ISMPP 20th Annual Meeting

April 29–May 1, 2024, in Washington, DC

Highlights summary

May 2024

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Key discussion topics



Scientific storytelling



Patient engagement



Artificial intelligence

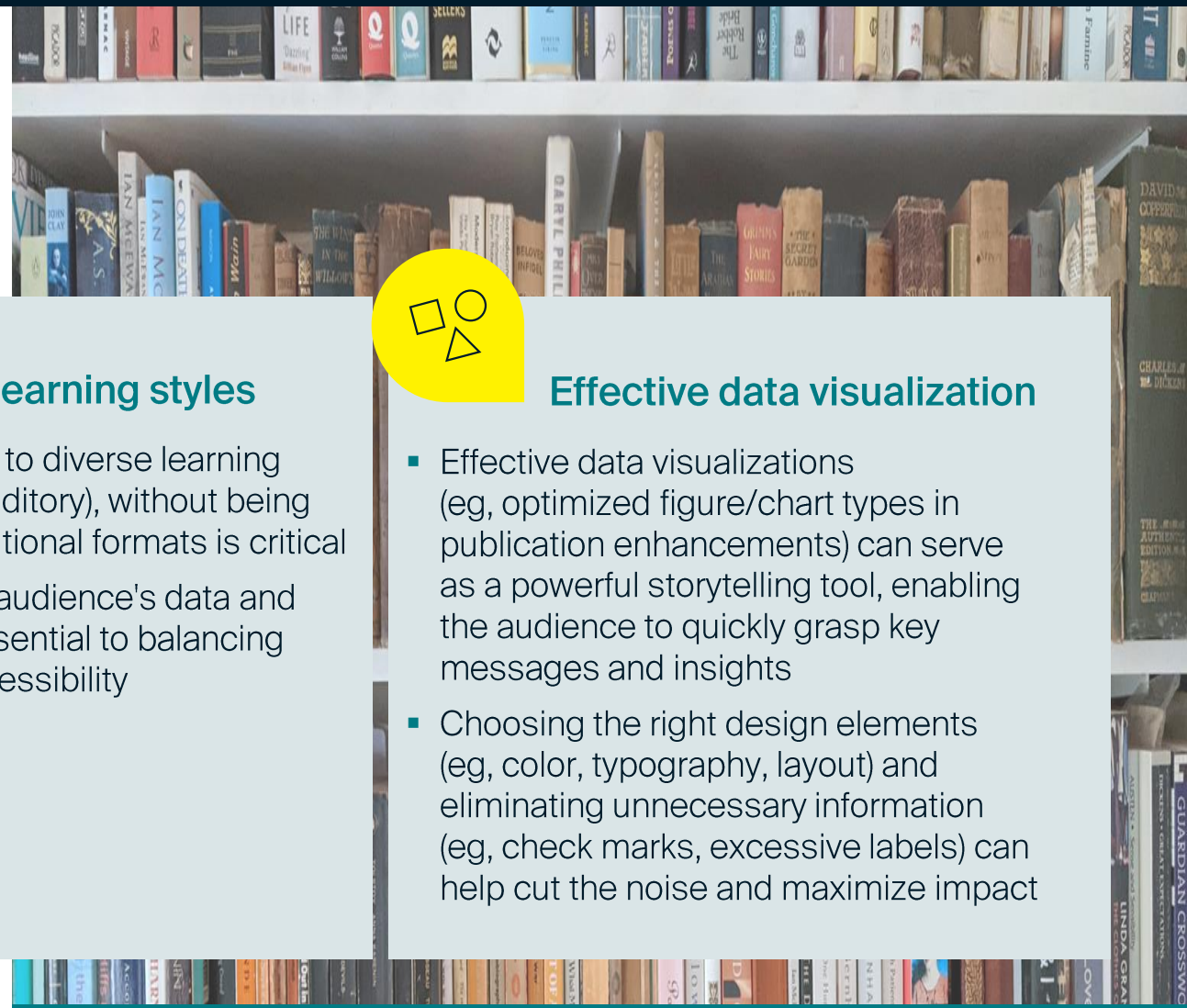
The 20th annual meeting of the International Society of Medical Publication Professionals took place April 29–May 1 in Washington, DC, and focused on evolving trends in medical communications.

