

EVENT REPORT



The attendees at the Education Day

How to publish and present research

Contact lens educators and postgraduate students met in Manchester in May to learn how to optimise their publications and presentations. **Alison Ewbank** reports from the IACLE/BUCCLE Education Day

With more and more optometry schools opening in the UK, the topic of this year's IACLE/BUCCLE Education Day could not have been better. Organised jointly by the International Association of Contact Lens Educators (IACLE) and British & Irish College & University Contact Lens Educators (BUCCLE), Education Day was held in Manchester to precede the British Contact Lens Association Clinical Conference (May 30 to June 1).

The programme of lectures and discussion – compiled by Judith Morris, IACLE regional president for Europe/Africa-Middle East – attracted 80 members and guests to the University of Manchester's Chancellors Conference Centre. Delegates ranged from senior academics to postgraduate students, from UK institutions and overseas.

BUCCLE chair Dr Manbir Nagra (University of Portsmouth) and IACLE president Dr Shehzad Naroo (Aston University) introduced the programme, and business psychologist Andy Cole (Cole Face) chaired the event. A line-up of top international speakers made for a stimulating and useful day.

WHY WE DO RESEARCH

Having a personality firmly in 'introvert'

territory had not proved a handicap in the career of Professor Philip Morgan (University of Manchester). From a PhD in 1990 and first publication in 1993, to his current role as deputy head of the division of pharmacy and optometry, Professor Morgan's experiences were an inspiration for young students and experienced educators alike.

Career highlights included seizing an early opportunity to conduct a study in a key research area – the incidence of contact lens-associated keratitis – that resulted in eight peer-reviewed publications, and no less than 80 papers on international contact lens prescribing written with colleagues from around the world.

Media training at the start of his career had also paid dividends. Professor Morgan's next appearance was radio and TV work around contact lens compliance.

Why do research? To learn, write, publish, have fun, educate, inspire, influence, impress, contribute, drive new practice, improve patient care and more, he said. Not a bad list for a self-confessed introvert.

HOW TO WRITE AND SUBMIT AN ABSTRACT

Whether drafting a publication for a peer-reviewed journal, or submitting a paper or poster to present at a conference, the starting point is an effective abstract. IACLE treasurer Dr Etty Bitton (University of Montreal) and assistant secretary Dr

Luigina Sorbara (University of Waterloo) had advice for delegates on putting one together.

Some institutions had mentoring schemes for new writers and presenters, but the key was to look up the abstract submission guidelines of the individual journal or event and stick to them, said Dr Bitton. Remember to include in the conclusions/discussion the rationale for publishing the study: how the results added to the existing literature, presented a new or opposing view, or had a potential impact on clinical practice.

According to Dr Sorbara, a novel case study report could be the first step towards conducting a full study. 'Ask yourself, why is this case unique and reportable?' she advised. Submitting a case report required signed permission from the patient, a thorough literature search and a timeline to organise all the information you had on the case. Guidance on defining the role of students and authors, and a template for case reports were also available.

HOW TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC POSTER

For Dutch educator Dr Bykji Huntjens (City University), scientific posters created opportunities for teaching as well as learning about the most current results in your field, and were important to share ideas and foster collaborations. Dr Huntjens had some useful tips for designing an

eye-catching poster: cut down on text, use bullet points, embrace white space, change the position, shape, colour and orientation of content to maximise impact, and 'tell a story'.

Avoid including too much information and follow the rules for font sizes. Software was available for creating posters and high-resolution graphics, and there was a variety of templates and online tutorials. Her final advice was practical: don't check your poster in as hold baggage in case it gets lost.

PERFECTING A PUBLISHABLE PAPER

For Professor James Wolffsohn (Aston University) and Dr Jennifer Craig (University of Auckland), drafting a masterpiece for publication in a peer-reviewed journal was all about storytelling, but in a scientific way. Journal style was always to write in the passive tense, avoiding personal pronouns, but style was now changing. Sentences were getting shorter and abbreviations kept to a minimum. 'Participant' was now preferred to 'subject'.

