

ELECTIVE (SSC5a) REPORT (1200 words)

A report that addresses the above four objectives should be written below. Your Elective supervisor will assess this.

Introduction

In organising my final medical elective placement, I was determined to build on my existing skills and break from traditional medical ward work. Having worked stints for medical technology companies in the past, I have gained a keen interest in how these enterprises impact patients on a wider scale than a physician might alone and thus sought to further my understanding of how the various teams collaborated and tackled the challenges of working in such a strongly regulated environment.

As a result, my time at Havas Lynx has been split with a number of different teams, working on both the healthcare campaigns themselves, working on team briefs, analytics and also working on social awareness campaigns around gender inequalities. This has provided valuable insights into a number of distinct disciplines, whilst at the same time developing my understanding around regulatory frameworks, client roles and even new developments in the management of both common and rare disease. This report seeks to reflect on my time with these professional teams as well as determine whether I was able to achieve my four initial objectives.

My pre-placement objectives were as follows:

1. To select a specific health campaign and further understand how this has/seek to impact health outcomes or health economics over both the short and long-term, as well as how this may be applied at a more global scale to reduce burdens of disease
2. To understand how health campaigns, health promotion and increasing medical awareness improves health outcomes in the UK, and how this compares with other high/medium and low-income countries with differing cultural norms, funding and communication infrastructure
3. To further my understanding of the process, teams and objectives involved in global/public health campaigns orchestrated by the Havas group. Previous campaigns by this organisation have involved a variety of common pathologies, as well as those promoting uptake of COVID-19 vaccines
4. To improve my teamwork, interpersonal and communication skills to better be able to work with, manage and lead others in my future career.

Week 1 - Building an effective health campaign

Following my inductions, week 1 at Havas Lynx had me joining the Opal team, working with account managers and medical advisors on the atopic dermatitis campaign. This project had me working on both audits of competitor content, as well as critically reviewing Havas's own tools. In undertaking this work, I was interested to learn of the regulations in place in the UK pharma industry, prohibiting the marketing of prescription medication directly to patients and the resulting need to split any engagement campaigns into two stages. In engaging with the team, I learnt the first, targeting patients, intends to raise awareness, encourage engagement with healthcare providers, and ultimately prompt those with poorly controlled disease to seek out novel developments that may better manage their symptoms. For this project specifically, this involved the development of both websites and online tools, allowing patients to better evaluate the impact of their condition, develop goals and communicate these effectively with their healthcare provider. The second stage, targeting HCPs was instead more direct, intending to highlight physiological benefits of the client drug and was thus more data-driven, utilising research from clinical trials. This was intended to showcase the client drug as a suitable management option for patients with poorly controlled disease and thus benefit both the patient and client from greater adoption of this medication in clinical practice. By working on this campaign, and better understanding the means of engagement and intended benefits for both patients and the client, I feel I achieved my first objective in improving my understanding of how campaigns seek to reduce the burden of disease. I would also be encouraged to see how this campaign develops over the longer term, and the impact it has on patient quality of life.

Week 2/3/4 - Understanding the various means and modalities of healthcare advertising

As well as gaining insights into the R&I team, I was also given inductions and teaching on the various modalities of advertising, including paid, pay-per-click, endemic and social media as well as search engine optimisation strategies to more effectively target HCPs. Whilst I did not work on this directly, it was helpful to discuss the reasons particular

methods were used when engaging different audiences, leveraging the trust HCPs have in scientific journals, the different ways public audiences engage with social media platforms such as LinkedIn vs Instagram and how these were pitched to clients. I was also interested to explore how cost-benefit analyses differed so significantly across different campaigns, with some constituting a cost per successful engagement of less than £1, whilst others, particularly those targeting niche diseases or highly specialised HCPs, still considered a cost of £1000/successful engagement as a success. Other more innovative means of advertising, such as digital boards with accompanying sound bites had proven particularly successful in previous vaccine campaigns and used an approach I and many others hadn't previously considered.

During the rest of my time with the AMP team, I was fortunate enough to work within individual accounts developing medical / pharmaceutical briefs, providing information for teams to use during pitches and to allow them to better answer questions put forward by specific clients. This involved researching the disease area itself, the client drug and any novel developments from competitors as well as the role of key decision-makers within the MDT and the manner in which patients engage with these HCPs.

Week 4 / 5 - Developing ethical campaigns alongside client projections

Following my time with the AMP team, I began working more heavily with the Pint of Science project in Weeks 4, 5 and 6, assisting with content research and development. This project centred on gender disparities in healthcare, particularly gender inequalities, attempting to raise awareness on topics such as clinical trial recruitment, clinical bias in the diagnosis and management of myocardial infarction, and the propagation of these biases in the development of clinical artificial intelligence algorithms. As more of a general social awareness campaign than a normal client project, and targeting those who are often neither patients nor HCPs, this required a different approach and was a valuable project to work on. I particularly enjoyed working more heavily with the medical writers, who themselves had both a scientific background but also experience in more creative roles as well.

Summary

On reflection, my work on projects with both Opal and AMP allowed me to achieve two of my initial objectives, whilst my overall 6-week experience allowed me to achieve my third objective around furthering my understanding of the process, teams and objectives involved in global/public health campaigns. Similarly my 4th objective, improving teamwork, communication and interpersonal skills was (hopefully) demonstrated in the way my interactions with team members developed over the course of the elective. The skills and experience I have taken away from this placement will hopefully provide me with a broader and more thorough understanding of non-clinical medicine as well as a greater understanding of how business operate effectively. Regardless of whether I pursue a long-term medical career or branch into health management / advisory roles, I am certain this experience has better prepared me for future work and has been an extremely enjoyable experience.