



Irving Estevez, PhD

Scientific Associate (MedEd)
IMsci a VML Health/WPP Company



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2019



Undergrad/Masters studied neuroscience, disease mechanisms, and opportunity to **teach and science liaison**

2021



PhD with Brian Daniels where I developed a liking for **big picture strategy, project coordination, and scientific storytelling**

2023



Though iJobs and SciPhD I learned about **medical affairs** and the **business of science** to identify careers that better aligned with my strengths and goals

2025



Moved into a role that keeps me close to innovative science while focusing on **scientific communication, strategy, with real-world impact**

What I do

- Review and translate clinical study findings into accurate and **strategic messaging**
- **Create and refine** content across multiple workstream (slides, expert videos, infographics...)
- Conduct **literature searches** on therapeutic areas
- **Manage feedback** from clients and internal teams to ensure accuracy and compliance
- **Work closely** with account, editorial, and creative team to deliver on project needs

What I love

- The people
- Still immersed in science each day
- Creative problem-solving and storytelling
- Working as a team
- Good work and life balance
- **Remote with option for office**

Prepare for the job

- **Reflect on what energizes you**
people, science, strategy, writing, presenting...
- Practice communicating science to different audiences
advanced studies presentations
- Get exposure beyond your lab
- Build relationships that show who you are, not just what you know
- Informational interviews are gold
- **Know that your skills are interchangeable**

You already have transferable skills The key is reframing!

- Performed cell death assays, immuno fluorescence and survival studies to explore effects of drug-induced epilepsy under neuro invasive viral infection...**or did you...**
Managed timelines for 5 preclinical studies to study therapeutic targets of brain inflammation.
- Recipient of awards(int/ext fellowship/grants) that covered travel, stipend, and tuition expenses for academic and professional development for 2 years... **or did you...**
Managed a 2-year budget of X dollar amount to support progression of studies.

From Academia to Agency: My Medical Communications Journey

Sara Fournier | Associate Medical Director, IMsci (VML Health) | sara.fournier@mtgsci.com | www.linkedin.com/in/sara-fournier



Academic Foundations



BS Chemistry (2009)



PhD
Biomedical
Sciences (2015)



Beyond The Bench



NIOSH (Contract 2015-2016)

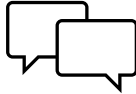


Environmental and Occupational
Health Sciences Institute | EOHSI

Rutgers EOHSI (2016 – 2021)



FBI Application
(2019 – 2021)



Medical Communications



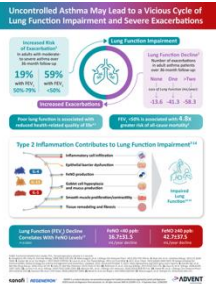
faricimab-svoa injection 6 mg



The Scienomics Group
(HCG 2021-2023)
Branded Promotional/Med Affairs



Current Role: Associate Medical Director



IMsci
(VML Health 2023-Present)
P2P Med Ed/Type 2 Respiratory/COPD

What I Do: Bridging Science and Strategy at IMsci

Client Partnership

Provide scientific recommendations that guide client-facing deliverables

Cross-Functional Collaboration

Translate scientific direction into clear tasks for Creative, Editorial, and Production

Scientific Strategy

Translate complex science into clear communication

Content Leadership

Lead creation of scientific decks, infographics, trainings, advisory board materials, etc.

Scientific Quality Control

Ensure all deliverables meet scientific accuracy, consistency, and compliance standards

Staying Scientifically Current

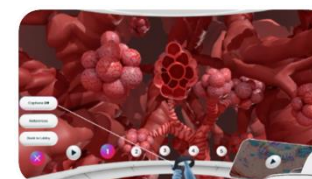
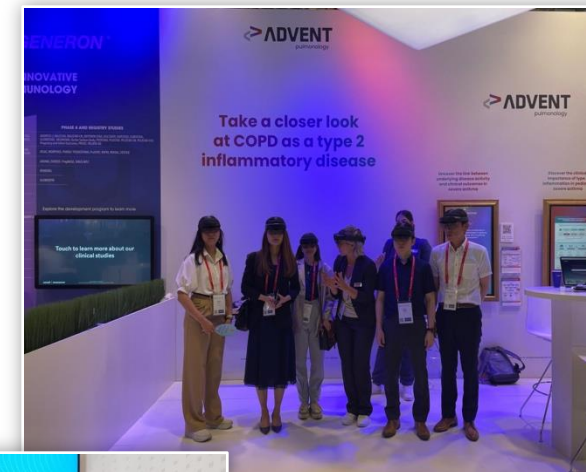
Interpret new guidelines and publications to update deliverables with the latest evidence

