

How happy are Chinese doctors with their own academic meetings?

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Abstract: Only 12.1% of the Chinese doctors are satisfied with their domestic academic meetings, according to DXY.cn, a major Chinese social media site.

Key words: Academic meeting; Chinese doctors; DXY; social media



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The DXY survey on medical meetings in China

Medical conferences and related events occur everywhere at any time in China. Attending a high-level academic meeting can help Chinese doctors build relationship with their peers and further improve their professional capabilities. However, what types of conferences actually benefit this audience? Why should a Chinese doctor find time to attend an academic event, given their busy schedule? What are their purposes?

With these questions, DXY.cn, the largest Chinese online academic portal, conducted an Internet-based survey themed “What academic conferences are you anticipating?” During the one-month survey, 2,162 valid responses were collected, among which 58.0% were from tertiary hospitals, 27.6% from secondary hospitals, and 11.4% from primary hospitals and other settings (*Figure 1*). In terms of the professional titles, about one fifth were professors or associate professors (5.4% and 17.9%, respectively), two fifths (39.9%) were attending doctors, and the rest were residents and interns (29.5% and 7.3%, respectively) (*Figure 2*). Over half (59.9%) of the participants had a service experience of 6 years or longer, 31.6% of 1-5 years, and only 8.5% of less than one year.

What conferences do Chinese doctors attend?

Academic conferences are important venues for continuing

medical education (CME). The survey shows that most respondents (62.3%) take part in 1-3 academic conferences every year, whereas 19.5% of the respondents attended 4-6 academic conferences annually. Notably, 14.8% of the respondents attended more than 6 academic conferences on an annual basis, which means that they attend such events almost every one or two months in average. Only 3.4% of the respondents “never attend” (*Figure 3*).

When answering the question “How long is considered to be optimal duration for an academic conference?”, 86.5% of the respondents, the optimal duration of an academic conference is 2-3 days, with 39.2% and 47.3% prefer 2 days and 3 days respectively;. Only 4.7% of the respondents think that 1 day is enough; 8.8% choose “4 days or more” (*Figure 4*). A short event often is less informative, whereas a prolonged meeting often overwhelms the audience and make them difficult to arrange their daily activities.

Which sponsors of academic conferences are most trusted? As shown in the survey, the vast majority (91.1%) of the respondents prefer to take part in the conferences held by academic societies/associations, hospitals/departments, and colleges/scientific research institutes (accounting for 45.5%, 31.2%, and 15.2%, respectively); Only 8.1% of the respondents are more interested in events sponsored by advertising/exhibition companies (*Figure 5*).

Symposiums/workshops are most welcomed by doctors because they are more focused and targeted. About one

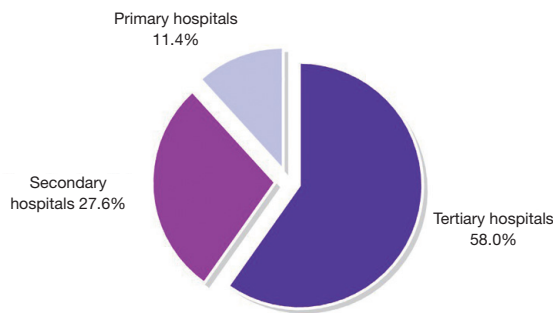


Figure 1 Hospital distribution of the respondents

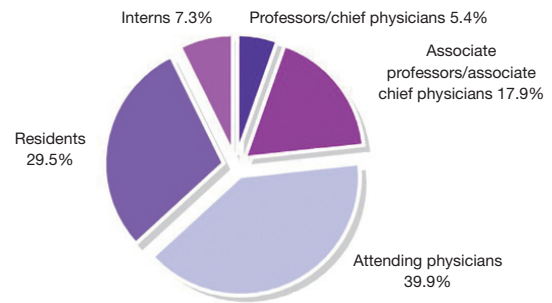


Figure 2 Professional title distribution of the respondents

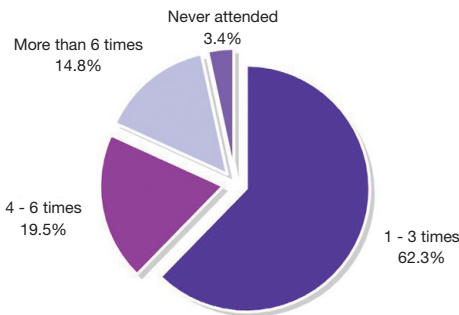


Figure 3 How many academic conferences in average have you attended annually in the last two years?

