

Become a mentor and pass on your editing skills and experience (before you retire!)

Jackie Senior

Editor & webmaster

Department of Genetics

University Medical Centre Groningen

j.l.senior@umcg.nl

www.rug.nl/research/genetics/staff/jackie-senior

METM14, El Escorial

31st October 2014

Abstract (A16) from meeting programme

Experienced editors and those nearing retirement should be thinking of how they can pass on their skills to younger colleagues. They may also need to train someone to take over work in a specific field or to work for clients with special requirements. As an in-house editor for a large, international research group in the University Medical Centre Groningen (NL), my “clients” (principal investigators, post-docs and PhD students) appreciate how much an editor can help with publications and in training students in writing skills. So after I turned 63, funding was found for a trainee editor position (8 hours/week) in the department, with a view to taking over when I retire.

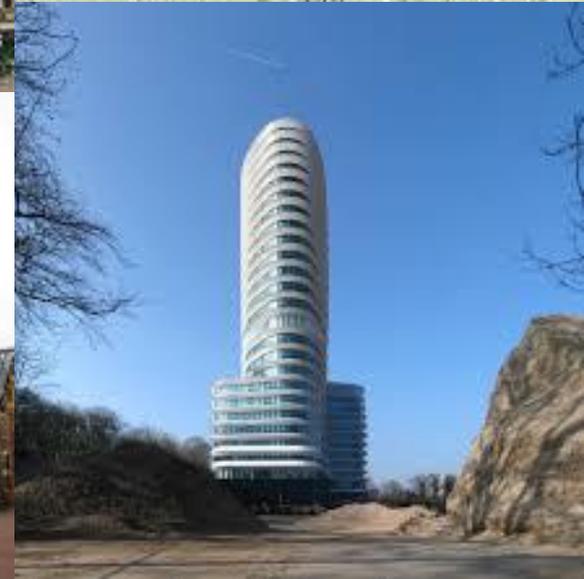
A year ago, we found a candidate who met our main requirements. Her mother tongue is English, she has an affinity with the academic world, editing and writing experience and, most importantly, a willingness to learn about a completely new field. This involves mastering the subject matter, its specific terminology and conventions.

We have adopted a strategy of the trainee tackling one research paper, poster or website text a week, which I then review. She attends weekly presentations on the department’s projects. Regular feedback is proving an essential part of her learning process, but is also helping me to re-assess some tasks that I have done on auto-pilot for years. I have needed to articulate the clients’ (often unspoken) expectations and the department’s work ethos. We have learned to accommodate our different professional and language backgrounds (US vs UK) and individual styles. Editing remains a subjective process.

