

NFTHD #9: Virtual Conferences

In this Notes from the Help Desk, we discuss a question about trade displays at virtual conferences. Specifically, how to manage a virtual trade hall, when there was a small number of non-healthcare professional delegates in attendance.

Let's consider this hypothetical scenario: A congress is intended for a healthcare professional audience, however approximately 5% of delegates will not be considered healthcare professionals. These people work in the therapy area, and are part of the wider care team, so thereby the content is relevant to their expertise. How can we manage a virtual trade hall when these delegates were not clearly identified? What are the risks of having a promotional display at an event with we know there may be interactions with non-healthcare professionals?

Let's consider how to work through this scenario:

- As the primary audience for this event are going to be healthcare professionals, it is appropriate to take a virtual trade display.
- In a traditional in-person event, companies would be able to have a trade stand, and conference organisers usually identify delegates in some way so companies can tailor conversations appropriately. Ideally, the same could happen in a virtual environment, but the absence of that does not need to be a barrier to participation.
- Companies should continue seeking to clarify whether a delegate who engages with their virtual trade stand is a healthcare professional or not, and tailor conversations accordingly.

“Guidance for Industry: Communicating ethically with patients and their representatives” is available in the Code Resource Toolkit and addresses a similar question.

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