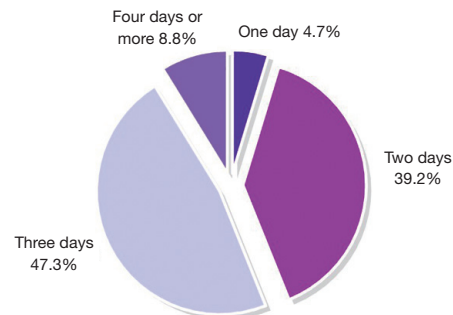


Figure 4 How long is considered to be optimal duration for an academic conference?

third (34.2%) of the respondents, on the contrary, prefer to be involved in a national academic conference. In keeping with academic globalization, a notable proportion (17.6%) of doctors show interest in international academic meetings. Few doctors are interested in local academic conferences and commercial events (6.6% and 0.6%, respectively) (Figure 6).

Are Chinese doctors interested in CME?

Most (86.8%) respondents choose “academic exchange” as their main purpose of being present in an academic meeting. Also, 76.2% of the respondents are willing to learn about new technologies and new products at such events. In addition, academic meetings can also serve other functions: 47.5% responded that they used them for obtaining CME credits and 31.3% for social networking (Figure 7).

Normally, CME credits play an important role in academic conferences. However, more than a half of (55.6%) of the respondents clearly express that they will attend academic conferences that offer no CME credits, 39.4% choose “It depends”, and only 5.0% insist that they will not attend an academic meeting without CME credit.

An interesting question then is whether doctors from different levels of hospitals have different attitudes toward academic conferences that do not offer any CME credit. The survey shows that up to 58.1% of the respondents from primary hospitals clearly express that they will not attend, while only 6.3% and 4% of doctors from the secondary and tertiary hospitals choose this option, which may be explained by the fact that doctors in the secondary and tertiary hospitals have more access to CME credits. Therefore, meetings that highlight CME credits may be more popular among doctors from primary hospitals.

Will Chinese doctors pay their own way to conferences?

As shown in the survey, the most (78.4%) respondents attended academic conferences with a registration fee below RMB 1,000 yuan; 20.9% have participated in events with a registration fee of RMB 1,001-3,000 yuan. Only 0.7% choose “RMB 3,001 yuan or above”. For the question “Are you willing to attend academic conferences at your own expenses?”, only 24.0% choose “Yes”; 28.2% choose “No”, and 47.8% “It depends”. In terms of the “acceptable self-

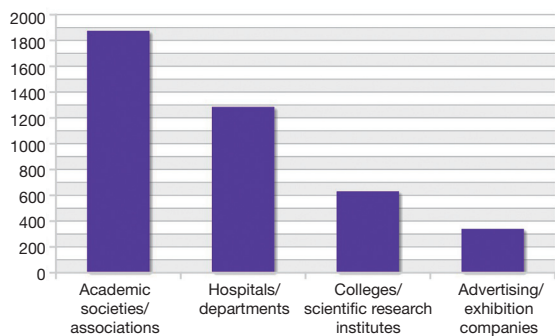


Figure 5 Which sponsors of academic conferences are most trusted by you? (Check all that apply)

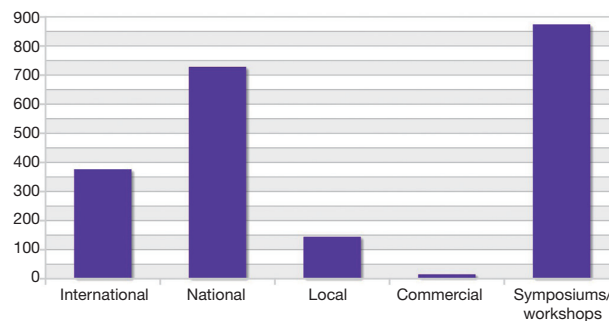


Figure 6 What types of meetings do you prefer to attend?

