



Case Study Life Science and Healthcare

The UK is a global leader in life science and healthcare, two of the most challenging subjects for interpreters. Every category has several levels of sub-categories, each as specialised as the other. An expert in oncology would not comment on orthopaedics. Genetic engineering is a completely different subject from bio-engineering. Our interpreters need to know them all, often within a single assignment. Knowledge Acquisition, the ability to become a specialist within a compressed timeframe, is the key.



Knowing the unknown

A leading Chinese company was in the UK looking for investment opportunities in life science and healthcare. During their intensive four-day programme, the delegation visited 12 organisations. At each, scientists presented their latest achievements. The subjects covered included infertility treatment, cancer research, the oncolytic virus, the solid dose injector, sports medicine, the meniscus and cartilage repair. As much of the presentation content was commercially sensitive, no slides or reference materials were provided beforehand. Some sessions were conducted via telephone conferencing with less than desirable sound quality. A bilingual medical expert from the delegation said she was amazed by the breadth and depth of our interpreter's technical expertise.

Right chemistry

GSK was running a webinar on epilepsy where leading experts in the UK talked shop. The audience was doctors and health care professionals in China. They submitted questions in Chinese for our interpreters to relay in English to the chair of the webinar in real-time. To begin with, our interpreters knew not much more than the term 'epilepsy'. However, they went on to study over one hundred pages of documents, built a glossary of the symptoms, physiology, treatments and drugs, and learned them all. During the webinar, the GSK chair received a text message from a doctor in China - 'the interpreters are excellent!'

Specialism specialists

Diabetes, like many other terms in Western medicine, doesn't exist as a concept in traditional Chinese medicine. Our team was hired to interpret at an international conference on the diagnosis and treatment of diabetes in traditional Chinese medicine. One PowerPoint file we received from China contained many passages from medical literature several hundred years old. The language was ancient Chinese, rather like Latin to an English speaker. We hired a specialist in traditional Chinese medicine to brief our team. On the day the conference chairman praised members of our team for their technical knowledge.