
Reports of meetings

2015 European Meeting of the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP)

21-22 January 2015, London

With the theme “Medical Publications for Better Patient Care: Integrity, Innovation, and Impact” as a remit, 200-plus members from 14 countries attended ISMPP’s European Meeting in the St. Paul’s area of London. Over the two days, a roster of distinguished faculty from throughout Europe and the USA provided attendees with a diverse slate of educational offerings with an awareness of the importance of the patient connection in medical publication at their core.

Day 1 opened with a review of developments emerging in 2014 that directly affect the role of publication professionals, including the May release of new EU Clinical Trial regulations and in October, European Medicines Agency’s “landmark” announcement of their intention to provide unprecedented clinical data access to the public beginning in 2015. The session continued with a status report on the upcoming release of the GPP3 (Good Publications Practice 3) guidelines, previewing changes from previous iterations, most significantly substantial redrafting of authorship policies that reference the newer ICMJE criteria. Finally, BMJ’s Trish Groves reported on the journal’s “Partnering with Patients” initiative, specifically the establishment of a patient peer review process.

In a subsequent session on medical publications for devices and diagnostics, representatives from Medtronic, Roche, and Covidien described challenges with communicating proven benefits of these products for patients and related how factors inherent to lifecycle, including marketing and regulatory processes as well as trial design, call for communication and publication strategies that differ significantly from that for pharmaceuticals.

Next, peer-reviewed research, selected from abstracts submitted for consideration, was presented in a format inspired by “speed dating,” whereby presenters had only five minutes to describe their research, at which point a bell would sound. The four topics were an evaluation of PubMed Commons; a study of the use of social media by medical researchers and healthcare professionals; a review of open-access clinical trials published in leading hybrid journals; and factors influencing manuscript development time.

This year was the first that round tables were incorporated into ISMPP’s European meeting programming, and their introduction on the afternoon of Day 1 met with apparent success. Attendees clamoured to seat themselves at different moderator-led, themed tables for a 30-minute conversation of relevant topics with a group of peers. The expert moderators guided participants in the discussion of 11 different topics; among the most popular were patient advocacy, data disclosure/transparency, and the evolution of peer review. At the end of the 30 minutes, participants had the opportunity to move to a second table and topic.

Day 1 concluded with the 2015 keynote presentation and an ISMPP update. The 2015 keynote presentation was unique

in that it was delivered by two speakers. The first, Richard Stephens, is a patient advocate who recently assumed a role as co-editor of a new journal from BioMed Central that is co-produced and peer reviewed by patients and whose focus is on patient engagement in research. The second was Adrian Tookman, a London physician with a large in-patient and out-patient clinical practice providing palliative care. Both shared expertise and insight into the significance of medical publications for doctors, patients, and their families. To wrap the meeting’s first day, Al Weigel, ISMPP’s President and Chief Operating Officer, spoke on the topics of strategic imperatives to fulfill the Society’s new mission and vision and ISMPP’s groundbreaking educational forays, and John Gonzalez reported on ISMPP’s Certified Medical Publication Professional certification programme.

Day 2 began with a 90-minute session, during which attendees could choose two of three breakouts where they could learn about publication challenges associated with the specialist areas of generics, orphan drugs, and vaccines, acquire an understanding of regulatory requirements governing approval in each area, and discover how to identify key challenges and opportunities for publication activities. Later, professionals whose job responsibilities include publications in Europe offered their perspectives on working in these disparate countries and solutions for confronting complex regulations, differences in cultural and social structures, language barriers, and other obstacles involved with the planning and development of publications in diverse and often challenging environments.

In the afternoon, an interactive, moderator-led panel discussion involved various publication stakeholders, including a patient-facing physician, nurse, patient blogger, and pharmaceutical representative and two journalists who cover healthcare. They exchanged views as to pressures confronting them in their roles as publication stakeholders, their individual priorities and needs in utilizing medical publications, and suggestions for improving the overall process and enhancing credibility. The meeting wrapped up with a somewhat idiosyncratic, yet compelling send-off address delivered by Henry Marsh, a renowned British neurosurgeon whose pioneering work in the Ukraine was featured in the 2008 award-winning BBC documentary, *The English Surgeon*. His best-selling memoir, *Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death and Brain Surgery*, was published to universal acclaim in 2014 and intrigued reviewers and readers alike with its candid glimpse into his amazing life.

For those unable to attend this year’s meeting, content is posted in the Archives section of the ISMPP website (<http://www.ismpp.org/european-meeting-archive2>).

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