a network of industry professionals. Second, in this process, I gained a mentor (an industry R&D scientist) who helped outline my postgraduate career path. I ultimately settled on an academic postdoc with a project that had clinical and translational relevance in terms of industry application, which made the ultimate transition to MSL work much easier because I was more marketable in that field.

What was the most challenging part of your transition from academia to your current field?

I found the most challenging aspect of the transition to be moving from preclinical to clinical research. Specifically, the nature of the studies, the experimental approaches, and the readouts were all based on biochemical and molecular studies, whereas clinical research deals with human studies, larger sample sizes, and completely different readouts and data interpretations. Interpreting data based on analyses such as median overall survival, progression-free survival, hazard ratios, and response rates was completely new territory for me. I was basically grasping a completely new language on the fly, as I often have conversations with clinicians who speak in "shorthand," using acronyms and abbreviated references to chemotherapy regimens and drug combinations. It has been quite challenging, but I really gained a greater appreciation for the complexity of the disease (cancer in my case) and how vastly more complicated the drug effects are in a human population, versus the far more controlled environment of cell culture and animal experiments.

Can you describe the interview/application process?

The application process generally consists of an online application at the company's website, and then the interview process is typically three-tiered. The first is a telephone interview with a recruiter, either outsourced by the company or within the HR department. This is typically followed by a more in-depth interview with the hiring manager. The third interview is a more robust process consisting of individual face-to-face interviews with several key personnel on the team, which usually

includes a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation to the group. This is usually on a topic determined for you – for one interview I gave a presentation on a class of drugs in leukemia, but for another I summarized the findings of a clinical trial presented in a journal.

What did you highlight on your Resume/CV?

For an MSL CV, your scientific aptitude is a given and your technical expertise is largely irrelevant to interviewers. Definitely highlight your accomplishments broadly to establish your credibility, but highlight them in a clinical, disease-specific context. If you worked on transcription factors in *Drosophila*, relate the significance of your findings in the context of a related pathological condition. Demonstrate soft skills, such as leadership, collaborations, working with KOLs (this is done in every research collaboration), speaking engagements, presentations, and any clinical research experience.

What is a typical day like for you?

There really is no typical day because I have meetings with different KOLs in a variety of different fields, stages of research, and physical locations. However, generally speaking, Mondays are usually full of in-house meetings with my colleagues at Eli Lilly, but I control my schedule for the rest of the week. I fill my Tuesdays-Thursdays with field meetings, where I travel to different locations and meet with KOLs to discuss various topics. I reserve my Fridays for administrative paperwork. Every trip and visit I make has to be reported in-depth to the FDA, and it can be very time-consuming. Some MSLs have a mix of field meetings and paperwork every day, but I like to dedicate one day a week to fill out the paperwork for the week's meetings. Also, I should point out that when I'm not in meetings, I'm spending my time preparing for meetings, i.e., reading and researching topics to discuss with KOLs and preparing slides and information for them.

What are your most and least favorite job aspects?

I thoroughly enjoy the flexibility of my schedule, being at the cusp of cutting-edge clinical research across many disease states, interacting with and being recognized as a peer by leading experts in science and medicine, being involved in the drug development process from discovery to clinic, being involved in preclinical and clinical collaborations with industry and academic scientists, being recognized as a key resource both internally with

my company as well as externally in the institutions I cover, and the camaraderie with my teammates.

My least favorite aspect is the paperwork, whether it is the FDA-mandated documentation of interactions or expense reporting, I find this to be the most tedious aspect of the job. My travel is not particularly extensive, given the relatively small size of my territory (NYC, NJ, and Philadelphia) so that is not a complaint.

What skills did you need to develop in order to move into your current position?

Certain skills, such as public speaking, critical thinking, multitasking, and managing your schedule, get developed through the PhD process. I had to develop an appreciation for networking and really be able to look at cancer and discovery in a clinical context, being that my background is almost exclusively as a bench scientist.

Is there room for career development and advancement for someone in your position? Or what other roles do MSLs transition to after their time as an MSL?

The short answer is “yes.” The specific opportunities available may be determined by each company, but generally, many offer opportunities to climb the ladder to leadership positions. Given the breadth of knowledge of the disease state, product pipeline, and regulatory and competitive landscape as well as established scientific credentials, the MSL has value in a number of areas, including medical affairs and research. In fact, one of my former MSL colleagues recently took an internal position as a clinical research scientist at our company.

Is there any last advice you would give to someone looking to make a similar transition from academia to Medical Science Liaising like you did?

Take advantage of any networking opportunities you can – particularly at events where the pharma industry is represented. Also, establish a good relationship with a mentor (it doesn't have to be your PI), join LinkedIn, and keep your CV up to date. Also, be flexible and willing to relocate. Often smaller biotech companies are willing to offer MSL opportunities to applicants with little to no prior experience, so be prepared to follow the opportunities wherever they may present themselves. Alternate routes, such as roles in medical communications or medical information, may offer opportunities to transition into MSL positions in lieu of prior experience.

Thank you for reading!!

CNSPY Leadership Team

Co-founders - Tihhan Paddukavidana, Rebecca Brown; Executive Board - Prabitha Natarajan, Claudio Bertuccio, Victoria Schulman, Tenaya Vallery, Daniel Mori, Seongseop Kim, Lie Ma, and Ira Kukic

Advisors - Yan Gao, Lu Jin, and Shalini Nag

Career Network SPYglass - Editor-in-Chief Victoria Schulman, Elaine Guevara, and Contributors