

CROSS-INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

The Respiratory Drug Delivery Conferences: Digitally Augmented

The Organizers of the Respiratory Drug Delivery Conference Series

There are usually three Respiratory Drug Delivery conferences held every two years. Large, diverse audiences attend RDD® (in the United States), RDD Europe and RDD Asia to remain on top of important developments in pulmonary and nasal drug delivery, share their scientific and commercial advances and meet collaborators and suppliers. 2020 has been a year no one will forget, as COVID-19 has impacted our personal and professional lives. For would-be attendees and organizers of the RDD conference planned for California, the pandemic represented a challenge, but more importantly, an opportunity.

Digital RDD 2020

This year, most conferences concerned with drug delivery to the lungs and nose were cancelled. While necessary to protect public health, it means that quality science from international experts goes unreported, and companies are deprived of ways to share their innovations with customers and clients. Networking and collaboration become victims of the coronavirus. Therefore, armed with 28 peer-reviewed scientific papers from internationally known opinion leaders, 96 poster papers and encouragement from long-time sponsors, presenters, exhibitors, media partners and participants, we decided to run a virtual event instead. “Digital RDD 2020—A COVID-19 Defying Conference” began April 26, six weeks after it became clear that hosting the conference in California would be impossible.

The majority of speakers recorded their presentations, additions to the scientific program were made by the International Pharmaceutical Aerosol Consortium on Research & Science (IPAC-RS), and platinum sponsors (Aptar Pharma, Kindeva Drug Delivery and Vectura) presented seminars on hot topics. Innovative poster styles joined traditional formats and exhibitors outdid themselves with an array of web-based presentations replacing their usual tabletop displays. More than 460 individuals actively participated to make the conference a success.

Admittedly, there was no California sunshine and socializing was done virtually, but Digital RDD 2020 included the hallmark features of an RDD conference. The Digital Auditorium packaged original presentations in moderated, themed sessions. When combined with Platinum Sponsor Seminars and Posters on the Digital Podium, participants had plenty to watch. Daily e-mails replicated the traditional daily schedule, but presentations continued to be viewed until the conference closed on June 30. Some attendees chose to receive paper copies of the proceedings by mail while others had customizable, online access. The Scientific Poster Session and Digital Technology Exhibition permitted interactivity via delegate-to-delegate messaging, with much of this happening during the opening week. As always, conference participants received a complimentary 12-month subscription to the RDD searchable library containing more than 2,500 peer-reviewed papers presented over 30

years of RDD conferences. The Charles G. Thiel Award for Outstanding Research and Discovery in Respiratory Drug Delivery was awarded to Jeff Weers, the “Father of Particle Engineering” and Emelie Landh from the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research received the VCU RDD Peter R. Byron Graduate Student Award.

It is not yet possible to foresee how COVID-19 will alter the structure of future RDD conferences but here’s a summary of our plans:

RDD Asia 2020

RDD Online and Aptar Pharma have made the difficult decision to cancel RDD Asia 2020 and instead concentrate on planning RDD Asia 2022, which will be held in November 2022. Lockdowns and evolving health and travel restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic pose unique challenges to participating in, and organizing, a safe and quality conference in India in 2020.

RDD Europe 2021

This event will go ahead in Antibes, France, May 4-7, 2021 with digital enhancements intended to increase the value of the conference and with contingencies in place to deal with the possibility of reduced capacity due to ongoing social distancing and sanitization requirements. These enhancements will also ensure we are ready for a switch to a virtual format if that becomes necessary. The meeting will include:

- **In-Depth Discussions** of the developing issues surrounding aerosol drug delivery including

new therapeutic opportunities and drug design technologies, progress in drug development alongside novel *in vitro* and *in vivo* testing methods, regulatory science and much more.

- **Scientific Poster Sessions** covering all aspects of regulatory science, formulation development, new research methods and advanced drug delivery technologies.
- **Technology Exhibition** in which excipient, device and equipment designers plus component and service suppliers present their latest developments in a tabletop format.
- **Workshop Sessions** selected by delegates, featuring practical and interactive demonstrations of innovative technologies, products and services.
- **Networking Opportunities**
Events are structured to enable participants to squeeze maximum value from RDD Europe 2021. Many participants use RDD to sharpen their ideas and meet new business partners.

Please visit <https://www.rddonline.com/rddeurope2021> for additional details. While the deadline for submission of speaker and workshop proposals was August 1, 2020, the deadline for poster abstract submissions is January 11, 2021.

RDD 2022

The next conference in the United States will be held at the Omni Orlando Resort, Champions Gate, Florida, May 1-5, 2022. RDD meetings in the United States are the most comprehensive and largest we organize and serve to highlight cutting-edge developments presented by key scientists, engineers, clinicians, regulators and other opinion leaders. Discussions and collaborative opportunities abound, due to the five-day meeting duration and the diverse interests and expertise of meeting participants.

Get involved

No matter which RDD meeting you decide to attend, our goal remains to equip academic, industry and government scientists and business professionals with the information and skills needed to optimize the performance of their organizations to best serve the needs of patients and customers. We invite you to become involved as a delegate, presenter, exhibitor and/or sponsor as we continue our legacy of providing excellent meeting value for all individuals and organizations active in the development of inhaled and nasal products. Learn more at www.rddonline.com.