The introduction reviewed the relevant literature leading to the hypothesis to be explored in the study. The method informed the reader what was done, that ethics approval was in place, that enough participants were examined to thoroughly test the hypothesis, how bias was minimised and the techniques utilised, as well as the statistical approach for analysing the data.

The results section presented results in the best format to be 'digested' without repetition, and the discussion considered these in light of the previous literature highlighted in the introduction to determine the implications of the findings, and also included any limitations to the study.

In addition to each journal's guide for authors, there were resources to help with sample size estimation and statistical analyses. And referencing tools such as Reference Manager and Endnote were essential in managing large numbers of references.

TO PEER OR NOT TO PEER

That was the question for Dr Naroo and Ian Beasley (Aston University), who considered the options for publishing in peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed journals, and provided advice on putting together the different types of publication.

Figures were very important – do not duplicate results, such as in a table and graph, and make sure the reader can understand the figure from the caption alone. Common failings in drafting publications were not declaring authors'



Richard Pearson, Dr Hilmar Bussacker and Professor Desmond Fonn

interests, lack of ethics approval, plagiarism, inadequate stats and poor presentation.

Full length papers, review articles, short communications, letters, editorials and case reports could be submitted to peer-reviewed journals. As editor of *Contact Lens & Anterior Eye*, Dr Naroo received almost 400 submissions per year and had an overall rejection rate of nearly three in four.

If you wanted academic kudos for your work choose a peer-reviewed journal, said Beasley. If you wanted more visibility, to get paid, publish quickly or share a clinical pearl, then try non-peer reviewed journals.

SO HOW DO I REVIEW THE LITERATURE?

Professor Lyndon Jones (University of Waterloo) set out the rationale for conducting a literature review: to see what novel studies were needed to guide your research or your students'; find relevant research methods, instruments or surveys; and prepare an introduction, support a discussion and compile references for a paper or poster.

Review papers were useful secondary sources for learning about a topic, while patent literature and conference proceedings showed 'what's hot'. Many resources were available for literature reviews – from search engines to citation management software, said Professor Jones, who provided advice on optimising keywords and useful links to each resource.

21ST CENTURY PRESENTATION SKILLS

For Ian Davies (IansEyes), effective communication is a prerequisite to effective teaching. Ways in which students access

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF IACLE

Education Day ended with a celebration of IACLE's 40th anniversary. Three of the founding members of IACLE who attended its very first meeting – in Monaco in November 1979 – described the early days of IACLE and BUCCLE, and the close relationship between the two organisations that has endured for 40 years.

IACLE's founding president Dr Hilmar Bussacker, first BUCCLE chair Richard Pearson and former IACLE vice president Professor Desmond Fonn were presented with certificates by former president Professor Deborah Sweeney. First IACLE secretary Dr John de Brabander sent a video message to delegates.

Outgoing industry supporters Dr Dwight Akerman (recently retired from IACLE Platinum Sponsor, Alcon) and Ian Davies (formerly of IACLE Silver Sponsor, Johnson & Johnson Vision) were also acknowledged, with IACLE Awards for Outstanding Contribution to Contact Lens Education.

and process information today are very different from the way many of today's contact lens educators were taught.

Davies looked at how contact lens teaching had evolved to inspire the teachers of today and showed how the Vark (visual, audio, reading & kinaesthetic) model could be used to inspire the next generation of educators and researchers through effective presentation.

Among his top tips were that every presentation should start by stating its importance to the audience rather than to the presenter, and that 'no one has ever complained of a presentation finishing too soon'. Davies also described the evolution of presenting formats, from blackboard to slide projection to PowerPoint that had 'changed the world forever'.

For the audience, reading a slide was faster than listening to the presenter – 200 words versus 125 words per minute minimum – so it was really important to match words against speech. Whatever the preferred learning style, there were ways to inspire an audience: interactive elements such as drawings, symbols and mind maps rather than lists (visual/graphic), podcasts (audio) and hands-on demonstrations (kinaesthetic).

As far as possible, educators should encompass all presentation styles in their teaching, said Davies, concluding: 'In 30 years' time your students will be sitting in this room and they'll be there because you've inspired them.' ●

● Full presentations from Education Day, including links to useful resources referred to by speakers, are available to IACLE members via www.iacle.org.