Meeting & Event Support

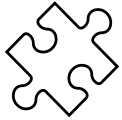
Develop agendas, discussion guides, and post-meeting summaries for advisory boards and symposia

Problem-Solving & Decision-Making

Provide science-based solutions that shape deliverable direction when issues arise

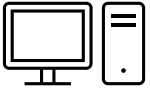


Preparing for a Career in Med Comms



Understand the Bigger Picture

- Think beyond the bench—why does this science matter to doctors, patients, and payers?



Develop Agency-Relevant Skills

- Learn tools and skills commonly used in agencies: PowerPoint at a high level, reference management, basic data visualization, and project/timeline management



Build Strategic Relationships

- Connect with professionals in the field—informational chats, conferences, and professional networks



Stay Flexible & Curious

- Explore different therapeutic areas or types of content (educational, promotional, advisory)

Industry News & Trends

- **MM&M** – Medical Marketing & Media – news and case studies in pharma marketing and medical communications
- **PM360** – pharma marketing, communications, and industry trends
- **PharmaPhorum** – news, trends, and expert commentary



Matt Rich, PhD

Associate Medical Writer,
Medical Communications Fellow

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<https://www.citrushealthgroup.com>

Career Path

- **Undergrad, Postbac – University of Connecticut**
 - Basic neuroscience – electrophysiology, cortical networks
- **PhD in Neuroscience – University of Pittsburgh**
 - Preclinical rodent research
 - Circuit and cellular mechanisms of cocaine-cue memory
- **Postdoc at Penn/Rutgers**
 - Models of deep brain stimulation for cocaine use disorder (electrophysiology)
 - Rodent models of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and cocaine use disorder

Responsibilities/Role

- Citrus Health Group is a boutique medical communications agency that supports pharmaceutical, biotech, device, and diagnostics companies
 - Help clients effectively communicate their **data and messaging** and deliver the value proposition of their products to key audiences
- Primary responsibility is **content development**
 - Research, write, and revise content, ensure scientific accuracy
 - Manuscripts, congress abstracts, posters and podium presentations, symposia, review articles, plain language summaries
 - Med affairs/strategic projects (MSL training decks, scientific communication platforms [SCPs], landscape and gap analyses, publication plans, advisory boards)
 - Attend and take notes during client/author calls
- Work within a small team (7-8 people) with ~5-6 main clients (mostly mid size pharma companies)
 - 3-4 medical writers, 2 senior scientific directors, 2 client services team members
 - Various therapeutic areas (urology, neuroendocrinology, immunology/cancer)
 - Mostly clinical studies (Phase 1, 2, 3 trials); had no prior experience with clinical research
 - Adherence to AMA style guidelines, client internal medical/legal review, ethical standards
 - Incorporate edits and revisions from clients and external authors (**Keep the client/authors happy**)

Advice

- Be strategic with job applications, know yourself, and know what type of science writing you prefer
 - Publications
 - Continuing medical education
 - Promotional (sales/product brochures, ads)
 - Science journalism (interviews, pop science, journal/editorial positions)
 - Regulatory (clinical study protocols and reports, new drug applications, medical devices)
- Use resources from professional societies (ISMPP, AMWA); trainings, webinars, networking
 - <https://www.ismpp.org/> | <https://www.amwa.org/>
- Translate skills from academia
 - Critical thinking, adaptive/flexible, creative, attention to detail, communication
 - Often not working within my specific scientific background, but can quickly assimilate to new TA
- Gain experience
 - Many jobs require 1-3 years of experience, often within an agency
 - Develop a portfolio (samples of various types of writing – conference abstract, grant application, poster)
 - Look for entry level roles (summer internships, fellowships, postdoc equivalent positions)
 - Write for your scientific society
- Thick skin, open to constructive criticism and not personally attached to the writing
 - Internal team and client will almost always make edits to your work
 - *Generally no authorship, but receive acknowledgements on publications*