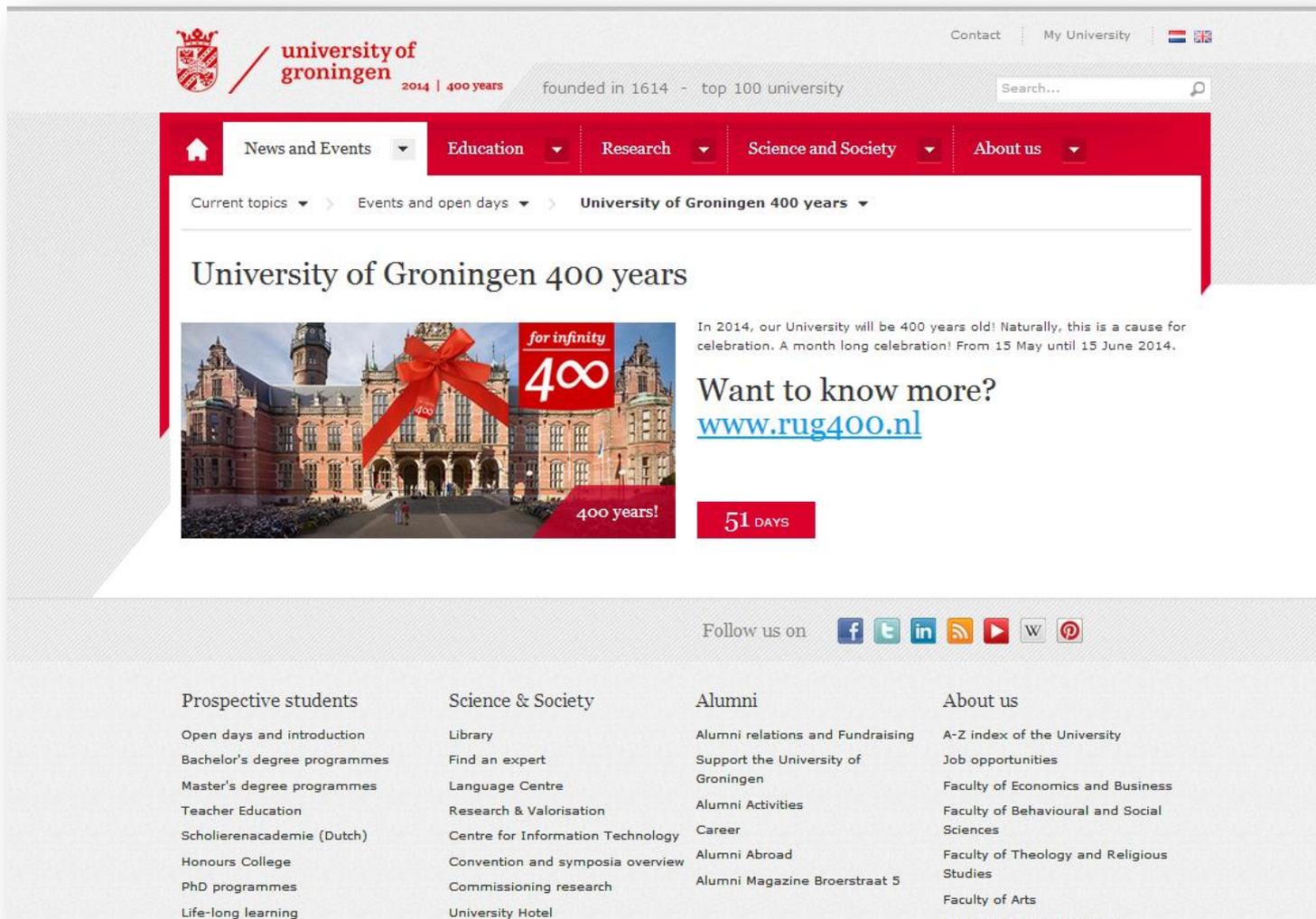
I will also comment on the mentor programme that SENSE (Society of English-Native-Speaking Editors in the Netherlands) has set up to encourage newcomers and experienced editors to get together.

► This presentation will alert MET members to the length of time it takes to train someone in a new field, to what the trainee needs to know, to ways of tackling such a traineeship, and to how working as a mentor raises self-awareness of your own editing approach.

City of Groningen (NL)



University is celebrating its 400th anniversary in 2014



The screenshot shows the University of Groningen website with a red navigation bar and a main banner for the 400th anniversary. The banner features a large red ribbon and the text 'for infinity 400' and '400 years!'. A countdown timer shows '51 DAYS'. The website includes a search bar, navigation menus, and a footer with social media links and a list of links for prospective students, science & society, alumni, and about us.

university of groningen 2014 | 400 years founded in 1614 - top 100 university

Contact My University

Search...

News and Events Education Research Science and Society About us

Current topics Events and open days University of Groningen 400 years

University of Groningen 400 years

In 2014, our University will be 400 years old! Naturally, this is a cause for celebration. A month long celebration! From 15 May until 15 June 2014.

Want to know more?
www.rug400.nl

400 years! 51 DAYS

Follow us on       

Prospective students
Open days and introduction
Bachelor's degree programmes
Master's degree programmes
Teacher Education
Scholierenacademie (Dutch)
Honours College
PhD programmes
Life-long learning

Science & Society
Library
Find an expert
Language Centre
Research & Valorisation
Centre for Information Technology
Convention and symposia overview
Commissioning research
University Hotel

Alumni
Alumni relations and Fundraising
Support the University of Groningen
Alumni Activities
Career
Alumni Abroad
Alumni Magazine Broerstraat 5

