Conference Participation as a Way of Promoting Collaboration With LMIC

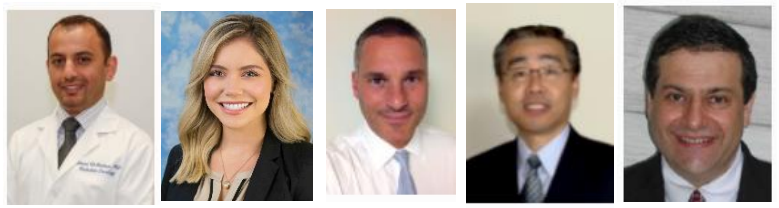
Izabella Barreto, PhD, DABR

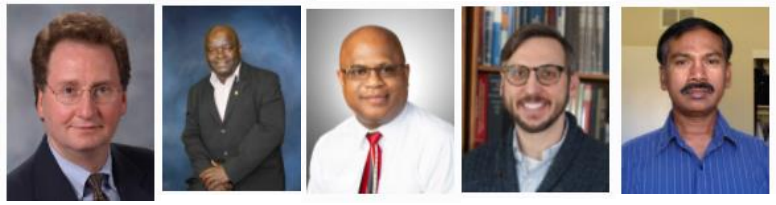
Clinical Assistant Professor
Department of Radiology
University of Florida

AAPM 2022
JULY 10–14 | WASHINGTON, DC
64TH ANNUAL MEETING & EXHIBITION
CELEBRATING MEDICAL PHYSICS
TRANSFORMING HUMAN HEALTH

