



ICCA

# The Future of Healthcare Meetings

2-4 September, 2024  
Zurich, Switzerland

Conference Report



Hosted by:  
**Zürich,  
Switzerland.**

# Executive Summary

The future of medical meetings will be characterised by enhanced collaboration among all stakeholders. This will involve drawing input from the entire value chain to foster innovation, optimise experiences, and manage resources effectively, while also ensuring compliance with industry-supported activities.

As healthcare systems evolve to place greater emphasis on disease prevention, medical meetings will need to reflect this shift by prioritising discussions on preventive care strategies and promoting cross-disciplinary learning. The implementation of AI-driven models will transform content creation, sharing, and development, increasing the effectiveness and impact of medical meetings.

Furthermore, generational shifts will significantly affect content creation, meeting design, and the use of spaces, necessitating more dynamic, interactive, and flexible environments. As younger generations with different learning preferences emerge, the medical meetings landscape must adapt to facilitate effective knowledge exchange and encourage innovation through novel meeting formats and engagement strategies.





The Future of Healthcare Meetings is an annual International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) flagship event, bringing together stakeholders committed to creating association meetings that add value and impact. Thank you to Zurich Convention Bureau for sharing the city of Zurich and its healthcare ecosystem with our participants. Thank you to our speakers, panellists, and moderators for sharing their expertise.



Zürich,  
Switzerland.

ICCA is very grateful to Radisson Hotel Group for their support in the production of this report. Their dedication to education and knowledge dissemination ensures that the valuable discussions and breakthroughs from the event reach a broader audience. Through Radisson Meetings, innovative healthcare event solutions are crafted to streamline processes, mitigate risks, and enhance operational efficiency, aligning with our shared goal of advancing the future of medical meetings.



Thank you to our Conference Scribe, Mark Handforth, 3SixtyEventsConsulting.



# The Changing Face of Healthcare

Speaker: **Felix Strobl**, Neuroscientist,  
European Society of Preventive Medicine

---

The ongoing transformation in healthcare is underscored by the inevitability of change. Central to this transformation are the “4Ps”; of modern healthcare: Preventive, Personalised, Predictive, and Participatory care. This emphasises a shift from merely extending lifespans to enhancing quality of life through adapted diagnosis, treatment, wellness approaches, and preventive measures.

The healthcare workforce is facing significant challenges, including a shortage of young professionals entering the field, making it essential to address workforce issues urgently to ensure sustainable healthcare delivery.

Technological integration in healthcare is rapidly advancing, which makes it possible to enhance patient care while maintaining a balance between technology and human connection.

## Takeaway Notes

- 1. Change is Constant:** Healthcare must adapt to new realities and expectations, leveraging both old and new models.
- 2. Future of Healthcare:** A progressive system integrates health as a core element of society.
- 3. Healthcare Workforce:** There is a pressing need to attract young professionals and address workforce challenges.
- 4. Embrace Technology, Retain Humanity:** Future healthcare should balance technology’s benefits with compassionate care.
- 5. Preventive and Personalised Care:** Focus on prevention, personalised approaches, and patient engagement.
- 6. Healthy Ageing:** Adapt to the growing elderly population with long-term health strategies.

# What will the Changing Face of Healthcare Mean for our Meetings?

**Moderator: Cathy Persidis, European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) Panellists: Mark Bächer, Life Science Communication | Davi Kaur, European Society for Emergency Medicine (EUSEM) | Catherine Kalamidas, Rotterdam Partners | Felix Strobl, Neuroscientist, European Society of Preventive Medicine**

---

The panel discussed the evolving landscape of healthcare meetings and the need to adapt to changes in healthcare professional and patient demographics, with a focus on long-term health for an ageing population. The role of technology, particularly digital solutions and AI, was highlighted as crucial for shaping future meeting programmes.

The session underscored the necessity for medical meetings to evolve in response to changing demographics, technological advancements, and sustainability considerations while fostering a healthier, more inclusive environment.

