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BY KRISTINE A. MORRILL, BS

## TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

How to keep current without leaving your chair.

Welcome to month 18 of 2020! At least it seems that way as summer approaches and thoughts turn to whether there will be a few face-to-face conferences this year. Yes, ASCRS will hold an in-person meeting in July in Las Vegas, but European congress organizers are planning virtual meetings until October at the earliest.

Obviously, attending congresses—whether it is in your home country or at an international location—fulfills a number of requirements. For many, most important are the social aspect of catching up with friends and colleagues and learning about new technology. The accumulation of continuing education (CE/CME) credits, however, is another crucial component of these gatherings.

This article focuses on how your colleagues are coping with meeting these requirements and how European ophthalmic societies are going online to address training and educational needs.

### SURVEY SAYS ...

Curious how the surgeons I know have managed their need for CE/CME credits, I conducted a completely unscientific survey and found that two-thirds relied on society-sponsored online congresses to meet these requirements, followed by webinars that offer CE/CME credits. As far as staff training, two-thirds of the survey respondents also said that they rely on society-sponsored online meetings. In-clinic training sessions were favored by one-third. Company-sponsored

webinars were another venue for staff training.

The surgeons who responded to this survey all indicated that they plan to attend a meeting in person this year (as do I). It's clear, however, that restrictions on attendance, social distancing, and

uncertainty about how SARS-CoV-2 will mutate will continue impact attendance rates.

### ONLINE LEARNING WILL BECOME MORE ESSENTIAL

A consensus statement published in

## ONLINE EDUCATION EFFORTS

### Deutschen Ophthalmochirurgen

[doc-nuernberg.de/mediathek-aerzte-weiterbildung.php?fksart=0](http://doc-nuernberg.de/mediathek-aerzte-weiterbildung.php?fksart=0)

As part of the virtual edition of this year's society meeting, the organization is offering an online continuing education (CE/CME) course that will be available from June 17 to July 31 for trainee surgeons. The virtual congress will feature five live channels for viewing from June 17 to 19.

### ESCRS iLEARN Portal

[elearning.escrs.org](http://elearning.escrs.org)

This free, online educational tool covers cataract surgery, refractive surgery, and cornea. It offers more than 30 hours of accredited content that includes videos, diagrams, quizzes, and forums.

### SFO Online

[sfo-online.fr](http://sfo-online.fr)

The French Society of Ophthalmology (Société Française Ophtalmologie) hosts a French-language educational online portal. This tool covers the anterior and posterior segments as well as neuro-ophthalmology, pediatric ophthalmology, and lids/orbits. It also offers a roundup of internationally published peer-reviewed articles.

### The Royal College of Ophthalmologists

[rcophth.ac.uk/events-and-courses](http://rcophth.ac.uk/events-and-courses)

This organization now offers its members a regular series of webinars providing everything from an introduction to ophthalmic surgery for trainees to management and leadership courses. The website also offers previously recorded webinars for viewing.

### YoungMD Connect

[youngmdconnect.com](http://youngmdconnect.com)

This platform, hosted by the parent company of *CRST Europe*, connects young ophthalmologists with their peers and mentors through educational workshops and small-group mentoring sessions.

March by medical teaching institutions in Europe, Asia, and Australia provides a framework for CE/CME under COVID-19. The authors of this statement advocate increasing the use of online learning and note that “there is potential for international collaboration to expand the cultural knowledge and diversity and development of global resources for medical education.”<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that European ophthalmology societies are stepping up their online educational efforts,

both at the European Union and national levels, in order to support educational requirements (see *Online Education Efforts*).

#### CONCLUSION

Certainly, many people are anxious to trade spending so much time online watching presentations for sitting in an auditorium surrounded by colleagues and listening to the latest scientific presentations. It is to be hoped that the latter routine resumes later this year or, at

the latest, in early 2022. In the meantime, European societies are stepping up to help clinicians maintain their educational requirements and stay up-to-date on what is happening in ophthalmology. ■

1. Nimavat N, Singh S, Fichadiya N, et al. Online medical education in India - different challenges and probable solutions in the age of COVID-19. *Adv Med Educ Pract.* 2021;12:237-243.

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