Disclosure

I have no relevant conflicts of interest to disclose





Global Needs Assessment Committee

Chair:
Dr. Wilfred Ngwa

Vice-Chair:
Stephanie Parker

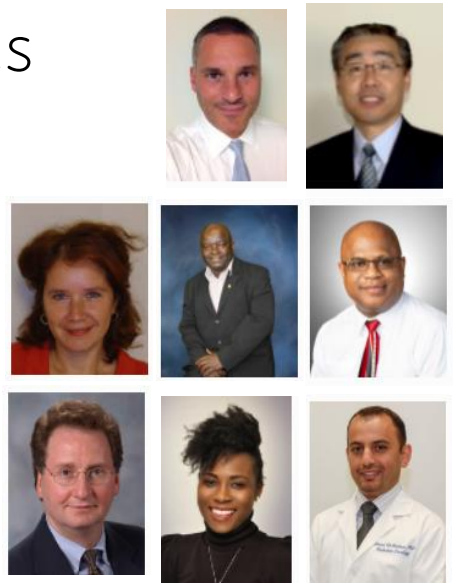
Equipment Donation Program Subcommittee

Chair:
Stephanie Parker

Global Representatives Subcommittee

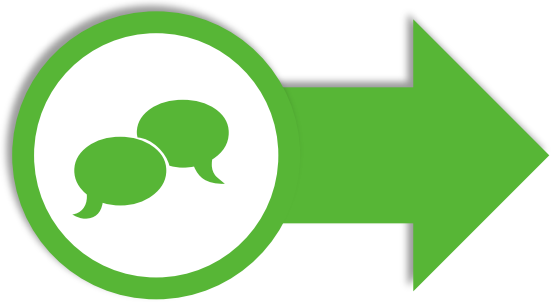
Chair:
Dr. Eugene Lief

Vice-Chair:
Dr. Izabella Barreto



STEP 1

Identify countries and regions



STEP 2

Identify global liaisons

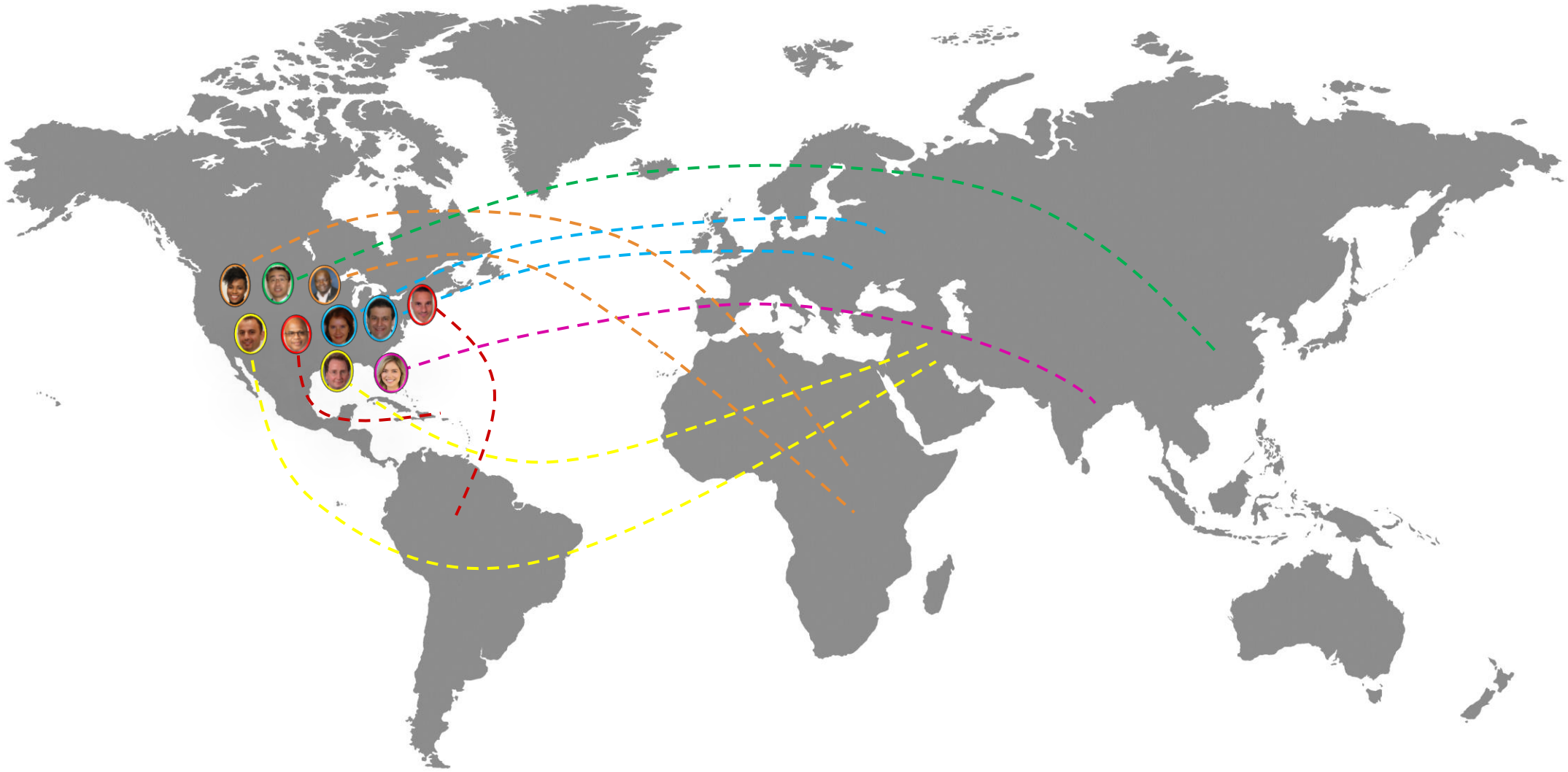
STEP 3

Network with global liaisons

GOAL

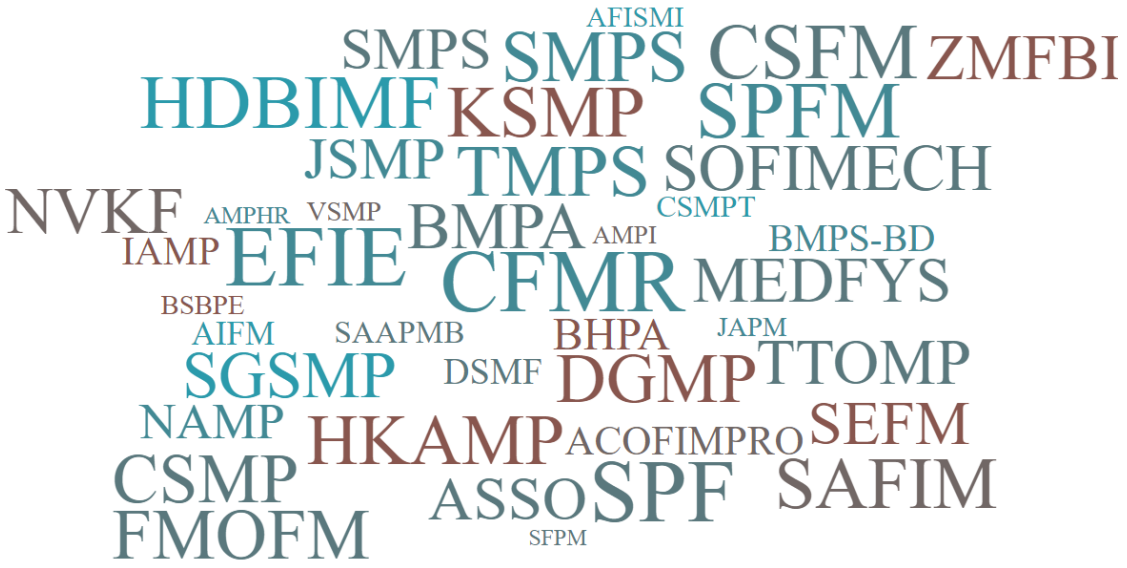
Develop and maintain a database of international medical physics consultants in each region to facilitate networking channels to identify global needs

