American Thoracic Society
International Conference

Instructions for Moderators of Poster Discussion Sessions

GOALS
1. To foster and encourage public discussion and debate of important scientific and clinical questions relevant to the major themes conducted in the poster sessions.
2. To offer specific feedback to the authors concerning their data and its interpretation.

FORMAT
- Poster presentations of abstracts closely related in theme
- Session duration: 90 mins
- Begin with the viewing period: authors are present at their posters for discussion with the audience on a one-on-one or small group basis
- Follow with a formal discussion period of the theme moderated by the session moderators

PREPARATION BEFORE THE CONFERENCE
In most instances, three Moderators are assigned to each Poster Discussion Session: two senior professors and one junior professional.

The abstracts to be presented in the Poster Discussion will be sent to the Moderators prior to the Conference. The Moderators should review all abstracts and identify some common points among the abstracts.

It is critical to the success of the Poster Discussion Session that the moderators communicate with each other at least once by email or by phone to discuss the approach they will take during the poster discussion.

Suggestions:
- The Moderators should communicate with the authors presenting in the Poster Discussion Session prior to the Conference to get a sense of the research to be presented in order to organize a more productive discussion.

- Three or four major questions to be addressed during the discussion portion of the session should be identified. The questions should *not* be directly aimed at the specific data presented in the individual posters but should focus on the overall topic of the session. A certain amount of time should be assigned to each topic prior to the session in order to ensure that all topics will be discussed. Where possible, *newer* investigations in the field should be included.

- The abstracts may be divided among the Moderators and the Moderators should visit each poster assigned during the viewing period. These assignments should be made by the Lead Moderator prior to the session

- It might also be helpful to contact colleagues who have an expertise in the topic being addressed and ask that they attend *both* the poster viewing and the poster discussion with the intent of participation.

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DURING THE DISCUSSION PERIOD

The room will be set up with the focus of the session toward the center of the room so everyone will feel welcome to participate. Wireless microphones will be available to pass among the audience during the discussion.

<u>Moderators should proceed with the discussion period as follows:</u>

1. briefly outline how the Discussion section will proceed
2. Start by asking simple open-ended questions on a larger issue with the idea of stimulating interaction between the presenters and the audience.
   - These questions should be directed towards a common theme among a sub-group of posters and <u>not</u> to a specific presenter.
   - The moderators will need to be creative as the success of a poster discussion depends highly on asking questions that stimulate discussion or raise controversies.
   - Preparing by reading the abstracts and interacting between co-moderators before the meeting will help a great deal with formulating great questions.
3. It is important to remember that the details of individual posters should *not* be discussed; just how they relate to the broader question.
   - The introduction to the first question should be brief and the discussion opened rapidly to the larger group.
4. Be aware when one of the questions under discussion has run its course
   - Be ready to move on to the next question.
   - The new question should also be introduced by a few minutes of remarks with reference to broad poster data.
5. Moderators should be prepared to:
   - Ask *specific* people in the audience their opinion on specific points.
   - Direct specific questions to the poster presenters regarding their data in the context of the major questions being addressed at the session.
6. Moderators must allow all those who wish to participate in the discussion time to participate and ask their questions.
7. Moderators should feel free to interrupt any speaker who is occupying a disproportionate amount of time relative to the point being made.
8. At the end of the discussion period, one of the moderators should provide a brief summary.

WHAT <u>NOT</u> TO DO AT A POSTER DISCUSSION SESSION

- *Do not* monopolize the discussion. The audience should do this.
- *Do not* review the data of individual posters in any detail. Data from the posters are important to the discussion but should be addressed only as they relate to the larger questions that are raised.
- *Do not* invite each poster author to the microphone to give remarks about his/her poster.
- *Do not* isolate the discussion among a small group of participants. The larger audience should be drawn into the discussion.