## Takeaway Notes

- 1. Major Changes in Healthcare Meetings:** The importance of digital health and the early integration of AI in meetings formats was emphasised. There is a need to attract new healthcare workers by addressing their preferred working conditions and provide educational content in new, engaging formats, such as bite-sized or hands-on sessions. As younger doctors seek more work-life balance and family-friendly environments, medical meetings need to adapt. Suggestions include shorter meetings and offering childcare services, possibly managed by cities and hotels rather than directly by event organisers.
- 2. Technology and AI:** AI and digital health technologies are expected to transform meeting experiences. The use of these technologies should go beyond traditional formats to create more engaging and flexible digital spaces. The shift toward “experience meetings” was discussed, in which the needs of new generations, who consume content differently, need to be more closely addressed.
- 3. Congress Spaces and Format:** Future congresses need to be more consultative, shaping spaces around the delegate experience rather than

just ticking off technological requirements. The trend toward more experience-focused rather than content-heavy meetings is growing. Large events may be reshaped according to destination and venue size to match sustainability goals and access progressive healthcare infrastructure.

- 4. Trends in Communities and Health:** Addressing stress in young doctors and adding practical, wellness-focused elements like yoga sessions into meeting programmes will be essential. The importance of creating healthy conferences that balance work and relaxation was emphasised, including avoiding excessively packed schedules.
- 5. Collaboration with the Life Sciences Industry:** The integration of serendipity into meetings, where unexpected and creative elements are included, is seen as beneficial. However, industry regulatory compliance is viewed as limiting to creativity.
- 6. Sustainability and Future Planning:** The need to consider sustainability at a national and city level rather than just for individual suppliers was highlighted. Clinical researchers in the UK, for example, have specific CO2 budgets to comply with, influencing meeting participation selection. Investment in rail travel and city connectivity was mentioned as a country- and city-level strategic move to reduce carbon footprints and attract the meetings of the future.
- 7. Reflections on Virtual Meetings:** While virtual meetings became prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic, some panellists would not return to that format exclusively, emphasising the value of in-person interactions.



# The Science of Science Communication and Opportunities for Medical Meetings



**Speaker: Dr. Mike Morrison, Lead Scientist Experience Researcher, Curvenote**

---

The efficiency of science relies heavily on the way we communicate its findings. Currently, the design of scientific articles, talks, and posters often hampers the swift dissemination of knowledge, slowing down scientific progress. If we can make small improvements in these communication formats, we can speed up the spread of scientific knowledge, potentially leading to faster advancements, including curing diseases.

## Takeaway Notes

- 1. Better Design, Faster Science:** Scientific communication is riddled with inefficiencies due to poor design. By enhancing the design of scientific articles, talks, and posters, even slightly, we can create a ripple effect that accelerates the dissemination of knowledge. The aim is not just to convey information, but to do so in a way that engages and informs more effectively, leading to a faster pace of discovery and innovation.
- 2. Rethinking Posters for Better Learning:** Scientific posters are a key medium for sharing knowledge at conferences, but their current design often overwhelms viewers. The goal should be to design posters that communicate three key points clearly, rather than just two, and to create layouts that reduce cognitive load, guiding the viewer's eye through the content in an intuitive way. Innovative poster designs, such as those modelled on billboards, are more effective in managing cognitive load and can significantly improve knowledge transfer at meetings.
- 3. Transforming Presentations:** Engage the Eyes, Ears, and Heart: Scientific talks should go beyond just visual engagement; they should also appeal to the audience's emotions to enhance retention and understanding. Designing presentations with accessibility in mind is also critical, ensuring all attendees, including those with disabilities, can benefit. Presentations that are well-structured and make use of emotional cues are far more

memorable and impactful.

#### **4. Redesigning Scientific Articles for Interactivity and Innovation:**

Current scientific articles are constrained by outdated formats that do not promote innovation. To overcome this, we need teams with the resources to develop interactive content, such as pop-ups and dynamic elements that engage the reader. However, journals often maintain a model resistant to change, due to vested interests in the status quo. Moving away from traditional publishing fees and encouraging new forms of peer review could lead to a more open, accessible future for scientific communication.

