Tracking attitudes to artificial intelligence use in medical communications: baseline insights from a 2-year study

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POSTER 05

Background

The informed and responsible use of AI has the potential to transform medical communications by enhancing productivity in content creation and data analysis.[1]

Objectives

With the growing use of AI in medical communications...

We aimed to evaluate the perspectives of medical communications professionals on the use and perception of AI over a 2-year period using repeated online surveys.

Here we report the baseline results of the first survey response period.

Scan the QR code to take the survey and help us understand how AI is shaping the future of medical communications

Research design

- Data collection was initiated via online, voluntary and anonymised surveys over a 2-year period
- Interim analysis was performed (cutoff date 17/9/2024) on responses received from the first survey period (23/8/2024–16/9/2024)
- Open-ended items were categorised based on recurring themes
- Respondents were assigned a comfort rating based on their responses regarding AI use in medical communications: –1, uncomfortable; 0, neutral; +1, comfortable
- One-way ANOVA was performed to compare the effect of variables on comfort rating; post hoc Tukey's HSD/Tukey Kramer tests for multiple comparisons were performed to determine significant differences

Data collection

Online survey

15 questions on:
AI usage
Experience with AI
Comfort with using AI
Outlook on using AI

Distribution

Social media
Distributed to medical writers via LinkedIn

Email communications
Distributed to 8 different medical communication agencies

Final analysis 2026

Results

127 respondents

Generational breakdown

Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomers+
7	60	52	5
5.5%	47.2%	40.9%	3.9%

Medical writer

Yes	No
67.7% 86/127	32.3% 41/127

Works in

Publications	Medical affairs	Commercial
71.7% 91/127	48.0% 61/127	27.6% 35/127

Time in medical communications

⩽2 years	3–5 years	6–10 years	11–15 years	>15 years
15.0% 19/127	17.3% 22/127	24.4% 31/127	12.6% 16/127	30.7% 39/127

Number of respondents using AI

49.6% 63/127 used AI in their roles at work

The most common uses of AI

The most common uses were for plain language summaries, slide decks and abstracts.

- Plain language summaries **39.7%** 25/63
- Slide decks (de novo) **34.9%** 22/63
- Other **33.3%** 21/63
- Abstracts **31.7%** 20/63

The most common tasks for which AI was used were understanding of the context and environment of the topic, first draft generation and modifying a piece for a different audience.

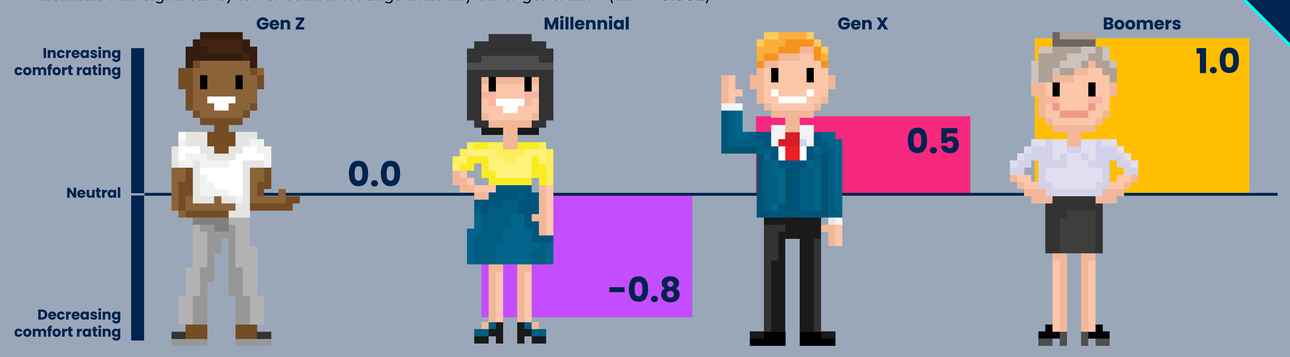
Understanding of the context and environment of the topic	First draft generation	Modifying a piece for a different audience	Editing language, grammar, tone and style	Literature searching
46.0% 29/63	42.9% 27/63	38.1% 24/63	38.1% 24/63	33.3% 21/63

Improving flow and storytelling	Outline generation	Contextualising a given topic and/or data set	Synthesising a large volume of information on a given topic
31.7% 20/63	27.0% 17/63	25.4% 16/63	25.4% 16/63