About us
A-Z index of the University
Job opportunities
Faculty of Economics and Business
Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies
Faculty of Arts
Faculty of Medical Sciences

European Research Institute for the Biology of Aging, Groningen



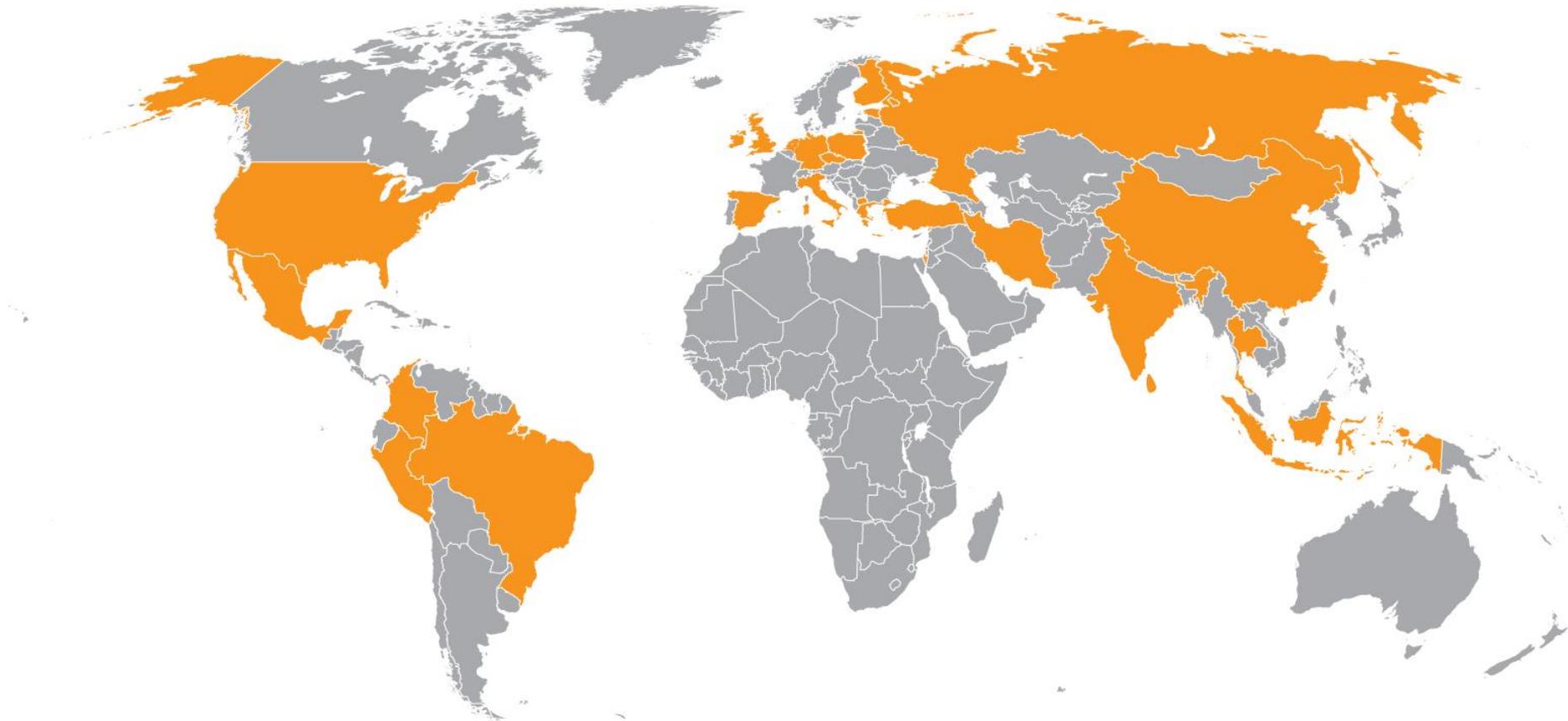
Inside ERIBA





Dept of Genetics - an international research group

50 international staff, 26 nationalities



Ballpark budgets for Dept of Genetics

- Healthcare budget ~€15 million p.a.
- Total research budget ~€ 3 million p.a.