Natalie Losada, PhD

CONTACT:

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<https://www.linkedin.com/in/natalie-losada/>



Fall 2018

- Began PhD
- Just finished Chemistry BA



Fall 2021 – Spring 2022

- iJOBS Phase 2
- Shadowed Medical Writer
- Took course on drug development



Fall 2024

- Scientific Associate IMSci at VML Health

Fall 2019 – Spring 2020

- iJOBS journey began
- Attended career panels/events
- Began writing for iJOBS blog



Fall 2024

- Completed PhD
- Completed my year as Senior Editor of iJOBS blog



A Scientific Associate Will Be Asked to:

- **Take a project objective** or general plan **and create slides** that effectively communicate data for the specific audience
- Take a slide deck near completion and **annotate** accurately and appropriately to the literature
- **Perform literature searches** to develop new content, supplement existing content, or update old content
 - “Content” can include slide decks, podcast scripts, videos, background guides, etc.)
- **Ensure all above work is scientifically accurate** with consistent formatting
- Evaluate all above work for **alignment with project goals**, potential for **audience** understanding, and medical/legal/regulatory **guidelines**

What Can Students/Postdocs Do to Get This Job?



Seek out writing and presenting opportunities

- Oral talks at conferences
- Oral talks or writing to a variety of audiences



If possible, shadowing or fellowships

- If not, any external opportunities to show to develop communication, leadership, and team work



Networking

- Different titles everywhere
- Sometimes unclear where roles are open

Sierra Swords

sierraswords413@gmail.com

Associate Medical Director, IMPRINT Science, Dec 2024-current

- Dermatology, respiratory, transplant, rare disease

Scientific Associate, IMPRINT Science, Oct 2023- Dec 2024

- Dermatology

PhD candidate, Rutgers; Sept 2016 - August 2023

- Cell biology, autophagy, neuro

Current Role – how I spend my time

Publications

- Abstracts
- Presentations (oral or posters)
- Manuscripts
- Plain language summary publications

Medical Communications

- Scientific platforms
- MSL decks
- Lexicon

Strategic Publication Planning

- Competitive literature review
- Workshop
- Finalized pub plan
- Vet with key opinion leaders

Advice!

NOW

- Network – referrals go FAR
 - Extracurriculars!
- Get experiences in industry/pharma (if possible - iJOBS shadowing!)

WHEN YOU APPLY

- Your resume is your first writing test – make it tailored and make it flawless
 - Seek out referrals
- Medical writing test
- Understand what they want – they may not be clear
 - Pharma websites have prior presentations, abstracts are often published
 - Read and analyze abstracts from pharma companies

Strategic Publication Plan Workshop: Example

Disclaimer: This is a mock-up of what a strategic pub plan looks like. None of the studies or disclosures are real or based on actual client publication plans

Publication Plan Workshop Agenda



Welcome (5 min)

- Overview workshop objectives



Literature Analysis Results (25 min)

- Competitive publication landscape
- Key Takeaways and Impacts for PHARMA COMPANY Pub Planning



2026 Objectives and Messages (15 min)

- Alignment on publication objectives and messaging



Idea Generation based on data readouts and mapping

- Review data read-outs timelines of pivotal upcoming clinical trials
- Generate ideas for data disclosures
- Map to congress/manuscript timelines



Close and Next Steps (5 min)

