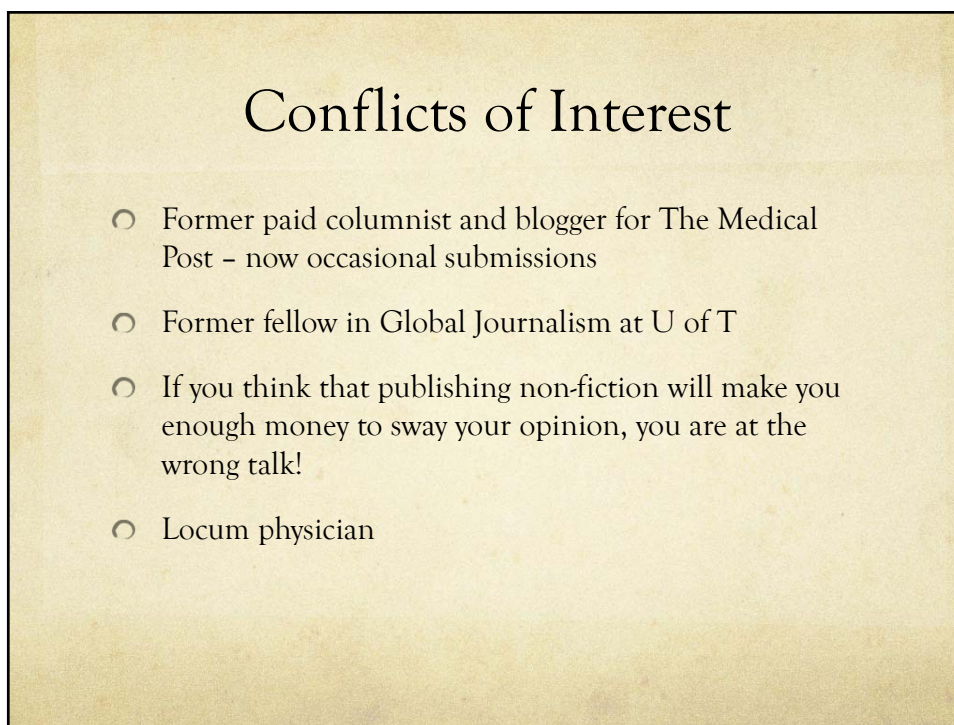


1



2

Objectives

- Participants will learn various options for publishing non-academic non-fiction
- Participants will identify venues for pitching non-academic non-fiction
- Participants will be able to formulate a pitch
- Participants will demonstrate an ability to distinguish an opinion piece from a reported piece
- Participants will explore the process of working with an editor once a pitch is accepted

3

Non-Academic Non-Fiction

- AKA - the stuff I like to read!
- Literary Non-fiction (facts are real, told with beautiful language)
- Long form pieces (>5 000 words)
- News - reported pieces, other people's opinion
- Op-Eds - your opinion, with facts
- Comedy

4

Venues for Your Work

- Local: blog, your local newspaper
- Niche: The Medical Post, CJRM, CMAJ, CFP
- National: National Post, Globe and Mail (The Essay), MacLean's, Canadian Press, The Conversation, Healthy Debate
- International: STAT, Quartz, BMJ, Australian Journal of Rural Practice
- Who can you pitch? Look at the website for editors with email addresses.
- READ the publication and search its history prior to pitching.

5

So, um...what's a pitch?

