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Editorial

Hybrid Ophthalmology Conferences: Paradigm Shift in 2022

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Received Date: 29-09-2022; **Accepted Date:** 10-11-2022; **Published Date:** 17-11-2022

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Editorial

Introduction: It has been almost a year since our journal talked about ophthalmology conferences under the COVID-19 era [1]. With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing throughout 2022, scholars and academics are finding their ways out for scientific exchange of knowledge and research advances [2]. Virtual conferences were mostly turning into hybrid form to cater for delegates from around the world both physically and electronically [3].

Going through the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (APAO) official website's meeting calendar page, recent international conferences are 40th Congress of the European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons (ESCRS) held on 16-20 September 2022; American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) 2022 held on 30 September to 3 October 2022, and 15th Asia-Pacific Vitreo-Retina Society (APVRS) Congress held on 18-20 November 2022. These are all conducted in hybrid formats. There are few similarities, but also differences, across these hybrid conferences.

Registration: Separated registration for physical conference from virtual conference. ESCRS and APVRS both offered a discount on virtual conference registration fees, yet AAO charges the same price no matter you register for physical or virtual conference. AAO and APVRS got both physical and virtual options for all category of delegates. However, virtual options were not available for researcher (employee) from exhibiting / sponsoring companies in ESCRS.

Access: Physical conferences of ESCRS, AAO and APVRS cover all virtual conference platforms access. On top of the 3-month post-event virtual platform access, ESCRS physical conference allows access to the exhibition, congress material, some specialty days and wet labs

Au SCL | Volume 3; Issue 3 (2022) | JOAR-3(3)-0042 | Editorial

Citation: Au SCL. Hybrid Ophthalmology Conferences: Paradigm Shift in 2022. J Ophthalmol Adv Res. 2022;3(3):1-2.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46889/JOAR.2022.3303>

subject to additional charge. AAO physical conference includes instruction courses, skills transfer lectures, expo, industry showcases, clinical sessions and original papers. All these were not possible on virtual conference. Concerning APVRS, other than real-time and 5-month post-event on-demand access to scientific and sponsored sessions, physical conference allows opportunity to join the presidential dinner and gala dinner, and access to industry exhibition hall.

Future: Thanks to the travel bubble, APVRS delegates are not subject to mandatory quarantine after arrival. Recently, Hong Kong also has a piece of good news on ending of hotel quarantine starting from 26 September 2022. Travellers will also no longer have to show a negative COVID-19 test before boarding a plane to Hong Kong. They will only be required to go through three days of home medical surveillance after arrival to Hong Kong. It would be a great convenience for overseas ophthalmology practitioners to attend 34th Annual Scientific Meeting Hong Kong Ophthalmological Symposium (ASMHK) 2022 on 19-20 November 2022 at the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, Aberdeen. This year, ASMHK will focus on glaucoma, and Professor Paul Healey will share his expertise in the field together with Professor Ki Ho Park [4,5].

The COVID-19 pandemic's scope has forced a paradigm change in medical practice and research. In the post-COVID-19 era, I believe hybrid conference is definitely the trend, yet physical conferences will be coming back soon.

Keywords

Ophthalmology; Conference Eye

Conflict of Interest

The author reports no conflicts of interest in this article.

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Au SCL | Volume 3; Issue 3 (2022) | JOAR-3(3)-0042 | Editorial

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