Assign AAPM GRSC Members to Each Region



Identify Contacts in International Medical Physics Societies & Organizations

National



Regional

EFOMP

Asociación Latinoamericana de Física Médica
ALFIM

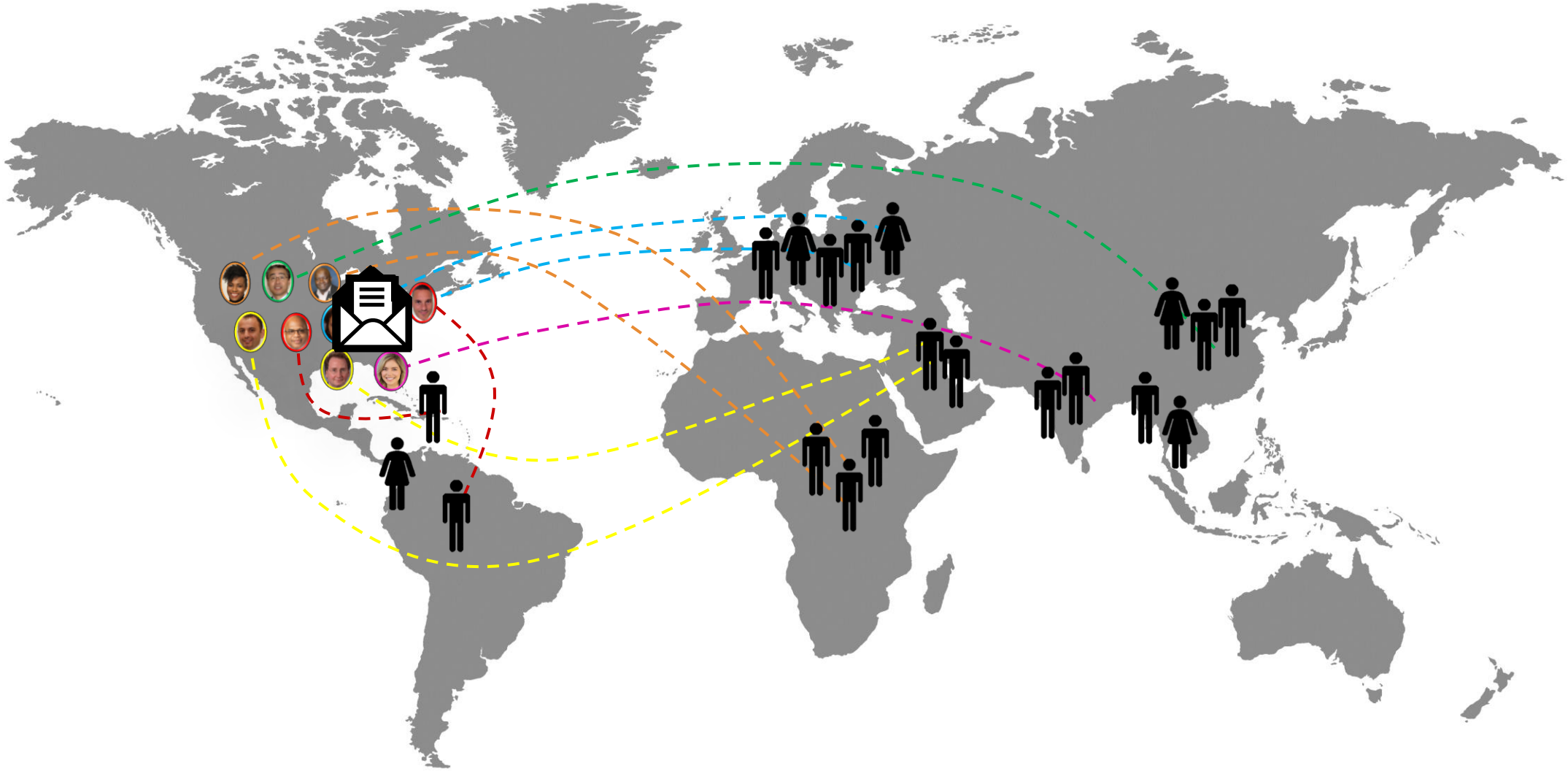
AMFO

SEAFOMP

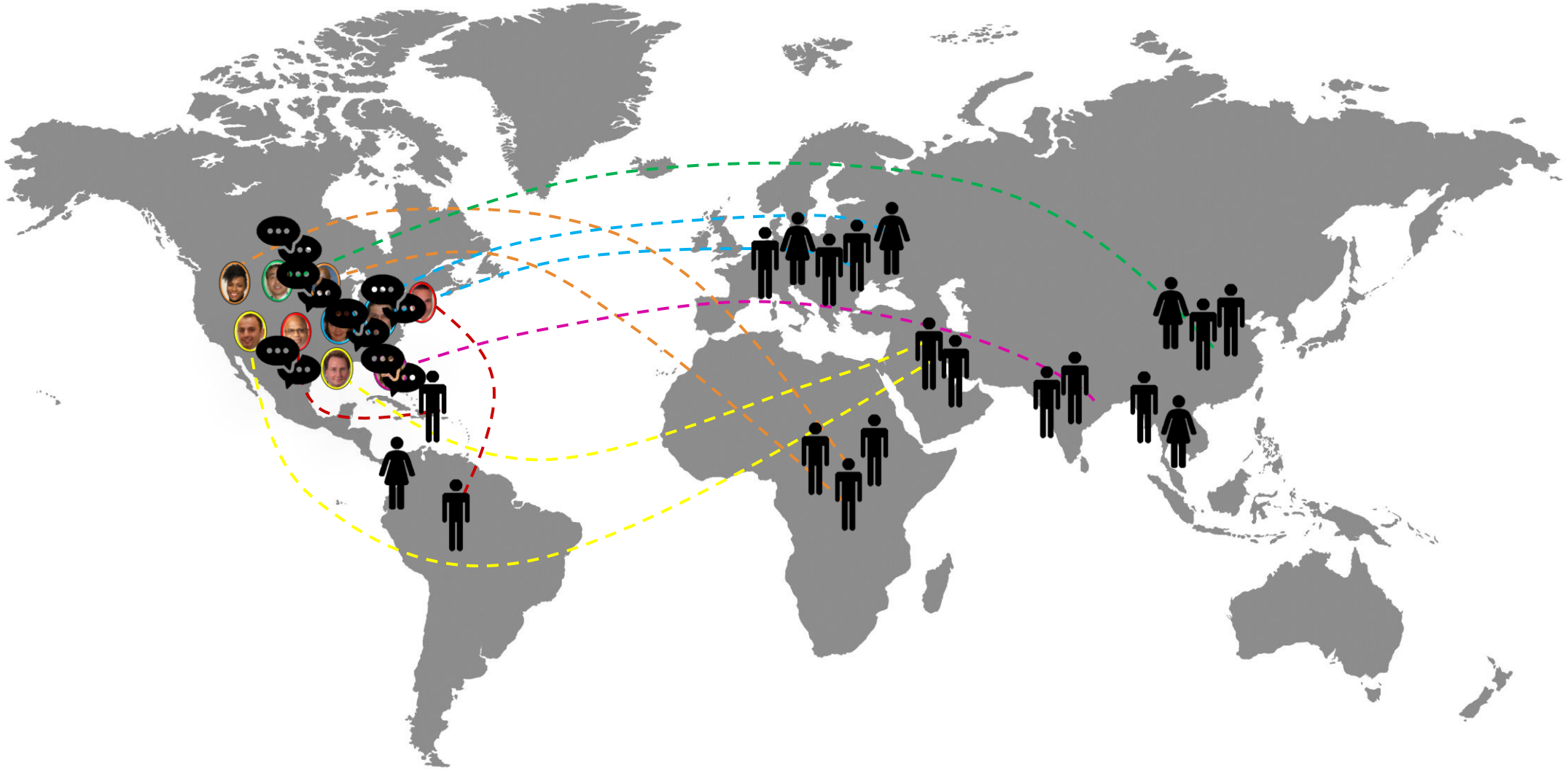
AFOMP

MEFOMP
Middle East Federation of Organizations of Medical Physics

Invite contacts to join the GRSC as international consultants

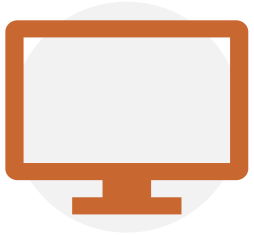


Establish network, discuss needs, attend each others' meetings



Distribution of the GNAC's Needs Assessment Surveys

AAPM EMAIL

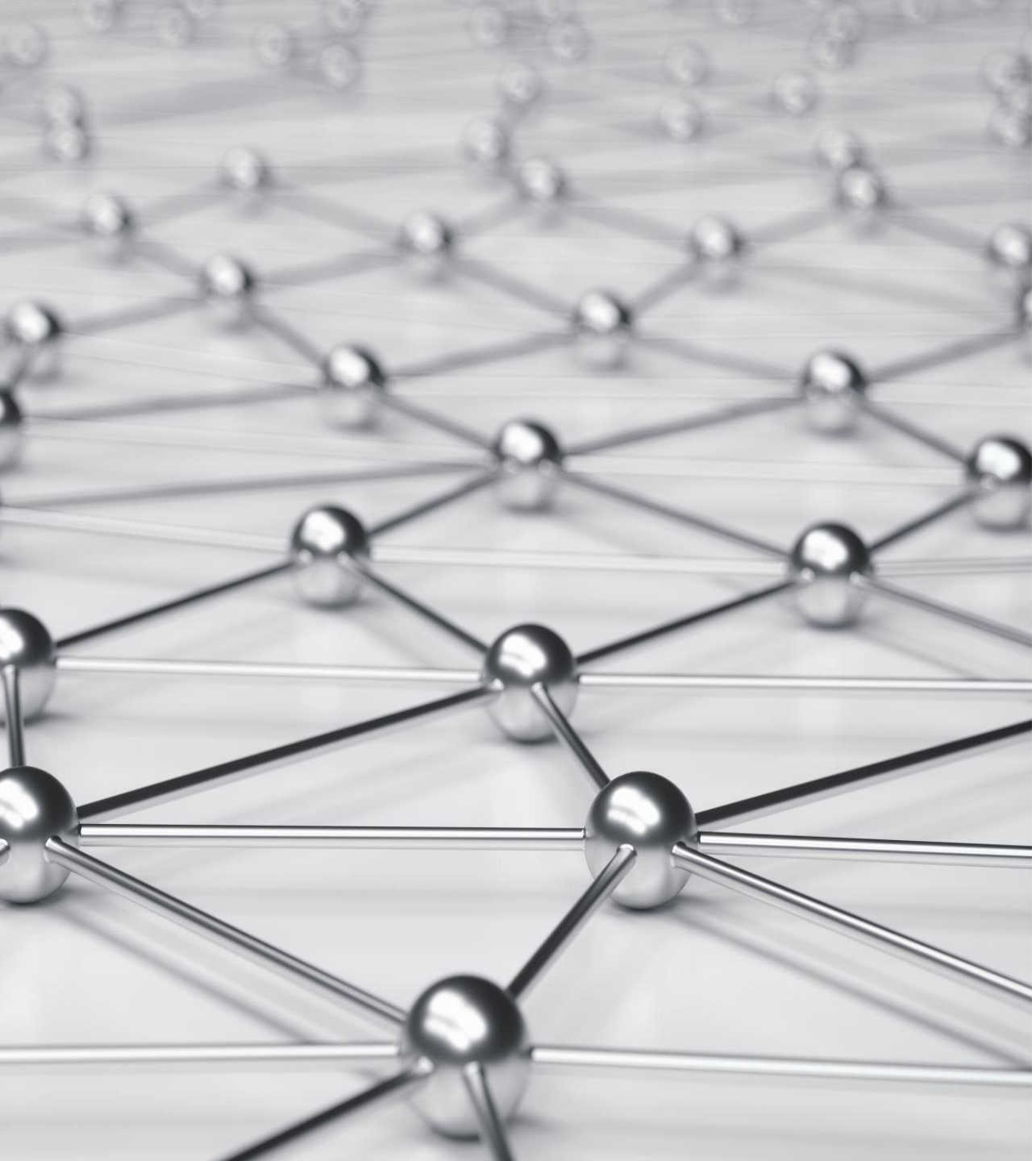


AAPM WEBSITE

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**

Zajdella ER, et al (2021) arXiv - *Xiaoyan Su, et al (2016) IEEE*

