Healthcare Professional Perceptions and Expectations for Scientific Content at a Medical Convention Booth

RUTGERS Institute for Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowships

NOVARTIS

Joanne Nguyen, PharmD, MS; Kimberly Colligan, PharmD; Joanne Jani, PharmD; Erin Carducci, PharmD; Lu Ann Silvestro

Introduction

Medical conventions are held yearly in different therapeutic areas for Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) for advancement of their training and education.

At these Medical conventions, pharmaceutical companies present information regarding their products and related services at booths in the Exhibit Hall.

These booths may be for the purpose of either scientific exchange (i.e. non-promotional Medical booths) or for promotional activities (i.e. Commercial booths).

As information technology advances, Medical booths are using many innovative channels for communicating medical and scientific information.

Thus, it is necessary to gain an understanding of how HCPs prefer to receive medical information at the Medical booth, what topics are of interest and what expectations and perceptions HCPs have when visiting a Medical booth.

Objectives

This research aims to evaluate Healthcare Professional (HCP) perceptions of the utility of Medical booths and expectations for scientific information exchange from pharmaceutical companies.

Methods

A 10-question, internet-based survey was distributed via email to 30,000 Healthcare professionals (Novartis Affiliates) via SurveyMonkey®.

In this email, an introduction to the survey described the intent and goal of the research to gain further understanding of HCP perspectives regarding Medical booths and assess what content such as medical information, clinical trial recruitment, disease state information, etc. are of interest. Additionally, the difference between a Medical booth and a Commercial booth were clearly outlined to gather a baseline understanding of respondents to enhance the interpretation of the results.

The survey included questions relating to: medical degree and specialty, familiarity with Medical conventions and booths, preference for meeting size and scientific information, utilization of Medical booths, perception of Medical booths, and areas for possible improvement.

A 14-day collection period was allotted for survey completion (2/13/14 to 2/27/14). Survey results were pooled and analyzed using SurveyMonkey® and Microsoft Excel.

All participants remained anonymous and personal contact information was not collected.

Results

Survey Respondent Profile

A total of 350 HCPs responded to the survey with a majority of the responses (n=332) from Physicians (See Figure 1).

- In the survey, respondents were asked to identify their therapeutic area specialty. The majority of Physician survey respondents were of cardiovascular (n = 74; 22.3%), psychiatry (n = 50; 15.1%), and neurology (n = 47; 13.3%) disciplines.

Prior to receiving the survey, the majority (64.2%) of Physicians indicated that they already understood the difference between Medical and Commercial booths (See Figure 2).

Most Physicians attend Medical conventions at least yearly with the majority (53.3%) responding attendance of 1-2 times per year and 31.3% attending 2 or more times. Only 0.6% of Physicians stated they never attend Medical conventions (See Figure 3).

Figure 1: Respondent degrees

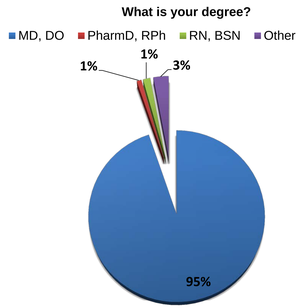


Figure 2: Familiarity of Medical booths and Commercial booths

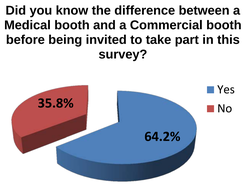
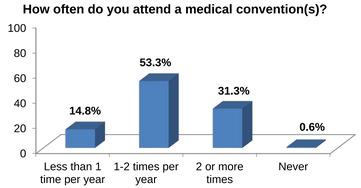


Figure 3. Number of times Physicians attend Medical conventions annually



Results continued

Meeting Preferences

A total of 46.7% of Physicians mostly preferred meetings that were smaller in professional attendance (attendance of <10,000) or did not have a preference (36.1%) (See Figure 4)

- Responders were given the option to explain their preference further as free text (maximum of 2 sentences allotted). For all Physicians who shared reasons for their preference (n = 78), key text words that were most commonly used included "interact" (n = 7), "content" (n = 6), and "focused" (n = 6).