#### **5. Empowering Scientists and Embracing New Platforms:**

Scientists must be trained to create better communication materials and adapt to new distribution channels. There is a growing trend toward self-publishing and dynamic content, where doctors and scientists take control of their work's distribution. This shift raises questions about how peer review will function in the future, but it offers exciting opportunities for more transparent and open access to scientific knowledge.

#### **6. Fostering Everyday Scientific Communication:**

Scientific communication should become a more passive, everyday activity, integrated into regular practices, similar to the routine search for answers in medical practice. New platforms are needed to facilitate this ongoing exchange of information, making scientific knowledge more accessible and easier to navigate.

By embracing better design and more innovative formats for sharing scientific knowledge, we can help make science more efficient and impactful. This transformation will require effort from everyone in the scientific community, but the potential benefits are immense.



# Turbocharge Science and Knowledge Sharing: How to Turn Medical Events into Must-Attend Experiences



Speaker and Workshop Leader: **Pigalle Tavakkoli**,  
School of Experience Design

---

This presentation, followed by a hands-on workshop, focused on designing impactful meetings with intention, by shifting the mindset from merely generating ideas to defining desired outcomes and transformations.

## Takeaway Notes

- 1. Define Transformation as the Goal:** Transformation in the context of meetings is not just about delivering information or creating temporary impressions; it's about inspiring long-term change. True transformation is an irreversible shift in perspective or behaviour — something that fundamentally alters how individuals think, feel, or act, often beyond their conscious control
- 2. Acknowledge the Limits of Influence:** It is an illusion to believe we can directly change someone's behaviour. Instead, we can inspire and empower participants to make their own decisions. This is achieved by designing meetings that change emotions and foster a deeper connection, ultimately leading to self-driven, lasting transformation.
- 3. Leverage Emotional Design for Impact:** By understanding that emotions drive 95% of our decisions, meeting planners can design experiences that resonate emotionally with participants. Engaging multiple areas of the brain through storytelling, sensory engagement, and emotional triggers enhances retention and facilitates more meaningful connections.
- 4. Foster Two-Way Dialogue for Buy-In:** A key method for driving transformation is through two-way dialogue. Creating opportunities for open discussion allows participants to feel valued, leading to greater engagement and a sense of ownership over the learning experience. This collaborative approach helps create buy-in and motivates participants to embrace new ideas.
- 5. Promote a Broader Perspective and Belonging:** Effective meetings

encourage participants to see beyond their individual viewpoints and understand they are part of a larger whole. By designing sessions that highlight diverse perspectives and collective goals, participants can experience a shift from an individual mindset to a more holistic understanding, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose.

- 6. Recognise Meetings as Agents of Transformation:** Meetings should be viewed as strategic tools for catalysing transformation — not just in the moment, but as triggers for long-term change. By combining transformational strategy with thoughtful design, engaging experiences, and the right resources, meetings can leave a lasting impact that goes beyond the event itself.
- 7. Prioritise Transformation over Experience, Experience over Design, and Design over Resources:** A transformational strategy should guide the planning process, where the ultimate goal is long-term change. This means prioritising the desired transformation, then crafting the experience to achieve it, designing the event around that experience, and finally aligning resources to support this design.
- 8. Balance Content with Curated Moments:** Instead of overwhelming participants with information, it's crucial to incorporate curated moments that allow for reflection and connection. These pauses enable attendees to process new ideas, absorb key messages, and create meaningful connections with others.

Designing meetings that truly resonate requires a focus on intention, engagement, and transformation rather than merely delivering content. By understanding the science behind decision-making and memory formation and crafting experiences that engage both the heart and the mind, we can transform meetings into powerful tools for long-lasting change and growth.



