Statistics Leaders Meeting 2020 – Summary

The annual EFSPI Statistics Leaders meeting took place on the 23rd July 2020, hosted by Merck Group. This year, the community of EFSPI statistics leaders met virtually for the very first time in the 11 years history of the meeting. In the special situation, the statistics leaders demonstrated that they are well prepared to deal with challenging situations and uncertainty. The meeting was a great success in terms of attendance and contents: 30 leaders and three external speakers spent five hours together in a virtual setting. We had a lot of fun trying out new ways of interactions and reflecting on relevant future-oriented topics for EFSPI. We were eventually surprised that the time flew by so fast.

The first key topic of this year's meeting was "Safety Analyses: The Cinderella of Biostatistics?" The focus of this session was on how statisticians add value and leadership in addressing safety topics within organisations. We got inspired by invited external speakers (Benjamin Hofner, Juergen Kuebler, Tim Friede) representing regulatory, industry, and academic perspectives. They emphasized not only the importance of safety for patients but also the many opportunities for further development of statisticians in the pharmaceutical industry.

The second key topic of EFSPI Statistics Leaders Meeting 2020 was "Organisational Evolution" with a focus on how statistics/data sciences are positioned within organisations and how statistical leaders are preparing for future success. In order to make this session most effective, all participants were asked to complete a questionnaire about their current and their 'to-be-state' organisations before the meeting. When looking at the responses, we found out that most of the EFSPI statistics leaders work in big pharmaceutical companies, lead cross-functional teams and focus on clinical statistics even though they expand and collaborate with new areas. With regards to the organisations of the future, the feedback showed that there is a trend to enrich the core role of clinical statisticians by skills and competencies of other data scientists, visualisation experts, and data and software engineers. Also new roles related to agile ways of working like product owners and agility masters seem to become more and more important in our organisations.
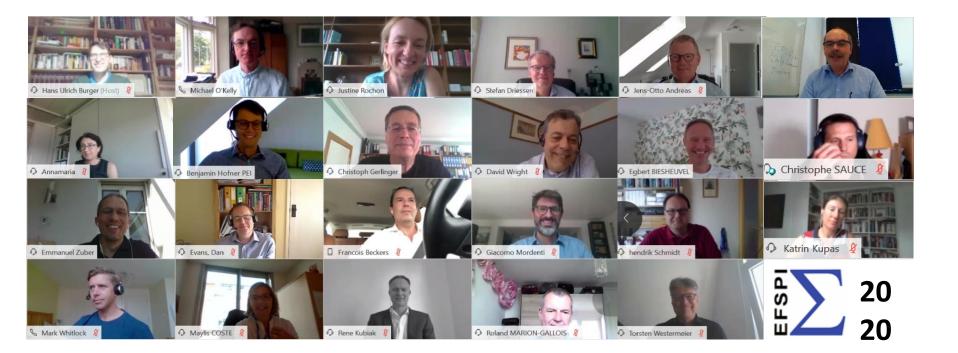
In addition, our EFSPI statistics leaders continued their exchange on the impact of COVID-19 on clinical trials and projects and discussed how the EFSPI statistics leaders can contribute more to the topic of estimands. Finally, we collected many interesting topics for next year and are already looking forward to meeting all together (hopefully face-to-face) in 2021 at the latest.

The 2020 EFSPI Statistics Leaders Organising Committee would like to thank all who actively contributed to the 11th EFSPI Statistics Leaders Meeting. As an African proverb says: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." This is us, EFSPI statistics leaders! We are driven by collaboration and everyone participating strongly believes in the importance of networking in the EU Statistics community. The EU Statistics leaders forum will continue to shape the strategy of EFSPI and motivate and inspire the current and next generations of statisticians in the pharmaceutical industry to reach their full potential. Stay tuned for upcoming EFSPI events by visiting www.efspi.org and connecting with us on LinkedIn, and Twitter at @EFSPItweet.

Justine Rochon (Chair, EFSPI Statistics Leaders)
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Statistics Leaders Meeting 2020 – Group Picture

THANK YOU

Stay safe, stay healthy!