Five Years of Experience with the Lupus Academy: An Effective Model for Building a Robust Community of Practice for Geographically Diverse Learners

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THE PROBLEM
Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is a complex and multifaceted yet low prevalence disease. Without a community of lupus specialists to establish consensus and guide best practices, rheumatologists have limited opportunities to develop skills and maintain competence in SLE care.

THE SOLUTION: THE LUPUS ACADEMY
The Lupus Academy (http://lupus-academy.org) was established in 2011 as an independent continuing medical education (CME) initiative led by a Steering Committee of international experts in SLE.1 Developed as a long-term initiative, the Lupus Academy is committed to improving patient outcomes in SLE and allied diseases by meeting multiple objectives:

- Create an independent community of practice of physicians interested in the pathogenesis, diagnosis, and management of patients with SLE and related conditions
- Share insights and practical guidance for implementing evidence-based care in routine practice
- Develop needs-driven CME relevant to different levels of clinical expertise through annual meetings, regional meetings, meeting toolkits, and e-learning activities
- Promote collaboration models with publishers to create space for dialogue and community building
- Involve patient advocacy groups to steer physician education and incorporate the patient voice into educational activities

LUPUS ACADEMY: EXPERIENCE TO DATE
As of June 2017, the Lupus Academy has grown to a global community of more than 2,500 committed learners with an interest in SLE. The Steering Committee has guided the development and delivery of six 2.5-day annual meetings; four 1-day regional meetings; a meeting toolkit for learner-advocates to host meetings in their home regions; and multiple e-learning courses.

Learner Reach
Delegates from more than 30 countries have attended live Lupus Academy events, and learners worldwide have access to e-learning modules.

Impact on Practice
Most learners (80%) reported a commitment to implementing changes in their clinical practice based on information from the meeting, 7% reported that the Lupus Academy content reinforced their current practice, and 11% reported a willingness to modify their current practice with additional training.

OUTCOMES SNAPSHOT: 6TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE LUPUS ACADEMY
The 6th Annual Meeting of the Lupus Academy (5-7 May 2017) hosted 134 attendees and 20 faculty experts from Europe, North and South America, and Asia.

Learning Objectives
Nearly all learners (93% to 98%) reported that the educational objectives of the 6th Annual Meeting were met.

OUTCOMES SNAPSHOT: LUPUS ACADEMY MIDDLE EAST SUMMIT CONFERENCE
The most recent regional meeting was the Lupus Academy Middle East Summit Conference (9-10 December 2016). The meeting welcomed 153 attendees and 17 faculty from 13 countries.

Learning Objectives and Impact on Practice
All learners (100%) agreed that the educational objectives of the meeting were fulfilled. Further, 100% of learners reported that the educational content of the meeting will help them to improve their clinical practice and support evidence-based patient care. Across several topic areas, delegates ranked the extent to which they agreed that the learning objectives were met and practice changes would be implemented, on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

CONCLUSIONS
The Lupus Academy serves as an effective model for building a consortium-led, evidence-based educational resource and community of practice for rheumatologists, other physicians with an interest in SLE, and patient advocacy groups.