Aim is to obtain at least €1.5 million p.a. in government research funding, plus another €1.5 million from external research funding bodies

- Number of patients seen p.a. = 6,200
- Number of DNA tests performed p.a. = 16,000 lab tests



More ballpark figures for the Dept of Genetics

44 fte research staff

15 fte bioinformaticians

17 fte clinical geneticists (medical specialists)

Plus: 7 fte medical doctors being trained as specialists

5 fte medical assistants not in specialist training

2 fte social workers

10 fte genetic consultants

Total fte staff in dept: 228

Many are part-time or dual appointments, so in total

→ **300 people** are on the staff list

Kate Mc Intyre - trainee

- Mentoring Kate in the context of my work as biomed editor at UMCG
- She's from US; I'm from UK
- A process of learning to work together
- And for me how to coach!

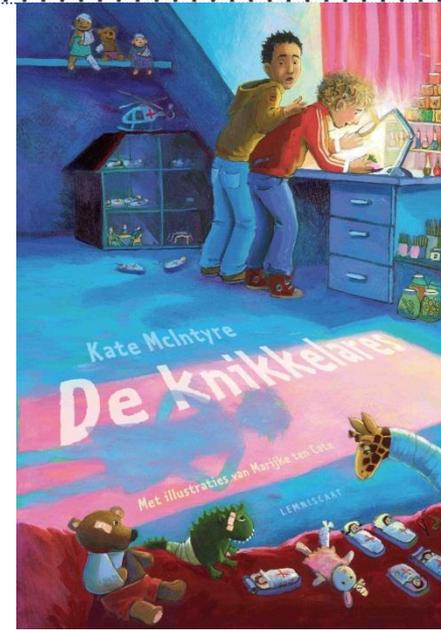


Why a trainee?

- I was 63 when this traineeship started in 2013
- Need a successor
- Have a permanent position
- Large international research group
- Appreciated by the research and clinical staff and head of department sees the need to help researchers write and publish

Why Kate?

- Native English speaker
- Is an academic editor/translator
- Scientific training – PhD in Marine Geochemistry
- Gives writing courses to PhD students
- ‘At home’ in the academic world
- Been in NL for 12 years, speaks Dutch
- Is a published author





Aims of traineeship

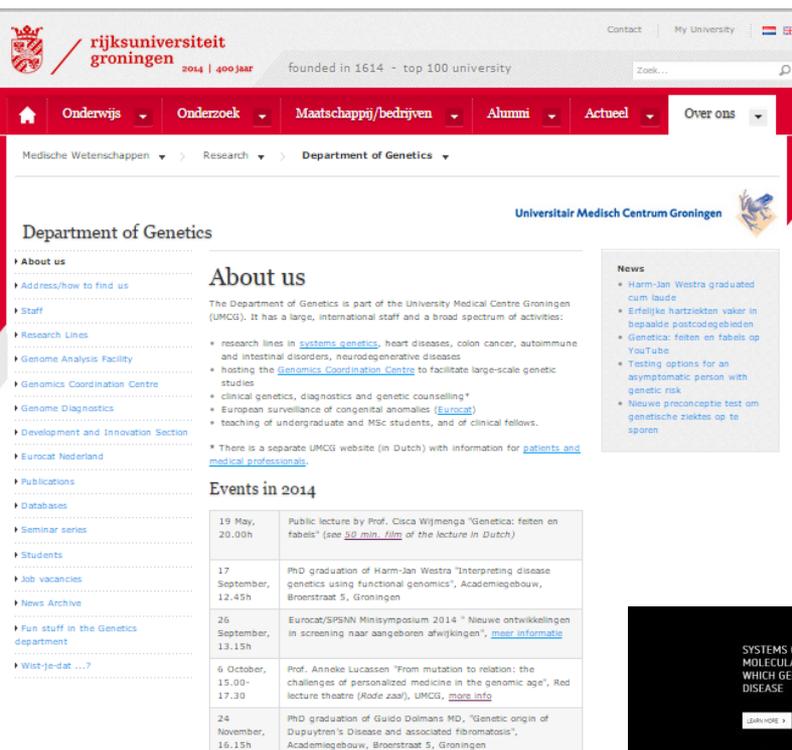
- To take over within 1-2 years
- Get up to speed on genetics, bioinformatics, patient work
- Expand editing skills
- Get to know department and researchers
- Meet my support network in university and UMC



What do I actually do?

