

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATORS FOR THEMATIC POSTER SESSIONS

GOALS

- To foster and encourage the discussion of important scientific and clinical questions relevant to the major themes of the session
- To offer specific feedback to the authors concerning their data and its interpretation
- To foster interchange between the presenters and observers of the poster material

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Thematic Poster Sessions include related abstracts which are presented in a poster format. Posters are programmed together under one or several themes. Authors are given a specific time to be present at their posters, when the viewers can discuss the work with them on a one-on-one or small group basis.

There is no formal discussion period; however, facilitators will be expected to attend the session during the viewing time and foster discussion among the authors and the audience. Since the majority of abstracts presented at the Conference will be scheduled in this format, the role of the facilitator is extremely important.

PREPARATION BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

Multiple facilitators will be assigned to each thematic poster session. Facilitators should have some degree of expertise in the theme being presented. Each facilitator will be assigned 7-10 abstracts to oversee. Although each facilitator is directly responsible for 7-10 abstracts, it is highly recommended that the facilitators be familiar with all the abstracts, especially to identify those abstracts which focus on the same or related issues. All the abstracts to be presented during the thematic poster session will be sent to the discussion facilitators prior to the Conference.

Facilitator Responsibilities:

- Communicate with the Lead Facilitator and co-facilitators to discuss strategy
- Thoroughly review all the abstracts assigned to the session, paying particular attention to the 7-10 specific abstracts you have been assigned
- Meet with other facilitators prior to the session to discuss the common themes of the posters and unique methods for conducting the discussion

DURING THE THEMATIC POSTER SESSION

Facilitator Role:

- **11:15-12:00:** time for authors to interact with the attendees. Facilitators should plan to have contact with each poster author in their group during this time
- **12:00-1:00:** time for facilitators to foster group discussion with the authors and attendees
- encourage scientific exchange and point out the similarities and differences between posters by interacting with the authors and audience
- one suggested method is to conduct the poster review in walk arounds, where each facilitator and the authors visit each poster with the group. This could be an effective method for stimulating discussion.
- encourage viewers' participation and discussion
- guide experts to posters so that they may give the authors feedback on their work and presentation