

My friend and medical school classmate Atul Gawande once wrote, "Human beings are social creatures. We are social not just in the trivial sense that we like company, and not just in the obvious sense that we each depend on others. We are social in a more elemental way: simply to exist as a normal human being requires interaction with other people."¹ This applies to the growth and development of physicians as clinicians, researchers, and medical educators. Medical conferences remain an essential component of this process, as during this time important clinical trial data is presented, controversies in practice are reviewed and debated, and most importantly of all, side conversations and meetings occur that often lead to life-long collaborations and practice-changing research. There is simply no substitute for this in-person exchange of ideas.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic challenged the execution of large medical conferences, and many initially pivoted to video-based or hybrid models.²

Most physicians, myself included, welcomed the return of face-to-face meetings over the last few years. This issue of *Advances in Pulmonary Hypertension* is devoted to proceedings from one of these in-person conferences, the 2024 International PH Conference and Scientific Sessions. In this issue, Dr Hopper, the Scientific Sessions Chair, has provided a wonderful sample from the meeting for those who could not attend and a good refresher for those who attended. We learn how the development of newer classes of therapy in pulmonary arterial hypertension is changing the therapeutic approach to one of being proactive rather than reactive, how parenchymal lung-related pulmonary hypertension has gone from a black box to a hotbed of clinical research, ways to positively influence the early career development of our specialists, as well as a sampling of the depth and breadth of current research in our field. There is also a nice discussion

about the patient perspectives of participating in clinical trials.

The past few months have witnessed new challenges, among them social and financial, that have led many institutions to restrict travel to national meetings. We can hope that this response is only brief and that common sense eventually prevails, as the exchange of ideas fostered by such conferences remains irreplaceable.

References

1. Gawande A. "Hellhole." *New Yorker*. 2009; Mar 30:36–45.
2. Kalia V, Srinivasan A, Wilkins L, et al. Adapting Scientific Conferences to the Realities Imposed by COVID-19. *Radiology: Imaging Cancer*. 2020; 2(4):e204020.

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