- **Edit** – papers, grant applications, presentations, annual reports, teaching material, CVs
- **Write** - items for reports and newsletters, letters of recommendation, submissions for prizes
- **Translate** – management info, patient letters/case histories, counselling guidelines, lab protocols
- **3 websites**

Webmaster for 3 sites



rijksuniversiteit groningen 2014 | 400 JAAR founded in 1614 - top 100 university

Medische Wetenschappen > Research > Department of Genetics

Department of Genetics

Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen

About us

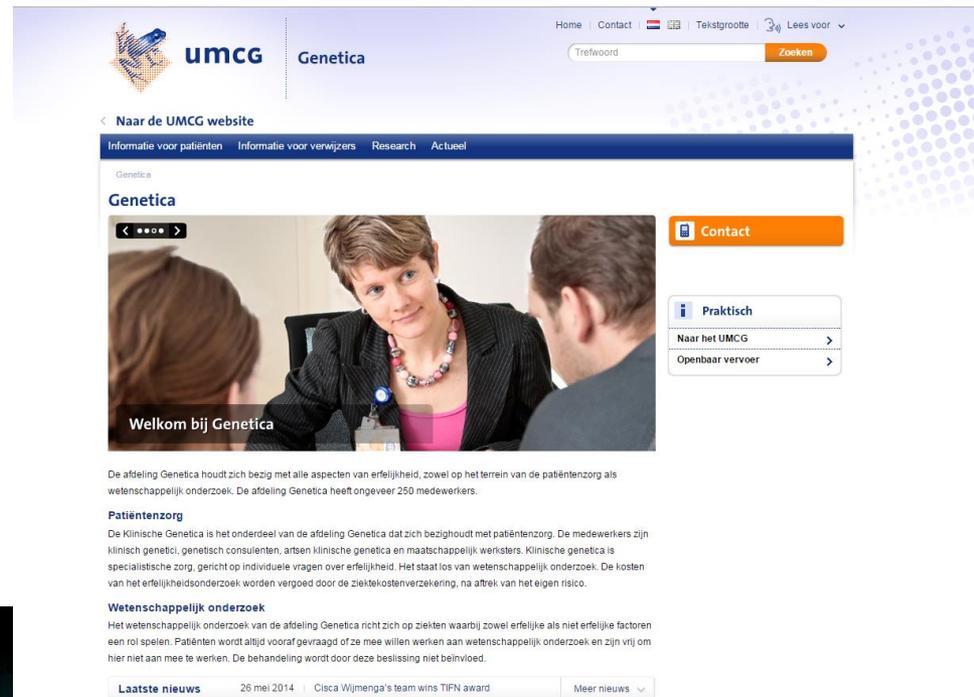
The Department of Genetics is part of the University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG). It has a large, international staff and a broad spectrum of activities:

- research lines in [systems genetics](#), heart diseases, colon cancer, autoimmune and intestinal disorders, neurodegenerative diseases
- hosting the [Genomics Coordination Centre](#) to facilitate large-scale genetic studies
- clinical genetics, diagnostics and genetic counselling*
- European surveillance of congenital anomalies ([Euracat](#))
- teaching of undergraduate and MSc students, and of clinical fellows.

* There is a separate UMCG website (in Dutch) with information for [patients and medical professionals](#).

Events in 2014

19 May, 20.00h	Public lecture by Prof. Cisca Wijmenga "Genetica: feiten en fabels" (see 50 min. film of the lecture in Dutch)
17 September, 12.45h	PhD graduation of Harm-Jan Westra "Interpreting disease genetics using functional genomics", Academiegebouw, Broerstraat 5, Groningen
26 September, 13.15h	Eurocat/SIPSMN Minisymposium 2014 "Nieuwe ontwikkelingen in screening naar aangeboren afwijkingen", meer informatie
6 October, 15.00-17.30	Prof. Annette Lucassen "From mutation to relation: the challenges of personalized medicine in the genomic age", Red lecture theatre (Rode zaal), UMCG, more info
24 November, 16.15h	PhD graduation of Guido Dolmans MD, "Genetic origin of Dupuytren's Disease and associated fibromatosis", Academiegebouw, Broerstraat 5, Groningen



umcg Genetica

Naar de UMCG website

Genetica

Welkom bij Genetica

De afdeling Genetica houdt zich bezig met alle aspecten van erfelijkheid, zowel op het terrein van de patiëntenzorg als wetenschappelijk onderzoek. De afdeling Genetica heeft ongeveer 250 medewerkers.