The most preferred method to receive scientific information included speaking with medical associates such as Medical Directors, Medical Science Liaisons, or Medical Information Specialists (50.5%) (See Table 1).

From most to least preferred, Physicians mostly preferred speaking with medical associates, followed by interactive technology, email, and mailed paper copy being the least preferred.

Perceptions and Utilization

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being extremely unhelpful and 5 being extremely helpful) most Physicians found Medical booths were a helpful resource to receive medical or scientific information (49.2%) (See Table 2).

- To further evaluate these results, a separate analysis of this survey response was assessed based on Physicians who understood the difference between a Medical and Commercial booth compared to those who did not understand the difference prior to participating in this survey.
  - Overall, regardless of Physicians knowledge of Medical or Commercial booth differences, respondents in either group were numerically likely to find Medical Booths helpful (See Table 2a).

Assessments of how often Physicians typically visit a Medical booth were evaluated to determine the utilization of these booths.

- Most Physicians (46.7%) stated they visit or utilize the Medical booth 1-2 times during the meeting. Those Physicians who responded they never visit a Medical booth were requested to provide a free text response for additional context. For these Physicians, the most common response included commercial bias in a Medical booth (See Figure 5).

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being extremely unhelpful and 5 being extremely helpful) most Physicians found information on recently published clinical trials (33.4%) and clinical trial information (29.2%) to be most useful to enhance their clinical knowledge and/or decisions (See Table 4).

- The least useful information was disease state information (41.3%).

Potential Medical Booth Improvements

Most Physicians (39.5%) indicated designated areas for in-person meetings would be most helpful in facilitating scientific exchange at Medical booths. This was followed by designated Exhibit Hall times to reduce schedule conflicts with educational sessions (25.9%), and presence of Medical booths more often at smaller conventions (21.4%).

Table 1: Physician preference for medical and scientific information receipt

Please rank preference for receipt of scientific information at a medical booth (1 being least preferred and 4 being most preferred)

Preference	Mailed paper copy N = 281 n (%)	Email N = 295 n (%)	Interactive Technology† N = 306 n (%)	Speaking with a medical associate‡ N = 319 n (%)
4 – Most preferred	31 (11)	55 (18.6)	57 (18.6)	161 (50.5)
3	50 (17.7)	67 (22.7)	96 (31.4)	85 (26.6)
2	49 (17.4)	126 (42.7)	86 (28.1)	11.6 (36)
1 – Least preferred	152 (53.9)	47 (15.9)	67 (21.9)	37 (11.6)

† For example, touch screen televisions or laptops where HCPs can independently request medical information or learn about disease states
‡ For example, Medical Directors, Medical Science Liaisons, Medical Information Specialists

Table 2: Physician perceptions of Medical booths

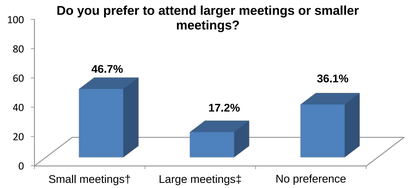
Please indicate how helpful you find Medical booths are as a source to receive medical or scientific information on a scale from 1-5

Answer options	1 – Extremely unhelpful	2	3 – Helpful	4	5 – Extremely helpful	Rating average
N = 323 n (%)	25 (7.8)	46 (14.2)	159 (49.2)	73 (22.6)	20 (6.2)	3.05

Table 2a: Physician perceptions of Medical booths stratified by previous knowledge of Medical booths vs Commercial booths

Answer options	1 – Extremely unhelpful	2	3 – Helpful	4	5 – Extremely helpful	Rating average
Yes, I knew the difference between Medical and Commercial booths, n (%)	18 (8.6)	24 (11.5)	103 (49.3)	52 (24.9)	12 (5.7)	3.08
No, I did not know the difference between Medical and Commercial booths, n (%)	7 (6.1)	22 (19.3)	56 (49.1)	21 (18.4)	8 (7.0)	3.01

