TIPS FOR ATTENDING
ISCoS 2021 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

In partnership

Conferences are an opportunity to inspire and energise, to connect with the greater scientific community, think about new strategies to approach your research, contemplate the bigger picture, and establish collaborations.

If this is your first time participating in a virtual conference, or if you have done this many times, the following are a few tips and recommendations to help make your experience a positive one.

Clear your schedule

- Block out this time in your diary. Set your out-of-office message on your email. Treat this virtual conference as you would a conference you would have attended face-to-face.

Do some pre-work before the conference

- Download/print and review the programme beforehand. Knowing what sessions are offered in the different tracks will enable you to make sure you hear all of the speakers that you are intending to.
- Familiarise yourself with the conference platform - where will you find the exhibitors, posters, presentations and social spaces?
- Create your own agenda using the conference platform tools, find a friend or colleague from the attendee list and send an invitation to meet via chat or video call. Be sure to make a note of the networking times and opportunities to have group catch ups.
- Browse the abstracts in advance which will be available on the conference app.

Test out your equipment

- Make sure that you run all of the updates on your computer in advance of the conference so your computer is not trying to update in the middle of a presentation.

- Log in early to check your connection, camera, microphone/headphones, and any other equipment that you will be using, to make sure everything is working appropriately.
- Have a back up plan. Are there ways that you can call in on your cell phone if your computer is not working? Work with the conference communications and organiser to get those phone numbers in advance if they are on offer.
- If you're using a laptop, be sure it is charged in advance and that you have your charger nearby.

Minimise distractions

- Find a quiet, private and comfortable space (e.g. meeting room, home office).
- If listening in from home, tell other members of your household that you're working and ask them to keep interruptions to a minimum.
- Turn off notifications on your phone. Close email.
- Use the conference breaks to attend to any non-conference activities.

Immerse yourself in the conference

- You will get as much out of the conference as you put in: engage with the content, use the chat/networking tools, ask questions during live Q&A if this is offered. Connect with speakers, poster presenters, exhibitors and other attendees.
- Use any materials sent out in advance of the conference to take notes, highlight work that is relevant to you and formulate questions to make sure you will get the best experience possible during the conference.

Engage with other attendees

- Use any of the chat/networking tools offered to connect with other attendees.
- Consider attending set sessions as a group, with your colleagues or collaborators. This can help boost your motivation and attention.
- Reconvene with your collaborators or group in breaks or at the end of the day to share your experiences and key takeaways, particularly for your areas of research interest focus.
- Join any scheduled social or networking events. Meet new people, catch up with those you've met at previous conferences.

Schedule time to watch recorded sessions

- Session recordings are planned to be available for one month after the end of the conference. Don't just assume you will get time to watch the videos. If there's something you really want to watch, schedule the time in your diary.
- There is valuable advantage in browsing the posters for a month after the event, make a note of those that are of interest to read at your leisure; you will be able to contact the author should you wish to have a conversation.

Maximise the benefit of attending the conference

- Take a few minutes at the end of each conference day to compile your key takeaway notes from the day
- Present some of the key learnings to your colleagues that did not attend the conference as a way of sharing knowledge and discussions more widely
- Follow up the contacts you made by sending them an email and committing further to ideas and collaborations
- Use social networking platforms to connect with your new contacts, follow their work and read their work
- Use the Spinal Cord Research Hub (scorh.org) to find SCI research groups of interest or to create your own group
- Keep in touch with the ISCoS Community @iscosmeetings

Connect with us

Spinal Research Institute

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International Spinal Cord Society

www.iscosmeetings2021.org

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in @internationalspinalcord

Adapted from:

Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine, Tips for attending a virtual conference

http://www.vet.k-state.edu/education/continuing/conferences/annual-con20/virtual-conferencing-tips.html

Mission to Learn, 5 Tips for Attending a Virtual Conference (and Getting Real Value) by Jeff Cobb

https://www.missiontolearn.com/attending-a-virtual-conference/

How to get the most out of attending conferences

https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2017/05/how-get-most-out-attending-conferences