## The "Compliance Doctor" is in: How to Diagnose the Current State of Pharma/MedTech Compliance Treat Its Symptoms and Side Effects

**Moderator:** Thomas Reiser, International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis (ISTH)

**Panellists:** Magdalena Makiela-Bogacka, International Pharmaceutical Congress Advisory Association (IPCAA) | Silvano Schär, Congrex | Elena Baggetta, European Society of Sports Traumatology, Knee Surgery and Arthroscopy (ESSKA) | Sus Nygaard, Bella Center Copenhagen

---

Compliance is a constant and critical factor for life- sciences companies, medical societies, healthcare professionals, and third parties when organising and participating in medical meetings. A clear understanding of the complex regulations, which span international codes (such as IFPMA/EFPIA), local legislation, and individual industry policies, is essential for all stakeholders to ensure successful collaborations. Medical societies, in particular, must be proactive in their partnerships to navigate these rules effectively.

A key takeaway from recent discussions is the growing shift from traditional marketing activities to educational grants, reflecting a change in how companies support events. Many companies wait for final Conference Vetting System approval before offering support, underscoring the importance of completing the approval process to unlock industry participation. Harmonising company requirements with regulatory codes is crucial for the smooth organisation of events, as failure to follow approval timelines can result in delays or rejections.

Additionally, MedTech companies are becoming more stringent in ensuring that events are marketed ethically, excluding any elements that could be seen as “fun” or promotional, focusing instead on the twin pillars of education and research.

The complexity of compliance across regions and industries makes it challenging to stay updated, but societies are encouraged to guide their clients and partners through this process. Furthermore, HCPs’ increasing interest in accessing scientific research aligns well with industry codes, providing an opportunity for meaningful engagement.

In conclusion, collaboration between companies, medical societies, and

Congress organisers on compliance-related issues will help ensure that meetings remain compliant, relevant, and impactful. Adhering to compliance timelines and working together on these regulations fosters trust, allowing for better and more proactive partnerships across the healthcare meeting sector.

### Takeaway Notes

1. Compliance is a shared responsibility that spans international, local, and industry-specific regulations.
2. Completing the CVS approval process is vital for securing industry support for events.
3. The shift from marketing to educational grants highlights the importance of aligning event content with scientific and educational goals.
4. Harmonising company and compliance code requirements helps streamline event approvals and fosters trust.
5. Collaboration and proactive communication between stakeholders are key to navigating the complexities of compliance.
6. MedTech companies' focus on ethics excludes promotional elements and prioritises education.
7. Staying informed on regulatory changes and guiding clients through compliance helps ensure the success of healthcare meetings.



**Parallel Workshop #1 Leader: Simon Beard,**  
**3SixtyEventsConsulting**

---

The first parallel Compliance Workshop, **Building a Knowledge Baseline**, focused on equipping participants with the essential knowledge and skills to understand and adhere to industry codes of practice for the healthcare and life sciences industries. A before-and-after poll showed that the percentage of participants who felt confident or very confident about their compliance knowledge for medical society meetings went from 6% to 38%.

### Takeaway Notes

1. **Understand Your Role in Compliance:** It's important to understand how compliance impacts every aspect of event planning, from destination and venue selection to hospitality, marketing of a meeting, sponsorship and

embrace in upholding these standards.

- 2. Best Practices Matter:** Industry codes of practice are in place to ensure the highest ethical standards are maintained. Adhering to these codes isn't just a requirement, but a chance to improve how you and your association, venue or destination are perceived as knowledgeable partners.
- 3. Continuous Learning is Key:** Confidence in compliance matters evolves with practice. The workshop highlighted the importance of staying informed and continuously building your compliance knowledge base.
- 4. Collaborate and Engage:** Working together with colleagues and sponsors to ensure compliance in every aspect, including logistics and broader support to an association, helps in avoiding potential issues and ensuring smoother event execution.
- 5. Practical Application:** Through teamwork exercises, participants learned how to apply compliance principles in real-world scenarios, such as avoiding extravagant hospitality and ensuring transparency in financial sponsorship.