- Approximately 100 words to grab the editor's attention
- First sentence in bold - the goods in one sentence
- Second and third sentences - why it's important, scope of the problem, numbers, demonstrate access
- How you'd explain the article to a friend at a bar
- A good pitch is timely, important, shows why you're the best person to write the story,

6

Example of a Successful Pitch

TUBERCULOSISBABIES – A report newly obtained through an access to information request shows the goal announced by the government on March 23 of eliminating tuberculosis (TB) from Canada's north by 2030 may be harder than many imagine. Records reveal that the incidence rate of TB in Nunavut infants under one year old was off the charts in 2017, at 1,020 cases per 100,000 people. In the rest of Canada, the rate for infants is just three per 100,000. The documents also reveal one possible reason for the extremely high rate, which is the failure to adequately track and preventatively treat babies exposed to TB. Documents show that the government of Nunavut does not currently track who receives preventative treatment for TB, so it is impossible to know if infants are developing TB despite treatment and the true scope of the current TB outbreak. The lack of reliable data is putting Nunavut's babies at high risk of developing a deadly, but preventable, disease, and is serious reason to question Minister of Health Ginette Petipas Taylor and Minister of Indigenous Services Jane Philpott's 2030 goal. (Sarah Giles is an emergency/family physician).

7

SLUG

- Think of it as a hashtag
- TB Babies
- A fast way to refer to your piece when communicating with editors
- Catchy
- Some editors want you to give your piece a headline, most won't

8

Another Pitch

APPSABOTAGE: Your fitness app may be sabotaging your exercise goals—or even putting you in danger. Apps such as Strava, Nike+ Run Club and Espresso Bike, which allow tens of millions of people to virtually race other athletes around the world, may be fostering unhealthy competition between strangers and leading to burnout, says Shaelyn Stratchan, an assistant professor at the University of Manitoba in exercise psychology. Renowned Canadian distance running coach Steve Boyd says the newest generation of these platforms, which include GPS data, create “the perfect s-t storm for causing people to throw their training plans out the window and just race every day.” Experts say overtraining can cause injuries or worse. In 2012, the parents of Californian William Flint unsuccessfully complained in court that Strava led to their son’s death when he lost control of his bike while trying to regain his recently lost title of “King of the Mountain” on Strava. This story will examine how fitness apps may be leaving users injured, burnt out, and even dead. (Sarah Giles is an emergency/family doctor and recovering fitness app lover).

9

Write a Pitch...Right NOW!

- Encapsulate it in 1 sentence
- Why is it important
- What is your access
- Give it a slug

10

Wait...I don't write the piece first?

- Most articles submitted en bloc will fail
- Editor needs some say
- When they accept a pitch, they will suggest a word count and a deadline.
- Editors may suggest you focus on people rather than science (or vice versa)
- Have a conversation until you are clear about the expectations

11

The Op Ed: Where Doctors Thrive

- Op Ed means opposite the editorial
- Usually about 800 words
- An opinion piece (you can use "I" or "we") supported by evidence
- Can be a response to something the paper published but needs to be submitted within three days of the original piece
- Some places (cbc online) still pay!
- Can submit en bloc

12

Reported Piece

- You are reporting the opinion of other people
- Try to have a balanced piece (represent both sides)
- Quote experts (better if they aren't your friends...or aren't all your friends)
- You can have a point of view, but you shouldn't have a conflict of interest (or if you do, you need to make that clear to your editor)

13

The Care and Maintenance of a Captive Editor

- Edit before being edited
- Blind to fonts other than Times New Roman 12pt and Calibri
- Inverse supply/demand
- Manners
- Use an active voice and flawless grammar and spelling
- Don't be afraid to pick-up the phone
- If you haven't heard back about a pitch in 3 days, move on

14

Final Thoughts

- In a fake news era, you are the real deal
- Be an advocate for others
- Hold people in power to account
- When all else fails, file an access to information or freedom of information request!

15

Craving Some More School?

- Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto
- Fellowship in Global Journalism
- Sept-April, first 5 weeks in person then but anywhere in the world
- University of King's College has an MFA in non-fiction
- Lots out there if you look

16

Questions?

- smgiles@dal.ca
- @SarahGiles10 on Twitter
- Thanks to:
 - Audrey Giles
 - Rob Steiner
 - Colin Mackenzie
 - Classmates at the fellowship in global journalism at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto
 - R&R conference committee