Welcome

Medical

Clinical

Research

PK

Stats

Safety

HVT

Biomarkers

Market Access

Commercial

Competitive
Intelligence

Patents

IMPRINT

Objectives of Today's Meeting



Review/align on
Publication
Objectives for
2026

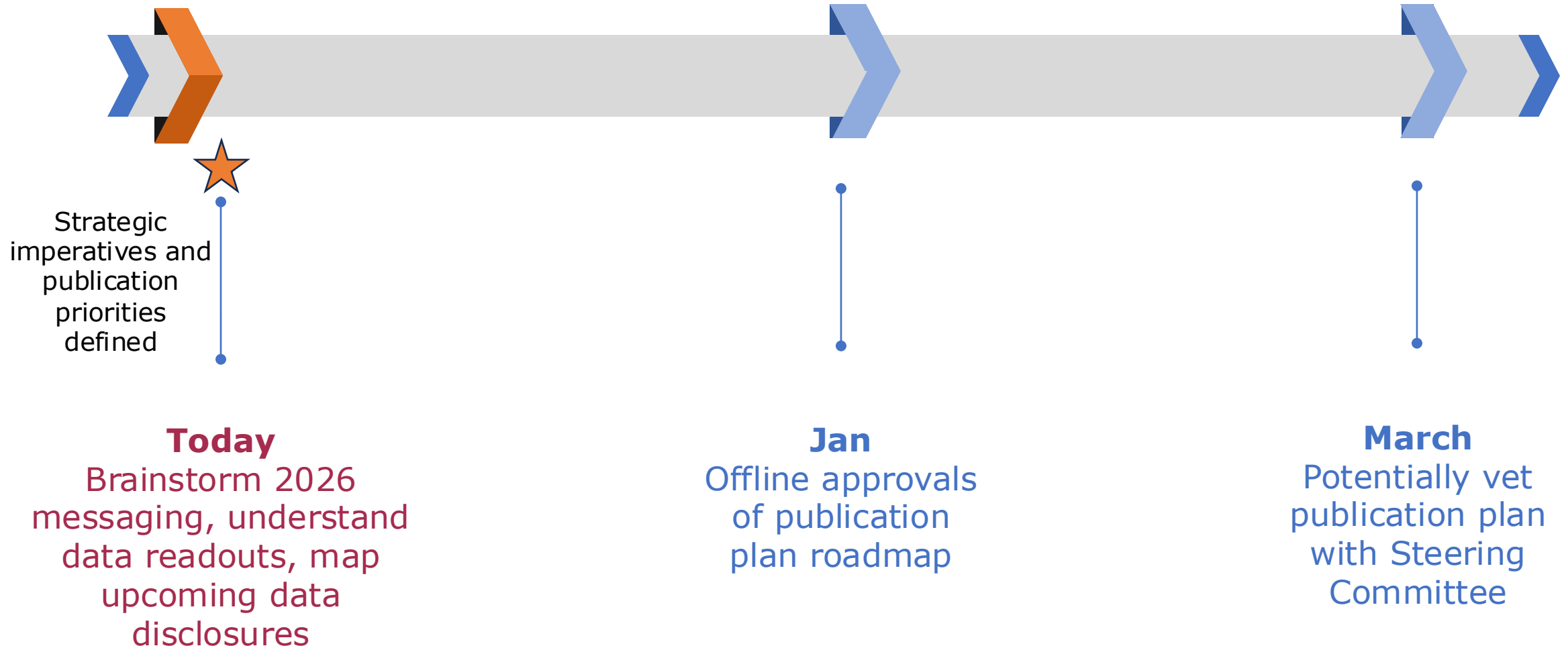


Review
competitive
landscape and
DRUG X clinical
development
timelines that may
inform 2026
Publication plan



Align on
preliminary data
disclosures and
timing

Strategic Publication Plan Process



Competitive Literature Analysis

- **PubMed**
- **Congresses**

Competitive Snapshot

	Drug A	Drug B	Drug C
Congress	Limited congress presence	Limited congress presence	Very high congress presence
Journal presence	No publications since 2023	Pivotal articles in high-impact journals – NEJM, Lancet	Japanese Ph3 published low impact journal Ph3 post-hoc analyses targeting lower IF journals
Topics			
Messages	Key messages	Key messages	Key messages
Upcoming data	phase 2 study to read out next year	Ph3 OLE adults data is expected next month	2 Phase 3 trials expected to report in 2025

DRUG X Publication Objectives: Generic

Publication Strategic Imperatives: Therapeutic area X

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graph TD; A[Publication Strategic Imperatives: Therapeutic area X] --> B[1. Highlight unmet needs and heterogeneity of DISEASE]; A --> C[2. Educate on the differentiated clinical benefits of DRUG X vs. competitor drugs]; A --> D[3. Disseminate evidence of the long-term continued efficacy];
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1. Highlight **unmet needs** and **heterogeneity** of DISEASE

