

WORST PRACTICES IN PUBLICATION PLANNING

Notes from the ISMPP EU 2021 roundtables facilitated by Valerie Moss, Group Managing Director at Prime Global

Learning Objectives



Develop awareness of common pitfalls in publication planning.



Understand potential solutions and ensure good publication practice.

Key Points

This roundtable topic generated a lot of discussion between the attendees.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Congresses

Congress experience in 2020 largely comprised turning a live meeting into a virtual meeting with little thought on how the experience could be optimised for a virtual setting. Lack of face-to-face time that would normally occur at a live event was also an issue throughout 2020 and better ways of interacting outside of the congress environment are still sought.

Congresses were slower than usual to announce acceptances, often leading to tight timelines for developing presentations. Authors were frequently given opportunities to submit posters and videos, regardless of how the abstract was originally accepted. Posters and orals have merged, and the timelines to deliver these extra materials were tough given delays in notification.

Think about how traditional formats, such as posters, work for virtual settings. These may be more commonly viewed on mobile devices so posters should be clear, engaging, and conclusions could be made most prominent. Find better ways of visualising data, such as the progression towards SMART/ infographic posters.

Publication Planning

During 2020, delays in recruitment to clinical trials were inevitable, so publication plans have had to change regularly. The general consensus was that publication extenders should be part of the publication plan. They have become more prevalent during COVID-19 and planning should start early for these to ensure success.

To support the reduced time available for HCPs to engage with

publications, consider introducing more digital enhancements to sit alongside publications, such as infographics and talking head videos. These are increasingly being incorporated into publication plans at an early stage, before the author kick-off call.

Strategic publication planning has continued apace despite the challenges of 2020. The attendees agreed that care is needed when planning a virtual workshop.

It is important that virtual workshops for SPPs are made shorter than face-to-face meetings, perhaps splitting into a couple of 2-hour workshops rather than attempting to keep engagement during one sitting.

Pre-work is vital to keep up momentum and make the most of the time available. To ensure this is completed, the focus could be on exercises that should be completed rather than just providing reading materials.

Managing Authorship Questions

In the time of COVID-19, it is important to be prepared for some delays, especially in the infectious disease and respiratory space. However, there are a few tips you can follow to manage timelines and support authors who are slow to respond:

- Ask an MSL or an internal author to talk to the author; set up a call to go through comments and keep things moving; or contact the author's assistant to ask for support
- Publication steering committees can help smooth the way
- Occasionally, it may be necessary to remove a non-responsive author from the publication after all other options have been exhausted but always seek advice about this



- Consider the [ISMPP guidance](#) on the ICMJE authorship criteria during the COVID-19 pandemic and allow a little more leeway in final approval if the author has fulfilled the first two authorship criteria.

Attendees suggested tips for ensuring authors meet criterion 2 of the ICMJE authorship criteria:

- Optimise engagement at the kick-off call, perhaps use Mural boards to encourage active discussion
- Ensure the author agreement invitation sets out the ICMJE criteria and roles and expectations for authorship
- It is also important that the author does not receive a too

polished draft of the publication. Ask lots of questions in the draft to ensure a good level of intellectual contribution.

How to manage restrictions in author lists:

- Congresses sometimes restrict the number of authors on the author byline and it is important that guidelines are checked before author invitations are issued
- Some congresses may allow additional authors on request, so it is always good to check with them. Also consider use of study group names in the author byline, which would allow additional authors to be acknowledged in the presentation or manuscript.

Key Takeaways

Thank you very much to all the people who attended the roundtables. We had some good discussion and all came away feeling a lot wiser and ready to tackle other issues in publications as they arise.

In the last 12 months, the impact of COVID-19 has put increased pressure on publication planning and delivery.

Common problems include adapting to the changes required to deliver publications in a virtual congress format. There have also been clinical trial delays and the increased time spent with patients has meant that some HCPs have little time to spare for authorship and reading publications.

These challenges have required teams to adapt to continue to deliver timely publications, and also to embrace the changes that COVID-19 has brought. For example, more thought into digital enhancements and better ways of visualising data.

GPP3 is a great resource. Many of the problems encountered on a daily basis can be mitigated by reviewing this guidance.



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