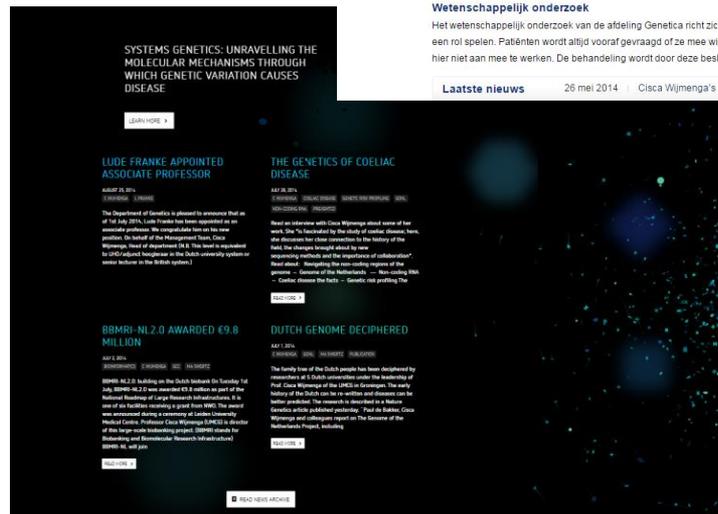
Patiëntenzorg

De Klinische Genetica is het onderdeel van de afdeling Genetica dat zich bezighoudt met patiëntenzorg. De medewerkers zijn klinisch genetici, genetisch consulenten, artsen klinische genetica en maatschappelijk werkers. Klinische genetica is specialistische zorg, gericht op individuele vragen over erfelijkheid. Het staat los van wetenschappelijk onderzoek. De kosten van het erfelijkheidsonderzoek worden vergoed door de ziektekostenverzekering, na aftrek van het eigen risico.

Wetenschappelijk onderzoek

Het wetenschappelijk onderzoek van de afdeling Genetica richt zich op ziekten waarbij zowel erfelijke als niet erfelijke factoren een rol spelen. Patiënten wordt altijd vooraf gevraagd of ze mee willen werken aan wetenschappelijk onderzoek en zijn vrij om hier niet aan mee te werken. De behandeling wordt door deze beslissing niet beïnvloed.

Laatste nieuws 26 mei 2014 | Cisca Wijmenga's team wins TIFN award



SYSTEMS GENETICS: UNRAVELLING THE MOLECULAR MECHANISMS THROUGH WHICH GENETIC VARIATION CAUSES DISEASE

LUIDE FRANKE APPOINTED ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

THE GENETICS OF COELIAC DISEASE

BBMRI-NL 2.0 AWARDED €9.8 MILLION

DUTCH GENOME DECIPHERED

www.rug.nl/research/genetics/

www.umcg.nl/NL/UMCG/Afdelingen/Genetica

www.systemsgenetics.nl

What does Kate do?

- 1 day/week
- Works on one research paper a week, which I comment on and we discuss issues that come up. Is a 2-way process
- Attends the research group's weekly work meeting
- Formal assessment yearly

Example 1

234 Phospholamban (PLN)

235 Mutations in the *PLN* gene, a regulator of the SERCA pump, are associated both with DCM

236 and ACM. To date, 15 variants ~~are~~ have been described, ~~4~~ four of them ~~are~~ pathogenic: ~~2~~

237 two (50%) missense, one (25%) nonsense, one (25%) in-frame deletion. <?>Given the

238 small numbers here, you do not really need the percent distributions> The in-frame ~~latter~~

239 deletion p.R14del is a founder mutation that was first identified in Dutch patients with ACM

240 and/or DCM and has been reported by seven 7 studies so far; [Van der Zwaag et al., 2012].

