

Are There Too Many Dermatology Meetings?

It seems as if there is a national or international dermatology meeting every other week. Are there enough interested dermatologists to attend all these meetings? Is there really a need for so many meetings? The answer seems to be yes.

In the past few months we have seen (and many have attended) the 21st World Congress of Dermatology in Buenos Aires, Argentina; the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Annual Meeting in Chicago, Ill; the 26th Anniversary Fall Clinical Dermatology Conference® in Las Vegas, Nev; the Skin Disease Education Foundation Dermatology Seminar in Las Vegas; and the highly successful 6th Annual Meeting, Exhibition & Workshops of the American Society of Cosmetic Dermatology & Aesthetic Surgery, also held in Las Vegas. Factor in state society and university meetings, and there really is an educational meeting almost every week.

First and foremost, these meetings tend to use the same limited number of speakers because there is a fixed number of investigators who perform the research that generates new ideas and therapies. Hence, these investigators are highly qualified to explain these new therapies and techniques. In addition, there are those who dedicate themselves to being educators, so it is hardly surprising that these committed individuals would be educating others.

The fact that there is a demand for these meetings is a testament to the dedication dermatologists show for lifelong learning and their willingness to embrace new therapies and techniques taught at continuing medical education meetings. I have been told by those in the publishing industry that dermatology textbooks sell better than textbooks on most other medical specialties. The point is that dermatologists buy

more textbooks than most of their colleagues in other medical fields.

Continuing medical education meetings also cover topics that are not part of the traditional university curriculum. Many young doctors are anxious to learn cosmetic therapies and procedures, but often there is not enough room in a university-based residency program to include them. The 6th Annual Meeting, Exhibition & Workshops of the American Society of Cosmetic Dermatology & Aesthetic Surgery sponsored more than 200 residents from around the country so they could attend the meeting and gain exposure to the latest innovations in cosmetic dermatology.

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Saying there are too many educational meetings is a bit like passing a library and saying there are too many books there and no one could read them all. As long as doctors make it their business to continue lifelong learning, I say the more educational meetings, the better.

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