



# The changing landscape of scientific communication at EASD

Chantal Mathieu<sup>1</sup> · Eleanor Kennedy<sup>2</sup> · Patrick Schrauwen<sup>3</sup> · Hindrik Mulder<sup>4</sup>

Published online: 16 December 2022

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer-Verlag GmbH Germany, part of Springer Nature 2022

The saying ‘truth is stranger than fiction’ very much applies to scientific research and how it is communicated today. Twenty years ago, who would have foreseen that most scientific journals would no longer be printed; that we would read scientific articles on a little computer small enough to fit in our pockets; that scientific conferences could be held virtually, with nobody physically present on site; and that education would become a global effort through e-Learning platforms? All these changes are great opportunities, but they also present major challenges. Therefore, what are EASD and its journal, *Diabetologia*, doing to keep abreast of the situation?

EASD aims to bring together the best of both worlds. We acknowledge the potential of virtual learning and communication, which enables global reach, but we also understand that face-to-face interactions provide a unique perspective. To take advantage of these novel opportunities, our programmes will blend the virtual and physical, at times in a hybrid fashion.

The annual meeting of the EASD has long been the highpoint of the society’s year, attracting thousands of basic and clinical scientists, clinicians and nurses. Importantly, people living with diabetes have also been represented in recent years. Since 2016, the whole meeting has been live-streamed, and opened up to the world free of charge after only 30 days. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing restrictions on travel and mass gatherings necessitated a rethink about the annual meeting. For two consecutive years, the meeting was an entirely virtual one. Thousands of people attended the conference from their homes, listening to pre-

recorded and live talks, debates and poster sessions, while their avatars on the virtual platform bumped into colleagues and visited virtual booths. Going forward, EASD annual meetings will be hybrid affairs, retaining some of the virtual formats, including livestreaming, but also involving many face-to-face sessions. Interactivity will be embedded in both the virtual and in-person formulas. Accordingly, the format of the meeting will change to accommodate this. We intend for the annual meeting to be a culmination of the year’s activities, in which research is communicated to scientific and healthcare communities in a format that is accessible to as many people as possible, rather than a one-off exclusive event to physical participants.

*Diabetologia* has a prominent place at the EASD annual meeting, and it has become a tradition to launch the journal’s themed special issue there. The 2022 special issue covers the topic of precision medicine, with leaders in the field setting out the hopes and challenges of realising personalised medicine in the management of diabetes ([www.diabetologia-journal.org/collections/precision-diabetes-medicine-special-issue](http://www.diabetologia-journal.org/collections/precision-diabetes-medicine-special-issue)).

*Diabetologia* constantly seeks to renew and explore novel means of publishing and communicating diabetes research. In line with this belief, publication of an article is just the beginning, not the end, of the process of disseminating diabetes research. Once online, articles are promoted on *Diabetologia*’s social media channels and in electronic table of contents (eTOC) alerts. The journal’s press officer writes press releases on papers of public interest, and the journal is now also interviewing selected authors about their research, making these available as podcasts and videos. *Diabetologia* also encourages the public sharing of science prior to submission, in the form of deposition of articles on preprint servers, and we have established a direct submission link from two of the leading preprint servers, bioRxiv and medRxiv. The type of articles that *Diabetologia* will consider is also evolving, with the addition of living systematic reviews (a format in which articles are updated to maintain relevance and validity) and extended articles (up to 8000 words) for research of particularly wide scope and importance.

In a new initiative, the recently founded EASD Academy ([www.easd.org/academy.html](http://www.easd.org/academy.html)) launched an online journal

✉ Hindrik Mulder  
hindrik.mulder@med.lu.se

<sup>1</sup> Clinical and Experimental Endocrinology, Department of Chronic Diseases and Metabolism, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

<sup>2</sup> EASD e-Learning, E.D. Kennedy Consulting Ltd, London, UK

<sup>3</sup> Department of Nutrition and Movement Sciences, Maastricht University, Maastricht, the Netherlands

<sup>4</sup> Unit of Molecular Metabolism, Lund University Diabetes Centre, Malmö, Sweden

club for those who wish to keep up to date with the latest scientific advancements in the field of diabetes in a timely, interactive fashion. A number of papers accepted for publication in *Diabetologia* will be chosen by the EASD Academy for online presentation, giving early career researchers the opportunity to present their findings. Both clinical and basic/translational research topics will be covered, addressing all aspects of diabetes research. The EASD Academy will also host webinars on broad topics such as editorial processes and science communication; all of these activities will be available on the YouTube channel of the EASD Academy ([www.youtube.com/user/EASDiabetes](http://www.youtube.com/user/EASDiabetes)).

Promoting the training of diabetes specialists, whether they are basic researchers or clinicians, has been at the heart of EASD for a long time ([www.easd.org/education.html](http://www.easd.org/education.html)). A postgraduate programme, with courses and symposia, is now complemented by an ambitious and expanding online activity under the umbrella of e-Learning ([www.easd-elearning.org](http://www.easd-elearning.org)). e-Learning comprises a multitude of modules on various topics relevant for diabetes healthcare practitioners and researchers, which are written and presented by leading experts. Emphasis is placed on the application of learning in clinical practice, with case studies and scenario-based assessment questions. Certificates of completion are offered to those who complete the clinical modules, and around a quarter of all the modules now offer continuing medical education (CME) accreditation as they are officially sanctioned by prestigious organisations such as the UK's Royal College of General Practitioners and Royal College of Physicians. In addition to training courses, the e-Learning platform combines diabetes

news from conferences and journals ([www.easd-elearning.org/horizons](http://www.easd-elearning.org/horizons)) with a range of film series highlighting hot topics in diabetes, such as 'The briefing room', where experts discuss a specific topic, or 'The long and the short of it', where two experts interview one another on key aspects of diabetes treatment or research.

The initiatives and efforts described above represent ongoing activities, which will be further developed going forward. We wish to see an expansion of the EASD, with diversity and inclusion as leading principles. Our goal is to ensure information about research and clinical training is broadcast in many different formats, across many channels, allowing it to be tailored to the audience, who can access it whenever it is convenient for them. EASD and *Diabetologia* are already working hard to make this happen in the field of diabetes, and we will continue to strive to translate this vision into reality.

**Authors' relationships and activities** CM is the president-elect of EASD. EK is responsible for EASD e-Learning. PS leads the EASD Academy. HM is the Editor-in-Chief of *Diabetologia*. The authors declare that there are no other relationships or activities that might bias, or be perceived to bias, their work.

**Contribution statement** All authors were responsible for drafting the article and revising it critically for important intellectual content. All authors approved the version to be published.

**Publisher's note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.