

EDITORIAL

Virtual meeting in pathology: Time to adapt to the new-norm

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In this issue, we have published the abstracts of two international pathology meetings that were conducted successfully through a virtual platform. Both of them (International Congress of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine – ICPaLM and International Perinatal, Paediatric and Forensic Pathology Conference – IPPFPC)^{1,2} were attended by more than 100 delegates from various disciplines in pathology. Since the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in late December 2019,³ most countries have implemented movement restriction orders and prohibited large group gatherings. As a result, all face-to-face forms of international and national medical conferences were immediately put into a total halt. This has a major impact on the medical fraternity as it affects the continuous professional development. In order to apply for a renewal of the annual practising certificate, our country mandates continuous medical education by attending medical conferences relevant to the field of practice. This was responded by an increasing number of virtual meetings using various platforms such as Zoom Meeting, Webex, Microsoft Team and others. This year, we had two international pathology meetings in March 2021, ICPaLM was organised by the College of Pathologists, Malaysia and IPPFPC was organised by Chapter of Perinatal and Paediatric Pathology, Malaysia. The advantages of virtual meeting are: it can be attended by everyone, safe costs (no need to travel), relatively no restriction to the number of participants, presentation can be recorded, and the ease to manoeuvre between a symposium to another. While the disadvantages are: required good internet support, less dynamic interactions between speakers and delegates, delegates from countries with different time zones, unable or difficult to interact with fellow delegates, and unable to develop collaboration. For the time being, it appears COVID-19 is here to stay,⁴ we will need to adapt to the new-norm.

Keywords: conferences, coronavirus, COVID-19, pathology, virtual meeting

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