Experts from around the globe gathered to exchange insights, strategies, and innovations with the potential to shape the future of medical publications and communications.

Discussions spanned diverse topics, with scientific storytelling, patient engagement, and AI standing out as areas of significant interest.

Key: AI, artificial intelligence.

Scientific storytelling



Increasing engagement and memorability

- Scientific storytelling is evolving to engage diverse audiences more effectively and make content more memorable
- Literature and cinema teach us that “starting in the middle” of a story enhances audience engagement by spurring their curiosity and activating their imagination
- By following a storytelling arc, narratives such as scientific platforms can better highlight gaps in the landscape and emphasize why they matter

Matching learning styles

- Adapting narratives to diverse learning styles (eg, visual, auditory), without being constrained by traditional formats is critical
- Understanding the audience's data and health literacy is essential to balancing complexity and accessibility

Effective data visualization

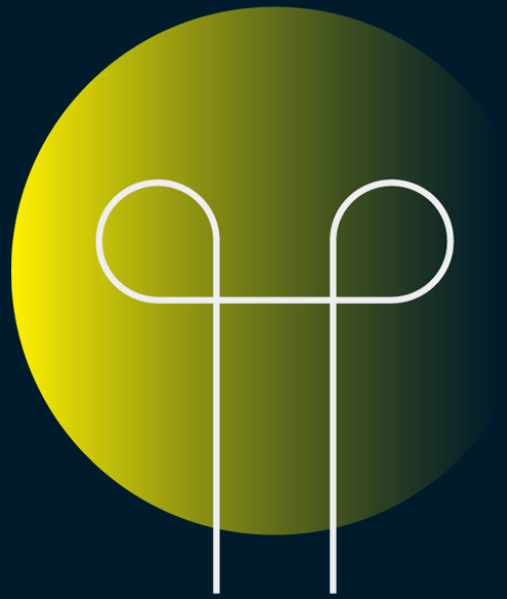
- Effective data visualizations (eg, optimized figure/chart types in publication enhancements) can serve as a powerful storytelling tool, enabling the audience to quickly grasp key messages and insights
- Choosing the right design elements (eg, color, typography, layout) and eliminating unnecessary information (eg, check marks, excessive labels) can help cut the noise and maximize impact

Key takeaway:

Scientific storytelling is evolving beyond traditional boundaries, embracing innovative techniques to engage diverse audiences and enhance memorability.

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“When telling a story,
a key means of promoting
memory retention is to
pique the reader's
curiosity.”



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Patient engagement

A clear need and value

- There is a strong ethical, moral, and business case for patient involvement across the drug development lifecycle, from study design through to data dissemination
- Co-creation with patients can improve health outcomes, data literacy, and emotional accessibility

Partnering with patients

- Presenters shared practical tips on how publications can be tailored to become more patient-centric (eg, lexicon, readability) and how industry can overcome common barriers to partnering with patients
- Strategies for effective patient engagement include collaboration with advocacy groups, careful consideration of appropriate patient authors, and proper education about the publication process (eg, understanding the time commitment involved)