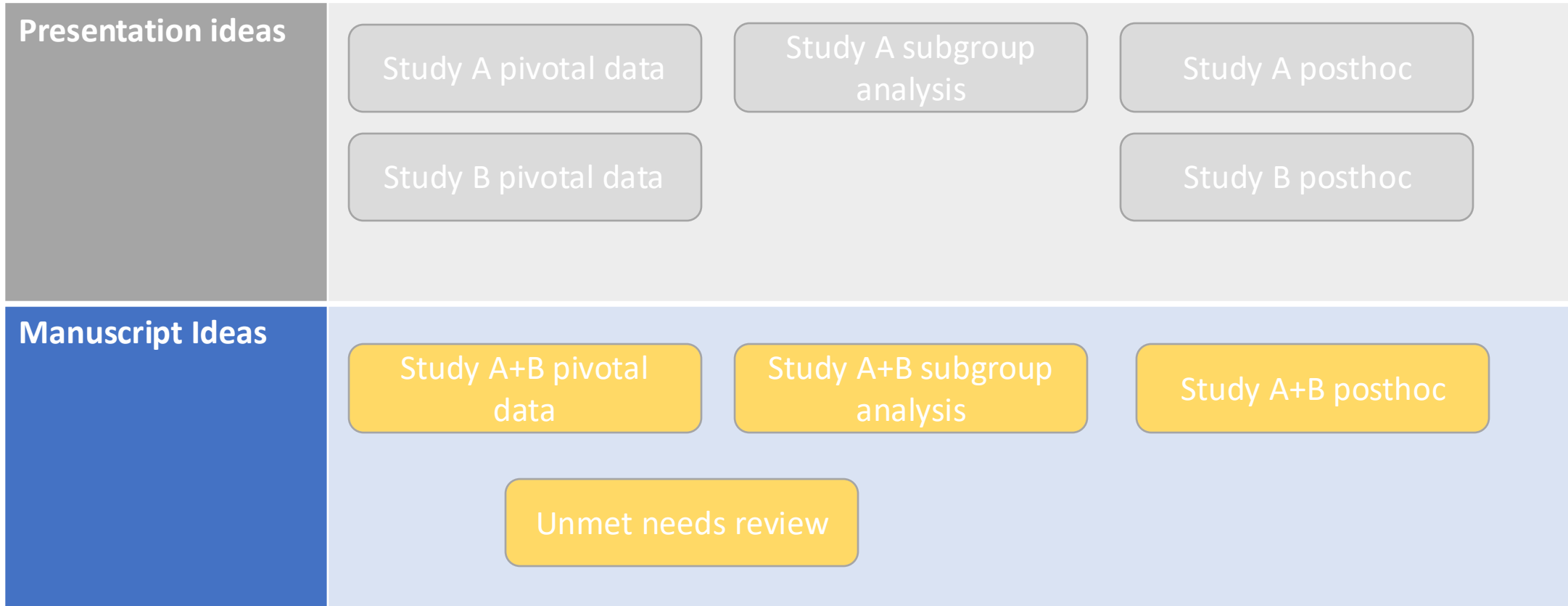
2. Educate on the **differentiated** clinical benefits of DRUG X vs. competitor drugs

3. Disseminate evidence of the **long-term continued efficacy**

Data generation - upcoming readouts

DRUG X Functions (KRM/estimated read out)	
Clinical/Medical Evidence Generation	Pivotal Study A (data expected Dec 2025)
	Pivotal Study B (data expected April 2026)

Idea Generation



Idea mapping to congresses/ timelines

2026	Q1 Jan-Mar	Q2 Apr-June	Q3 July-Sept	Q4 Oct-Dec	2027+
Congresses	★ A Congress 1	★ B Congress 2	Congress 3	Congress 4	
	Study A pivotal data	Study B pivotal data <i>Study A pivotal data (encore)*</i> Study A subgroup analysis	Study B pivotal data (encore)* Study A posthoc	Study A+B pivotal data Study B posthoc	
Manuscripts	Unmet needs review	Study A+B pivotal data			
			Study A subgroup analysis	Study A+B posthoc	

Strategic Publication Plan Process