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

19th South-East Asian Congress of Medical Physics (SEACOMP)
13th Annual Meeting of Thai Medical Physicist Society (TMPS)
14th Annual ASEAN College Of Medical Physics (ACOMP)

Global Engagement through the AAPM's International Council

Izabella Barreto, PhD
University of Florida

Saiful Huq, PhD
University of Pittsburgh

Stephanie Parker, MS
Wake Forest Baptist Health

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"

PAHO

Pan American Health Organization

World Health Organization Americas

Virtual Meeting for Medical Physicists in the Caribbean

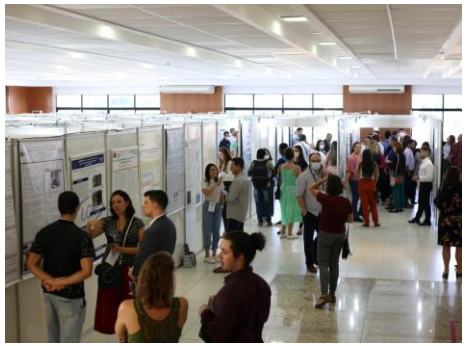
Benefits of attending the virtual conference:

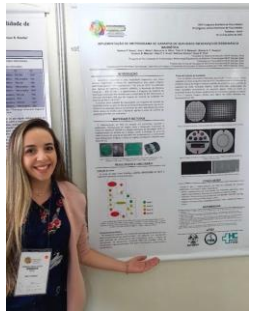
- Met new colleagues