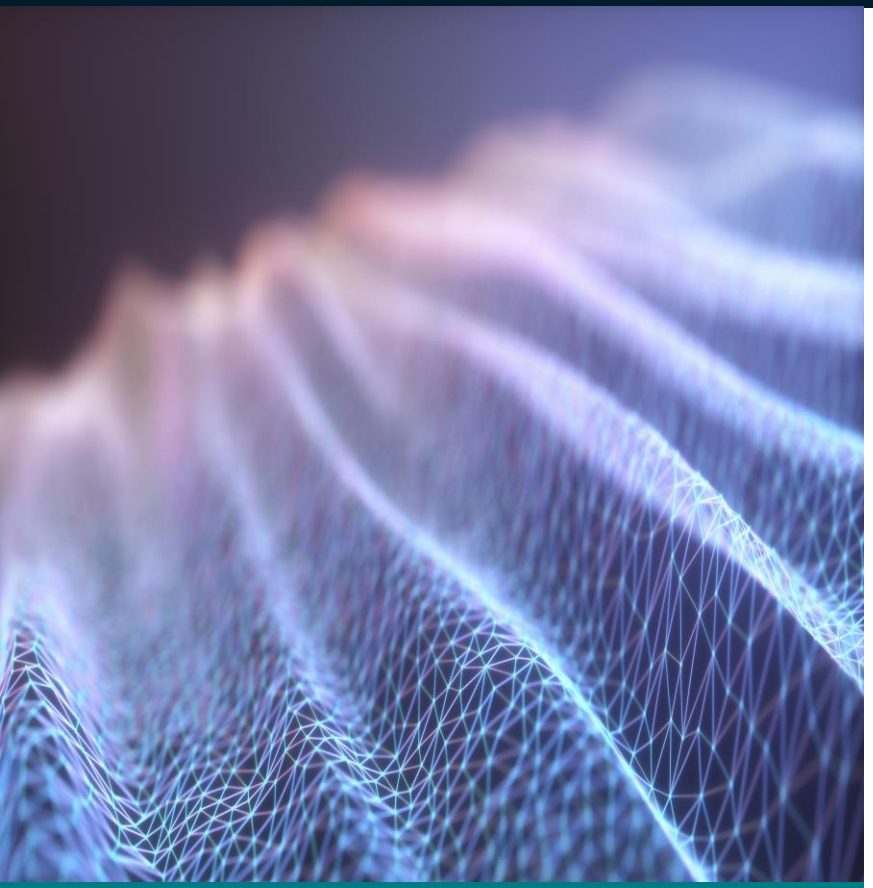
"For improved outcomes, we should be incorporating the patient voice early and often."



Key takeaway:

Patient engagement is pivotal in shaping research and medical communications, with a focus on inclusivity, collaboration, and improved outcomes.

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Key takeaway:

AI is transforming medical communications through efficiency and strategic innovation, with a current focus on making medical content more accessible.

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Artificial intelligence

Getting practical

- AI's role in medical communications is shifting from theoretical to practical, with a focus on enhancing efficiency and decision-making
- Debunking misconceptions about AI, such as complexity and job displacement fears, is crucial for broader acceptance

Solutions and approaches

- AI can alleviate information overload through better data management and insight generation
- Generating patient-centric content such as PLS through AI is a growing application
- AI's capabilities extend beyond text to include image and audio generation, offering diverse tools for audience engagement

Establishing best practices

- Concerns about data privacy and the need for enterprise-grade AI solutions highlight the importance of secure, responsible AI use
- Human oversight remains essential to ensure the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated content (eg, avoiding “hallucinations”)
- Ensuring consistency and best practices in AI use is a collective industry responsibility

Key: AI, artificial intelligence; PLS, plain language summaries.

Conclusion

The meeting highlighted the critical roles of evolving scientific storytelling, deeper patient engagement, and the practical application of AI in advancing medical communications.

These discussions underscore the industry's commitment to using innovative strategies for more effective, inclusive, and engaging communication.

The insights gleaned from the meeting point towards a future where medical communications are increasingly tailored, patient-centric, and enhanced by technological advancements.



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Key: AI, artificial intelligence.

Contact us

If you have any questions about the themes outlined in this summary, or if you are facing challenges in medical affairs that could benefit from our decades of experience and expertise, please reach out to us.

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