Trends in the Evolving Virtual Congress Era: Considerations for Presentation Development

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic sparked a rapid shift in medical congresses from in-person to virtual presentations. This transition required careful planning and adaptation of presentation strategies to maintain the quality and impact of congress presentations while accommodating the novel circumstances.

Methods

Four major oncology/hematology congresses (ASCO, EHA, ISHilo, AHA) were included in the descriptive analysis. Key data (2019-2021) were selected for analysis and included abstract rejection timelines in the pharmaceutical industry-sponsored clinical trial research environment that typically trigger development and delivery of the congress presentations.

Results

Figure 1. Median development times from 4 major congresses (2019-2021).

Approaches to Accommodable Shorter Timelines

COMMUNICATION

Glossary, proactive, and streamlined communications with authors regarding current development and sharing expectation timelines.

PLATFORMS

Where possible, simultaneous author reviews were leveraged on shared platforms when maintaining good publication practices.

Figure 2. Examples of supplementary content and enhancements.

Discussion and Recommendations

In adapting to the changing times with the pandemic, the shift from fully in-person events to virtual/hybrid events called for consideration of several factors such as content timelines and engagement tactics.

- Preparing for potential for in-person attendance in addition to considerations for virtual scenarios set by the congress.
- Regardless of congress format, presentation enhancements can help improve the viewer experience, with further potential for reader engagement, insight, and information retention of interactive poster elements.

Several key challenges should therefore be considered by agency/pharmaceutical company partners when planning for presentations in hybrid and remote formats.

Conclusions

Following the shift from an in-person to virtual medical congress era due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we explored factors and identified recommendations to subject development of medical congress presentations in the evolving reality. These factors can be considered by agency/pharmaceutical company partners when working with authors and medical platforms to help optimize the development process and support effective presentation of distributed work in virtual, hybrid, and in-person medical congresses.