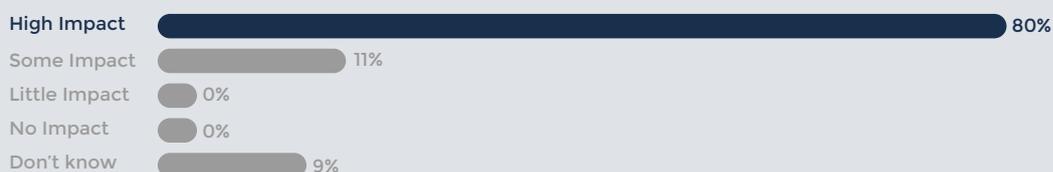


**Parallel Workshop #2 Leader: Mark Handforth,**  
**SixtyEventsConsulting**

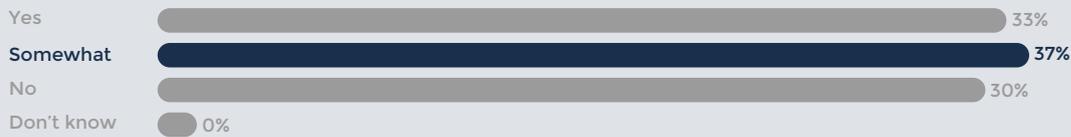
The focus of the second parallel Compliance Workshop, Future Proofing Your Organisation, was on aligning association meeting strategy with industry codes, building organisational competency, and fostering long-term partnerships that enhance both the quality and value of scientific exchange meetings.

Medical societies were encouraged to critically assess their internal resources, particularly the capability of team members with a strong understanding of healthcare compliance. This ensures that collaborations with industry partners are built on a foundation of compliance and integrity. Moreover, discussions highlighted the importance of shifting from purely financial imperatives to forming meaningful partnerships that drive innovation in healthcare meetings.

**Workshop poll: How much impact does industry support have on the financial success of your meeting?**



**Workshop poll: Do you have someone (a dedicated resource) in your organisation who has a working understanding of healthcare compliance and its application to industry interactions with your association?**



## Takeaway Notes

- 1. Compliance Expertise is Essential:** Medical societies must prioritise the knowledge, experience, and compliance understanding of team members who are responsible for working with the healthcare and life sciences industry. This expertise is crucial in fostering successful partnerships that align with regulatory standards.
- 2. Partnerships Drive the Future:** Moving forward, the future of healthcare meetings can increasingly focus on strategic partnerships rather than on financial transactions. These partnerships should aim to bring innovative solutions to life, enhancing the overall quality and value of scientific exchanges.
- 3. Mitigating Compliance Challenges:** Organisations should develop robust frameworks that integrate compliance at every stage of the meeting planning process. This ensures that industry interactions remain appropriate and transparent, contributing to the long-term success of events.
- 4. Organisational Preparedness is Key:** As industry compliance continues to evolve, it is vital for medical societies to future-proof their organisations by embedding compliance into their operations. Having dedicated resources to navigate compliance regulations will ensure sustainability and success in a rapidly changing environment.
- 5. Collaboration Fuels Innovation:** To improve the quality of scientific meetings, medical societies need to remodel and accelerate collaboration with industry partners, leveraging their collective knowledge and expertise. This approach will not only drive innovation but also enhance the value offered to healthcare professionals attending their meetings.

# Improving Patient Care: How Can Healthcare Associations, Pharma/MedTech Companies and Sector Partners Work Together for Greater Value Creation Around Medical Meetings.

**Moderator: Daniel Palomo, Visit Houston Speakers: Jürgen Meier, EuroSpine | Kimberley Zimmermann, European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) | Christian Ortlepp, MCH Group | Sissi Lignou, AFEA and President-Elect, International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO) Magdalena Makiela Bogacka, International Pharmaceutical Congress Advisory Association (IPCAA)**

Collaboration among all stakeholders is essential to create a meaningful and lasting impact. The value of these meetings lies not only in the exchange of scientific knowledge but in fostering partnerships that catalyse innovation and address shared objectives, such as enhancing patient care and promoting sustainability.