Figure 4: Physician preference for Medical convention meeting size



† Professional attendance of <10,000
‡ Professional attendance of ≥ 10,000

Figure 5: Number of times Physicians typically visit a Medical booth

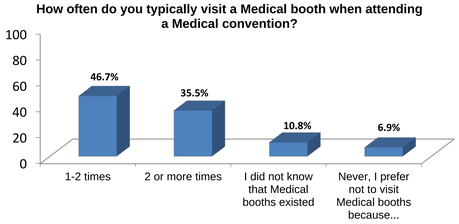


Table 3: Information most/least useful to enhance Physician's clinical knowledge and/or decisions

What type of information at Medical booths do you find most useful to enhance your clinical knowledge and decisions? (1 being least useful and 5 being most useful)

	Disease state education n (%)	Pipeline compounds /proposed targets of disease n (%)	Clinical trial information n† (%)	Medical literature of current products in market n (%)	Information on recently published clinical trials n‡ (%)
5 – Most useful	57 (17.2)	80 (24.1)	44 (13.3)	40 (12.0)	111 (33.4)
4	35 (10.5)	59 (17.8)	97 (29.2)	77 (23.2)	64 (19.3)
3 – Useful	54 (16.3)	63 (19.0)	74 (22.3)	74 (22.3)	67 (20.2)
2	49 (14.8)	71 (21.4)	65 (19.6)	100 (30.1)	47 (14.2)
1 – Least useful	137 (41.3)	59 (17.8)	52 (15.7)	41 (12.3)	43 (13)

† Investigator recruitment
‡ Paper copies or QR codes of recently presented conference posters or oral presentations

Limitations

The majority of the respondent population for this survey were Physicians and inherently, this does not provide opinions of other HCPs that often attend Medical conventions. Furthermore, these surveyed HCPs are Novartis affiliated HCPs which may represent Novartis focused specialty areas.

Discussion

Upon analysis, Physicians value the medical and scientific information provided at Medical booths and the majority of Physicians attend at least one convention yearly.

More than half of Physicians visit the Medical booth at least once for medical information. However, 23 out of 322 Physicians indicated they never visit the Medical booth. Common reasons provided included concerns for bias (n = 6) and lack of interest (n = 5). For those who responded concerns for bias (n=6), a further analysis was conducted to determine if respondents included those who did or did not know differences between Medical and Commercial booths. The results of this analysis indicated despite respondents being able to differentiate Medical and Commercial booths (n=5; 27.8%) a common concern included bias. Therefore, consideration of these perceptions is important when designing a Medical booth.

When it comes to meeting size preference, it appears that most Physicians prefer to attend smaller meetings due to increased interactions with colleagues and other factors inherent to their specialty practice. This correlates to Physician preferences for designated in-person meeting areas which would further facilitate personal communication between HCPs and medical associates. In contrast, larger meetings may be preferred for international exposure and a greater variety of education sessions.

It also appears that Physicians attend Medical conventions in pursuit of learning about innovative therapies to enhance their knowledge and/or improve treatment decisions. For example, respondents indicated the most useful information at Medical booths were recently published clinical trial information. Therefore, it is important to consider these expectations when creating and executing a Medical booth.

Conclusions

While pharmaceutical companies invest time and resources to attend and sponsor a Medical booth, it is also prudent to recognize the valuable time HCPs invest away from their practice to attend medical conventions.

Thus, this research is necessary to gain an understanding of how HCPs prefer to receive medical information at Medical booths, what topics are of interest and what expectations or perceptions HCPs have when visiting a Medical booth at conventions.

Key considerations for providing useful information to HCPs in a Medical booth include opportunities for scientific exchange and to provide a venue for HCPs to inquire about innovative treatments being developed by the pharmaceutical company.

Acknowledgement and Disclosures

Joanne Nguyen is a paid employee of Rutgers the State University of New Jersey and is completing a Post-Doctoral Fellowship at Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation.

Kimberly Colligan, Joanne Jani, Erin Carducci, and Lu Ann Silvestro are paid employees of Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation.

POSTER TEMPLATE DESIGNED BY QEMGRAPHICS ©2012
1.800.790.4001 WWW.QEMGRAPHICS.COM