Conference Participation as a Way of Promoting Collaboration With LMIC

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Disclosure

I have no relevant conflicts of interest to disclose
Global Needs Assessment Committee

Chair: Dr. Wilfred Ngwa
Vice-Chair: Stephanie Parker

Equipment Donation Program Subcommittee
Chair: Stephanie Parker

Global Representatives Subcommittee
Chair: Dr. Eugene Lief
Vice-Chair: Dr. Izabella Barreto
GOAL

Develop and maintain a database of international medical physics consultants in each region to facilitate networking channels to identify global needs.
Assign AAPM GRSC Members to Each Region
Identify Contacts in International Medical Physics Societies & Organizations

National

Regional
Invite contacts to join the GRSC as international consultants.
Establish network, discuss needs, attend each others’ meetings
Distribution of the GNAC’s Needs Assessment Surveys

AAPM EMAIL  AAPM WEBSITE  SOCIAL MEDIA  GLOBAL CONTACTS  REGIONAL CONFERENCES
We created a presentation to share at different conferences

- Introduce the missions of the AAPM’s IC & GNAC
- Share the development of our needs assessment surveys
- Help establish contacts abroad
- Increase responses for needs assessment
Collaboration is critical for advancing global health.

Technical advancements have facilitated global collaborations.
Conferences promote knowledge exchange

They enable attendees to network

Studies have shown conferences promote collaborations

They also offer opportunities for career development

International Conference Participation

- Promotes diverse discussions from outsider perspectives
- May cover topics that are typically outside of regular scope
- Provides participants and their colleagues with networking opportunities
To Date, We Have Presented at 3 Conferences:

1. **South-East Asian Congress of Medical Physics**
   - October 2021; Hybrid: Bangkok, Thailand & Virtual
   - Presenters: Izabella Barreto, Saiful Huq, Stephanie Parker

2. **Meeting for Medical Physicists in the Caribbean**
   - April 2022; Virtual
   - Presenter: Damian Rudder

3. **Latin American & Brazilian Medical Physics Associations**
   - June 2022; In-Person: Fortaleza, Brazil
   - Presenters: Cesar Della-Bianca, Izabella Barreto
Only local members and IT were onsite in Bangkok to organize the online congress.

231 virtual attendees from 16 countries - 15 from North America, Europe, Australia.

“The international friendly spirit was one of the main successful pivots of the meeting.”
Benefits of attending the virtual conference:

- Met new colleagues
- Discussed some of their needs
- Promoted the work of our committee
- Received a list of areas they need help with:
  - Knowledge sharing via webinars: new technologies
  - Face-to-face workshops: new technologies, QC measurements of non-ionizing radiation modalities
  - Support with equipment: ion chambers, dosimeters, phantoms, electrometers, survey meters
  - Calibration of equipment
- Resulted in invitation to another meeting and commitment for future collaborations
Benefits of attending the face-to-face conference:

- Networked with society & program leadership and trainees
- Shared our committee’s efforts and invited participation in the survey
- Discussed research & quality improvement projects with trainees
- Had lunch with faculty and residents
- Attended conference evening social hours
ALL THESE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES COVERED:

- New Quality Assurance Requirements
- Certification of Medical Physicists
- Training of Medical Physicists
- Women in Medical Physics
- Global Efforts of the AAPM
Conferences Can Be Inequitable

LMIC attendance is limited by systemic barriers
- High travel costs
- Visa restrictions

Hybrid events and technology must rise to these challenges
- Providing travel scholarships
- Relocating conferences to visa-friendly countries
- Developing mentorship programs for LMIC researchers
Virtual Conferences

Pros
- More accessible and inclusive
- Digital archive
- Reduces carbon footprint

Cons
- Digital-meeting fatigue
- Loss of hallway conversations
- Challenging time zones
Attendance at the Annual AAPM Meeting


Virtual AAPM/COMP Meeting

Virtual AAPM Meeting

Other International Country

Canada

0% 5% 10% 15%


12% 11% 9% 10% 12% 16% 13%

3% 4% 4% 3% 5% 11% 5%

10% 11% 12% 16% 13% 5%

0% 5% 10% 15%
Summary

Conferences enable knowledge exchange, networking, and opportunities for personal and career development.

Attendees from low to middle income and high income countries have much to contribute and gain from participation at global conferences.

Efforts should be made to remove barriers to attendance, increase participation from other regions, and enable global actions.
Thank You
For Your Attention

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