- Discussed some of their needs
- Promoted the work of our committee
- Received a list of areas they need help with:
  - Knowledge sharing via webinars: new technologies
  - Face-to-face workshops: new technologies, QC measurements of non-ionizing radiation modalities
  - Support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

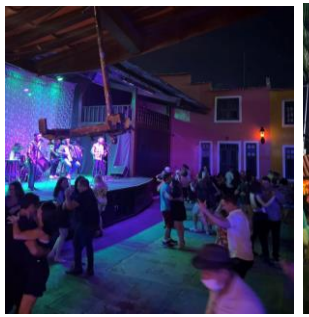
XXVI CONGRESSO BRASILEIRO & IX CONGRESSO LATINO AMERICANO DE FÍSICA MÉDICA

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

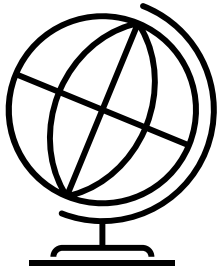
Certification of Medical Physicists

Training of Medical Physicists

Women in Medical Physics

Global Efforts of the AAPM

Conferences Can Be Inequitable



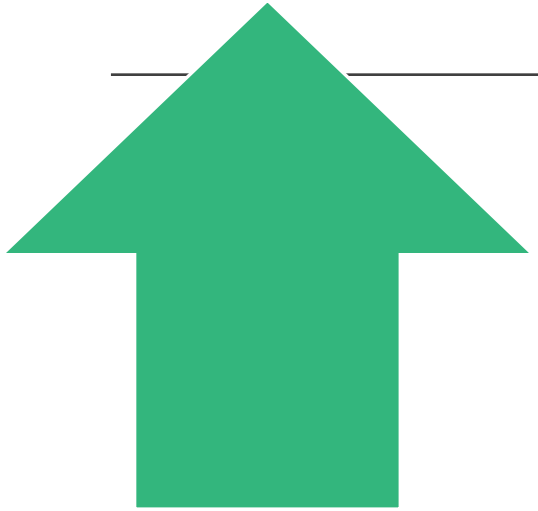
LMIC attendance is limited by systemic barriers

