



# **Relevance of English as an International Language of Medicine**

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**Is English for Medical Purposes (EMP)  
important in your future career?**

**Why yes / why not?**

## English is...

“...by far the most used language in international medical meetings [as well as] the main medium for medical textbooks, journals, and abstracting indexes, ...”

(Maher 1986, *Applied Linguistics*)

“...in the second half of the twentieth century  
**English** emerged as the predominant  
*lingua franca* in medicine.”

(Maclean and Maher 1994, *The Encyclopedia  
of Language and Linguistics* )

**“English** has steadily replaced other languages in research literature and has become the **lingua franca** of the international science community.”

(Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b cited by  
Mišak, **Marušić, M., Marušić, A.**, 2005)

## **lingua franca, noun**

a language which is used for communication between groups of people who speak different languages but which is not used between members of the same group

**Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary**



# Competence in English

professional  
requirement

working  
environment

academic career



# Importance of EL proficiency for the medical scene

## ➤ Continuing medical education (CME) / Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

“Continuing medical education (CME) can be defined as educational activities which serve to maintain, develop or increase the **knowledge, skills and professional performance and relationships** that a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession.”

(EACCME)

# Importance of EL proficiency for the medical scene

## ➤ Medical conferences

- e.g. EACCME – the central body for accrediting events in Europe
- in 2010 - **1030 events** in more than 40 medical specialties



# Importance of EL proficiency for the medical scene

## ➤ Medical journals



# Importance of EL proficiency for the medical scene

## READING

### ➤ EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE

**the practice of medicine in which the physician finds, assesses, and implements methods of diagnosis and treatment on the basis of the best available, current research, their clinical expertise, and the needs and preferences of the patient.**

Dorland's Medical Dictionary

# Importance of EL proficiency for the medical scene

## WRITING

- researchers – “publish or perish” approach
- clinicians – work accessible to the global community

**Mišak, A., Marušić, M., Marušić, A. (2005). Manuscript editing as way of teaching academic writing: Experience from a small scientific journal. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 14, 122-131.***

# Importance of EL proficiency for the medical scene

## ➤ Exams: PLAB, USMLE

### ➤ Professional and Linguistics Assessment Board

- PLAB Part 1 and 2

- **IELTS scores (7.0)**

### ➤ United States Medical Licensing Examination

- STEPS 1, 2, 3

- STEP 2 - Integrated Clinical Encounter

- Communication and Interpersonal Skills

- **Spoken English Proficiency**



# Importance of EL proficiency for the medical scene

- Medical encounters with native and non-native English-speaking patients



<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>CRO</b>	<b>GER</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>US</b>
<b>Hip replacement</b>	6.300	14.000	24.200	30.000
<b>Knee replacement</b>	6.200	12.300	15.400	30.000



# Medical history

## ➤ The Greek Era

- Hippocratic writings:
  - cover all aspects of medicine
  - numerous medical terms
- the Romans imported Greek medicine
- names of diseases and symptoms derive from Greek e.g. *diarrhoea* (*throughflow*)  
*dyspnoea* (*bad breathing*)

# Medical history

## ➤ Medical Latin

- Middle Ages – Greek medical texts were translated into Arabic
- at the time of the renaissance – Greek and Arabic works were translated into Latin
- all important medical works were published in Latin

# Medical history

## ➤ National Medical Languages

- medical English, medical French, medical German, medical Italian etc.
- they had much in common – medical terms were derived from medical Latin
- there were also systematic differences that still persist

# Medical history

## ➤ Medical English

- medical journals, international conferences in English
- the era of medical English - a single language for international communication
- register of medical terms today– composed of words borrowed from ordinary English

e.g. *bypass operation*

*screening*

*scanning*

# Medical history

- English-speaking doctors accept direct loans with Latin endings
  - e.g. *medulla oblongata*
  - diabetes mellitus*
- medical scientists coined a number of new terms composed of Greek roots
  - e.g. *ophthalmoscopy*
  - erythrocyte*
- 90% of the medical terminology today – derive from Greek and Latin



# Communication skills training





# Useful links

- [www.onelook.com](http://www.onelook.com) – online dictionaries
- [www.medscape.com](http://www.medscape.com) – medical news, full-text journal articles and more
- [www.medline.com](http://www.medline.com)
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/>