

Practical Solutions for Qualitative Promotion of National and International Medical Education Events: Experiences of Participating Medical Education Specialists

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Dear Editor,

Organizing national and international medical education conferences offers an invaluable forum for networking, information sharing, innovation, and transformation in the field of medicine (1), as well as for fostering social responsibility and university scientific authority (2). Therefore, it is necessary for policymakers, and organizers to ensure its continuous improvement in the future by advantaging practical solutions from stakeholders (3). In this letter, we draw on insights from a qualitative approach using the semi-structured interviews with 16 medical education specialists who participated in Iranian Conference on Health Professions Education in 2023. Participants were selected using purposive sampling method. Sampling continued until data saturation was achieved. The participants were asked about their experience of participating in event. If needed follow-up questions were asked to clarify the concept under study. The Graneheim method served as the foundation for the data analysis procedure. Through an inductive procedure, the researchers pulled codes, subcategories, and categories from part to whole such that the resulting

conceptions reflected the participant experiences (4). To ensure rigor of the data, Guba and Lincoln's trustworthiness criteria, credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability, were followed via engagement with the data, peer check, member check and preparation of a comprehensive description of concepts, participants and methodology. Following data analysis, 232 codes were extracted and categorized into eight subcategories. Eventually, four main categories including 1.scientific authority in medical education, 2.strengths, 3.weaknesses, and 4.enhancement strategies were identified. Some of their experiences are mentioned:

"The existential philosophy of universities is to respond to society requirements, and the events presented a wide perspective in this regard by promoting educational scholarships."

"Inadequate infrastructures, impossibility of live translation, lack of using new educational approaches in presenting materials in workshops and lectures, executive inconsistencies, incorrect evaluation of programs are some problems which I cannot ignore."

Moreover, participants provided solutions for quantitative and qualitative improvement of such

national and international medical education events. These practical recommendations and suggestions for current challenges include the following:

Effective conference management is crucial for the success of medical education events. Educating and orienting the executive team can help overcome operational challenges. Utilizing conference management software can significantly benefit the planning and implementation processes. These systems provide the convenient organization of presentations and workshops, while also offering immediate updates and notifications for participants. This streamlines the implementation and guarantees effective event management. To address the lack of participation, and interaction from panel members and the audience, integrating interactive technology tools can be highly beneficial. Implementing audience response systems, such as survey software, can allow participants to engage actively, answer questions, and provide feedback in real-time, creating a more engaging and interactive environment.

In addition to technology, mentoring or coaching programs may be used to foster more guidance and engagement. Individuals have the opportunity to sign up and be matched with specialists in certain fields of knowledge according to their own interests and specific subjects. Enhancing the hardware and software capabilities of conferences is another critical aspect. Providing simultaneous translation capabilities can overcome language barriers, and create a truly inclusive environment. Using specialized software or web-based platforms that offer real-time speech-to-text or text translation can enable participants to select their preferred language, ensuring accessibility of the presented content ultimately enhancing the diverse and accessible conference globally experience.

Future events should prioritize practical, need-based presentations, combining innovative presentation methods like gamification, instructional design, and appropriate assessment techniques to enhance the quality and effectiveness of delivered content.

The integration of virtual and hybrid event formats has the potential to increase engagement and accessibility. The learning experience can be improved and active participation can be encouraged by emphasizing interactive seminars and case-based learning. Establishing cross-institutional collaborations and partnerships can facilitate the sharing of best practices and the development

of comprehensive educational programs. Furthermore, implementing continuous feedback and evaluation mechanisms can help refine the event content and format, ensuring the educational needs of the participants are consistently met.

From the perspective of scientific content, we recommend that the submissions and articles for medical education conferences be reviewed, and evaluated based on the following Ernest Boyer's four types of scholarship, including the scholarship of discovery, integration application, and teaching (5). By considering these types of scholarship reviewers can ensure that conference content is not only scientifically sound, but also highly relevant and applicable to participants' professional development needs.

In conclusion, policymakers and organizers can guarantee that national and international medical education events continue to be important venues for knowledge exchange, innovation, and professional development by putting these workable solutions into practice, which range from efficient conference management to varied presentations, and thorough content evaluation. We implore them to implement these recommendations and foster an environment that is consistently enhanced by medical education events worldwide.

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