Overall, respondents' comfort rating with AI use in medical communications was slightly negative (mean comfort rating: –0.1)

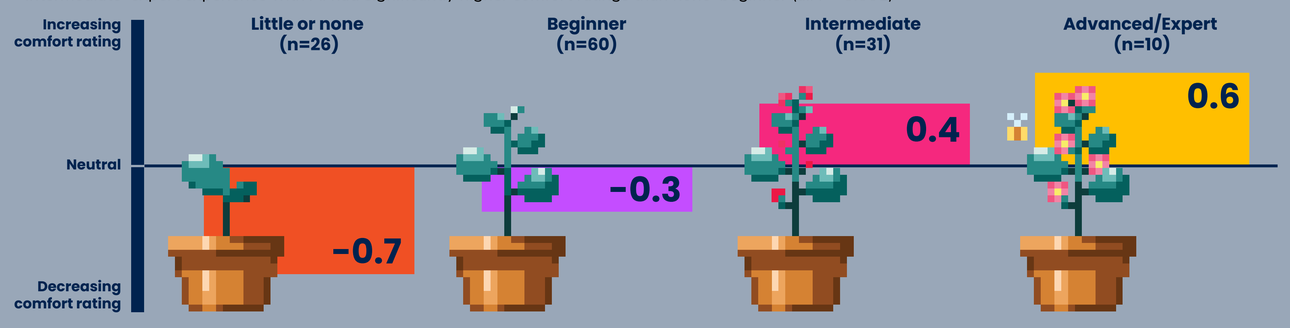
Generational split

Millennials had significantly lower comfort ratings than any other generation (all $P<0.001$)



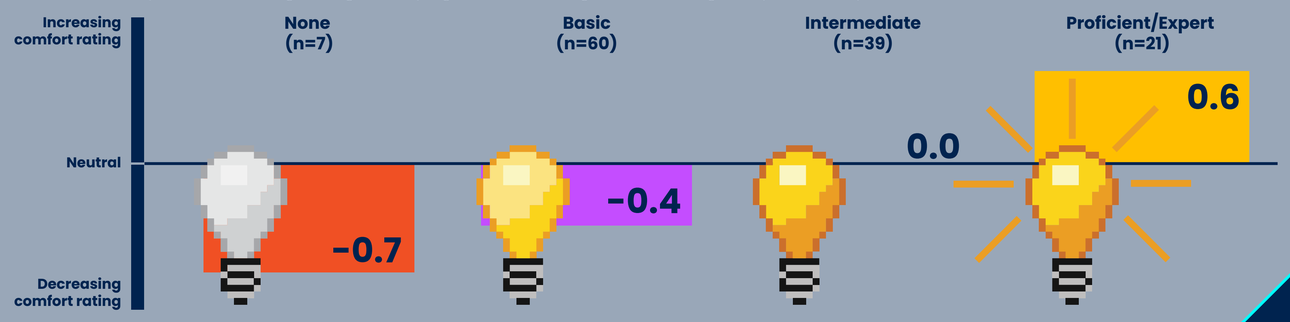
Experience level

Higher experience with AI was associated with higher comfort ratings
Intermediate–expert experience with AI had significantly higher comfort ratings than none–beginner (all $P<0.001$)



Understanding of AI capabilities and limitations

Higher understanding of AI capabilities was associated with higher comfort ratings
Intermediate–expert understanding had significantly higher comfort ratings than none–beginner (all $P<0.001$)



Time in medical communications, medical communication specialities and being a medical writer were not found to significantly impact comfort rating scores

Conclusions

In these baseline results, approximately half of respondents were using AI, covering a broad range of deliverables and tasks. Notably, greater familiarity with AI was associated with increased comfort in AI use within medical communications.

Limitations

These findings should be interpreted cautiously due to small sample size and the exclusive use of online data collection.

Authors

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Abbreviations

AI, artificial intelligence; ANOVA, analysis of variance; Gen, generation; HSD, honestly significant difference; N, number of respondents in the analysis; n, number of respondents.

References

1. Pharmaphorum. AI in Medical Communications: Revolutionising the present, redefining the future. https://pharmaphorum.com/digital/ai-medical-communications-revolutionising-present-redefining-future. Accessed 3 December 2024.

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