- High travel costs
- Visa restrictions

Hybrid events and technology must rise to these challenges

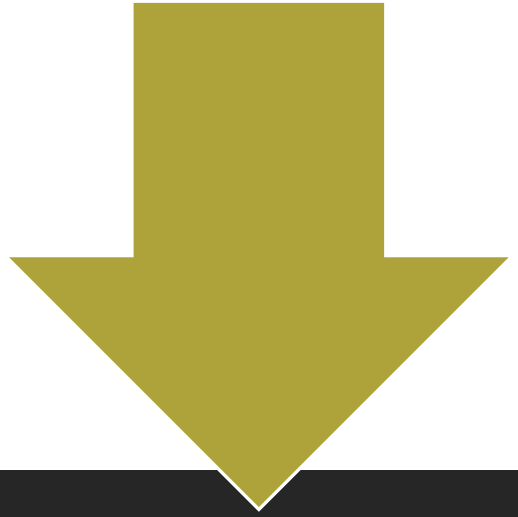
- Providing travel scholarships
- Relocating conferences to visa-friendly countries
- Developing mentorship programs for LMIC researchers

Virtual Conferences



Pros

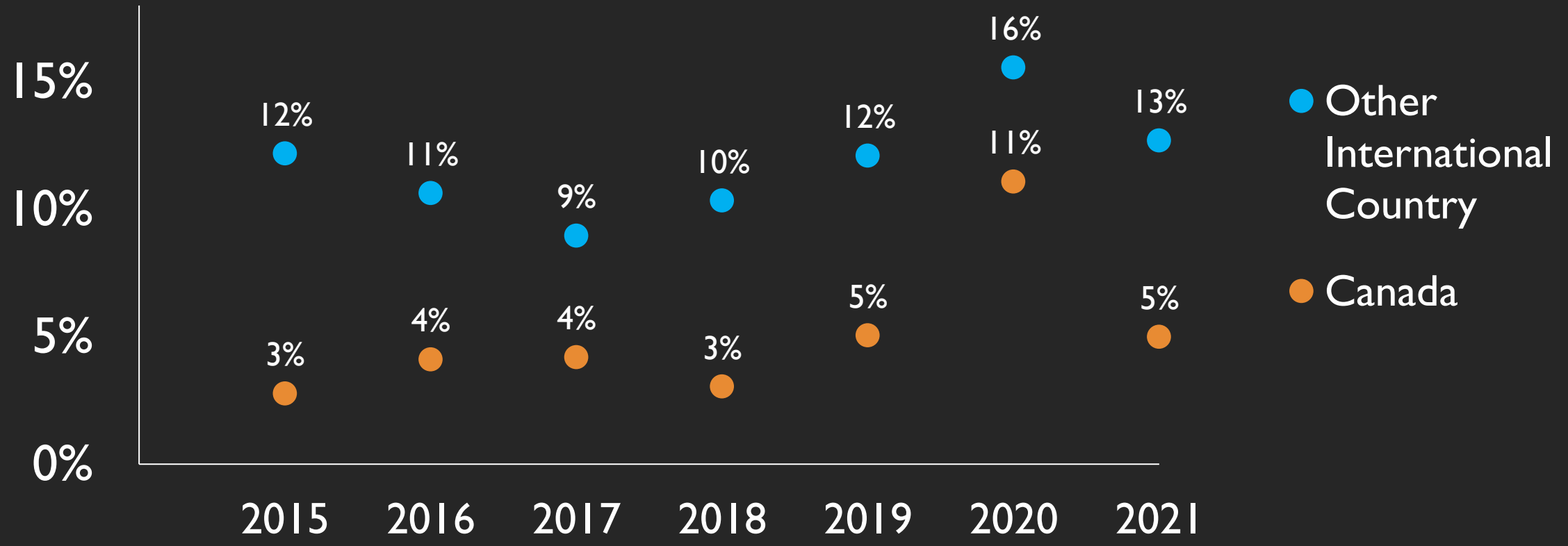
- More accessible and inclusive
- Digital archive
- Reduces carbon footprint



Cons

- Digital-meeting fatigue
- Loss of hallway conversations
- Challenging time zones

Attendance at the Annual AAPM Meeting



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

Contact: Izabella.Barreto@radiology.ufl.edu BarretoPhD ProfessorInPink