

Emerging Standards and the Hybrid Model

for

Organizing Scientific Events During & After COVID-19

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Risk Assessment & Mitigation

- 1) Perform risk assessment before planning for a scientific meeting to consciously judge the probability of infection transmission and how to mitigate governing factors
- 2) Use WHO guidelines to score and categorize the risks as Very Low, Low, Moderate, or Very High
- 3) Plan for mitigation risks

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Venue & Environmental Sanitation

- 1) All staff and executives in charge of venue preparations should be trained about cleaning and efficient disinfection methods
- 2) Dedicate personnel to provide careful health and safety monitoring and to supervise the disinfecting process
- 3) Make hand sanitizers widely accessible for participants
- 4) Account for physical distancing rules when arranging seats at conference halls and for social interactions at session breaks
- 5) Provide meals/snacks in disposable packages, avoiding buffets

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Participant Protection & Disease Prevention

- 1) Look to WHO guidelines for appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and specific needs of expected attendees
- 2) Participants with COVID-19 symptoms should NOT be allowed to attend
- 3) Consult CDC standards for how to deal with persons with recent contact with COVID-19 patients (quarantine & symptom monitoring)
- 3) At time of entry, participants should provide recent negative COVID-19 test results and be screened for symptoms
- 4) Equip all participants with PPE and ensure access to hand sanitizer as appropriate

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THE HYBRID MODEL

- 1) Having parallel virtual sessions can be advantageous not only for symptomatic participants but also for distanced persons who cannot attend the conference due to travel/quarantine restrictions
Examples: Local in-person hubs in parallel with online virtual activities
For social interactions, engage virtual participants through a social portal which can involve both virtual and in-person participants
- 2) Consider virtual reality (VR) that can simulate presence at the event itself including both formal and informal "face-to-face" events
One can now consume VR content via a smartphone and cardboard/plastic glasses although quality of the internet connection remains a barrier



SOURCES

Hanaei S, Takian A, Majdzadeh R, et al. Emerging standards and the hybrid model for organizing scientific events during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Disaster Med Public Health Prep.

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