Medical societies play a pivotal role as catalysts for bringing together diverse stakeholders, including patients, patient groups, healthcare professionals, industry partners, and external collaborators. Congresses and other society interactions provide a unique platform for access to the latest patient perspectives, innovations, and educational content, tailored to the needs of both foundation-level learners and experts. Importantly, the focus on content quality is paramount, ensuring that education remains at the core of these gatherings.

## Session group activity:

**In one word, what does “value” mean to you in the context of these evolving relationships?**



## Takeaway Notes

- 1. Symbiotic Relationship:** For the success of medical meetings, all stakeholders must come together. A collaborative approach helps define objectives and fosters a stronger partnership.
- 2. Educational Value:** Education remains a strong pillar. Omnichannel approaches, including virtual participation, offer diverse avenues for learning.
- 3. Venues and Value Generation:** Medical society meetings generate substantial value for participants and organisers alike, not just through physical venues but also through carefully curated content and educational platforms. Venues must continue to evolve, taking into account compliance, sustainability, and innovative content-sharing models.
- 4. Innovation and Sustainability:** These meetings serve as gateways to accessing innovations and creating sustainable practices, both in terms of content delivery and broader topics like medicine distribution and treatment approaches.
- 5. Collaboration as a Core Fabric:** External partnerships and collaboration are critical to the creation of successful meetings. Integrating omnichannel approaches allows for full utilisation of these partnerships. The industry's role in these meetings is clear; maintaining a non-influence stance on content, while still encouraging valuable input for overall meeting design.
- 6. Generational Change:** The needs and expectations of different generations attending these meetings must be recognised, enabling the next wave of professionals to contribute to and benefit from a collaborative learning environment.
- 7. Sustainability:** Medical society meetings should align with sustainability goals, reflecting the increasing importance in both industry and medicine. RFPs must also evolve to reflect a deeper understanding of meeting objectives, going beyond financial benefits to embrace creative and sustainable solutions.
- 8. Legacy and Impact:** Medical society meetings should leave a lasting legacy, not just for the immediate participants but at the destination level, addressing critical health issues and contributing to medical innovations that benefit society as a whole.

# How Healthcare Organisations Can Increase the Impact of Their Meetings Before, During and After They Take Place

**Moderator: Noemi San Emeterio Huang**, European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT). **Speakers: Milo Vergucht**, Visit Flanders Convention Bureau | **Petra Lammers**, Onliveline | **Almuth Siemann**, Encore

---

The session showcased three case studies creating a positive impact:

- Enhanced inclusion and access to sports, culture, and technology for people with childhood-onset disabilities was achieved by going beyond immediate in-conference room objectives.
- An innovative use of AI to tell compelling stories that resonate with audiences both during and beyond meetings, using a virtual character, as a central tool in this approach, enabling the organisation to transition from traditional, hierarchical structures to more collaborative and exploratory methods of learning.
- An “Experience Box” as a tool to tell stories in an inviting and interactive way.

## Takeaway Notes

- 1. Impact:** Meetings can enhance social inclusion and improve access to information and expertise, creating a lasting impact.
- 2. Shift to Collaborative Learning:** Moving away from formal, hierarchical learning structures toward collaborative, co-created learning experiences that harness diverse expertise.
- 3. Innovative Engagement Techniques:** Utilising AI, VR, and gamification to engage participants before, during, and after meetings, transforming learning into an ongoing, interactive process.
- 4. Pre-Meeting Engagement:** Personalised communication and informal interactions prior to the meeting help build engagement and set the stage for more impactful sessions.
- 5. Gamified Learning Experiences:** Activities such as an AI-driven escape room allows participants to apply new tools in hands-on, collaborative settings, enhancing retention and relevance.



ICCA

# The Future of Healthcare Meetings

1-3 October, 2025  
Düsseldorf, Germany



Hosted by:

**Düsseldorf**  
Live close Feel free