HEOR/Market Access Consultant

Jake Astill

With an academic background in microbiology and immunology, Jake is a skilled research writer with over 25 peer-reviewed publications. He has previously led communications with regulatory agencies.
At Stratenym, Jake formulates strategic guidance for our clients, notably spearheading a new algorithm on selecting and optimizing value messaging for different contexts. Jake has contributed to core value dossiers and submissions to HTA agencies in the UK, Canada, and Australia, with a strong focus on therapies for rare diseases.

Tell us a bit about your area of expertise.

My main focus at Stratenym is developing reimbursement dossiers and supporting our pharma clients in their responses to HTA agencies. I enjoy the challenge of deriving clear and impactful value messages that resonate with payers from complex evidence in the literature and from intricate pharmacoeconomic models.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

I appreciate every day when I am working to help bring innovative therapies to patients suffering from rare and burdensome diseases. A recent career highlight was being lead writer on one of the first submissions to NICE under their new “proportionate approach” technology appraisal process. We won a positive recommendation, securing earlier patient access to a life-changing therapy.

In your expert opinion, what is the greatest obstacle in your field and what advice would you give to clients to overcome it?

I have seen first-hand that a one-size-fits-all approach simply doesn’t work in market access—value messaging for HTA submissions will be dismissed by payers unless it is aligned with local clinical practice and guidelines. I would advise pharma clients to never underestimate the benefit of asking local expert clinicians how they plan to integrate the new product into their treatment algorithms, and whether or not they agree with key assumptions in the company’s pharmacoeconomic models. Obtaining expert opinion from the targeted markets is time well spent to ensure value messages are relevant to local practices and thus to payers.

Is there something new in the field that you’re really excited about?

Our specialization at Stratenym on rare diseases, in which it is difficult to enroll enough patients for pivotal trials, has driven my interest in methods that allow for better interpretation of data from single-arm studies. For example, the use of inverse probability of treatment weighting in observational research allows for adjustment for confounding variables between real-world patient cohorts and trial cohorts, providing critical data in situations where placebo-controlled trials are not feasible. Keeping abreast of new developments in our field like this increases our value to clients.