241 Desmin (DES)

242 Although *DES* mutations are related to heterogeneous phenotypes of skeletal myopathies

243 and cardiomyopathies. the first comprehensive study on *DES* mutations in ~~ACM~~ patients

Example 2

maternal pre-pregnancy BMI and NTD. Our results suggest that this effect is

most likely ~~to be~~ associated with ~~(thoracic)~~ spina bifida, specifically thoracic

spina bifida. Furthermore, we showed that obese women who smoked had

increased risks of having a child affected by CHD ~~affected child in for smoking~~

~~obese women who smoked~~ and that all obese women had increased risk of

having a child affected with a respiratory anomaly ~~in for all obese women~~.

Finally, obese class III women were at markedly increased risks of having

children ~~affected~~ with an eye anomaly, ~~a~~ cleft, ~~a~~ digestive anomaly or ~~a~~ urinary

anomaly.



Example 3

Study process

In the Netherlands, genetic counseling and testing for cardiomyopathies are performed by clinical geneticists and genetic counselors employed at eight ~~University—~~university ~~Medical—~~medical ~~Centers~~centers, in ~~collaborating~~ collaboration with psychosocial workers and dedicated cardiologists. This care is covered by compulsory general~~Dutch~~ health insurance general~~policies in the~~ Netherlands. Cardiologists in nine ~~regional~~ hospitals within the service area of our university hospital were informed ~~about~~of the ~~new~~ possibility of organizing group counseling sessions in their hospitals, and the formal referral criteria for

Kate's comments (1)

- Don't just share editorial knowledge and your client list
- Share your yearly schedule
- Share your professional resources
- Share your contacts
- Share your budgeting

Kate's comments (2)

- 'Coaching process can be humbling: "Did I really miss that mistake?" but is **immensely useful in establishing mutual standards of usage and quality**, as well as demonstrating how Jackie resolves certain linguistic problems'
- Reverse the process (with Kate checking my work)
- Some differences of opinion reflect our different backgrounds (British vs. American English)



SWOT - Strengths and Weaknesses

S

Appreciated by department staff!

Flexibility and independence in tackling work load

Flexibility in where you work

Permanent position

Good employment conditions

W

Work load is increasing

Peaks are difficult to manage

Can be lonely as a single editor, don't fit in any group

Work can be one-sided



SWOT - Opportunities and Threats

O

Good job for an academic editor

Can develop job in different ways, e.g. more teaching

Open atmosphere for new ideas, e.g. research retreat

T

Kate may want more time to write

Husband may move jobs

Conclusions

- Mentoring a less experienced editor is a rewarding, two-way process
- **Mentor** must review own work and work processes to see what is still reasonable and applicable
- **Mentee** can benefit from being able to ask lots of questions and has time to learn about a new subject
- Frequent (weekly) communication has been helpful



SENSE mentoring programme

- Started in 2011
- Coordinator is Lee Ann Weeks
- Has >15 volunteer mentors - but has not had many requests
- Takes 3 approaches: informal one-on-one sessions
internship
peer-sharing workshops

SENSE mentoring programme - work in progress

Problems

- Major problem in finding candidates to mentor!
- Programme needs much more publicity
- New members need to know that mentoring is available
- Less experienced editors/translators seem to feel too insecure to ask for help
- Being in a freelance situation makes it unattractive to spend time not earning

About Jackie Senior

Jackie Senior works as an editor and webmaster for an ambitious research department in the Netherlands (Dept of Genetics, University of Groningen/UMCG, Groningen, the Netherlands).

Nowadays she works mostly on biomedical texts but she started as a geologist (in the oil and gas boom), worked in investment banking (during the internet bubble), and moved to the genetics group in the 1990s (human genome era). She has been editing and translating for more than 40 years but, with the Dutch retirement age becoming a moveable feast, is exploring options for later.

She was a founder member of SENSE (Society of English-Native-Speaking Editors, NL) and has served twice on its executive committee.

See also <http://www.rug.nl/research/genetics/staff/jackie-senior>