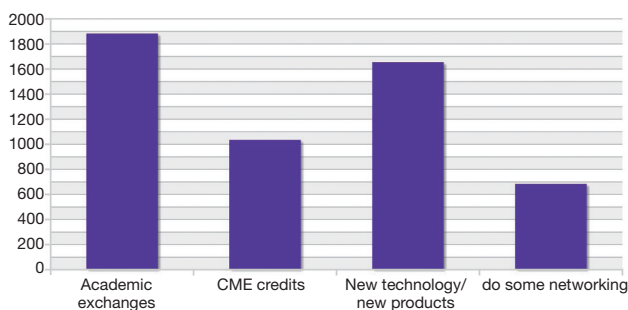


Figure 7 What do you think is the major purpose of attending an academic event? (Check all that apply)

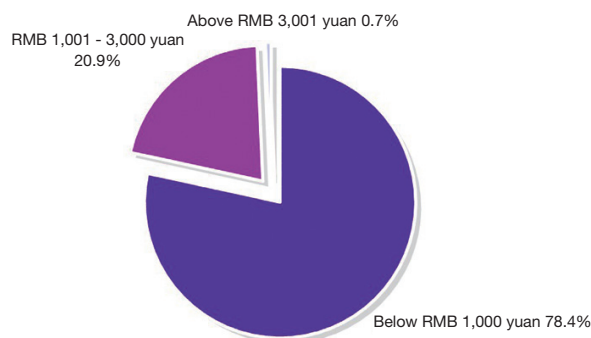


Figure 8 How much registration fee do you pay in general once you attend such a conference?

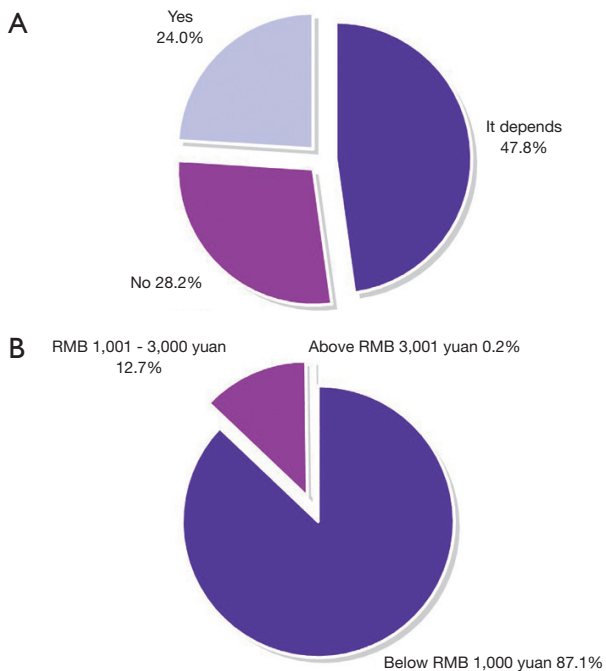


Figure 9 Are you willing to attend academic conferences at your own expenses? If “Yes”, what is acceptable self-paid expense?

paid expenses”, 87.1% of the respondents choose “Below RMB 1,000 yuan”, 12.7% “RMB 1,001-3,000 yuan”, and only 0.2% “RMB 3,001 or above” (Figures 8,9).

Are Chinese doctors satisfied with academic meetings held in China?

The medical sciences have become more specialized in the past decades, so have the academic conferences. Are doctors in China satisfied with the domestic academic conferences in recent years? The respondents were invited to score the overall conditions of the domestic academic conferences using a 10-point system, and the results showed that scores below 5 accounted for 20.8%, 5-7 for 67.1%, and 8 and above for only 12.1% of respondents (Figure 10).

The most selected options in the list of “Areas for Improvement” include repeated topics, commercialization, high charge, limited interaction, and poor organization capability (Figure 11).

Based on the feedback from the respondents, the meeting sponsors in China may consider: (I) enhancing academic

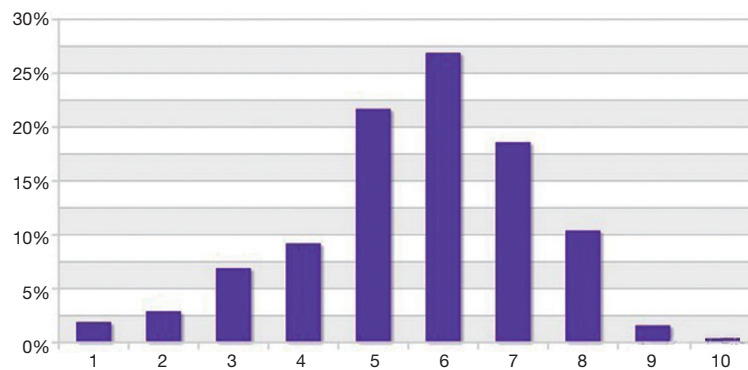


Figure 10 How do you evaluate the overall situation of domestic academic conference? Please grade it from 0-10

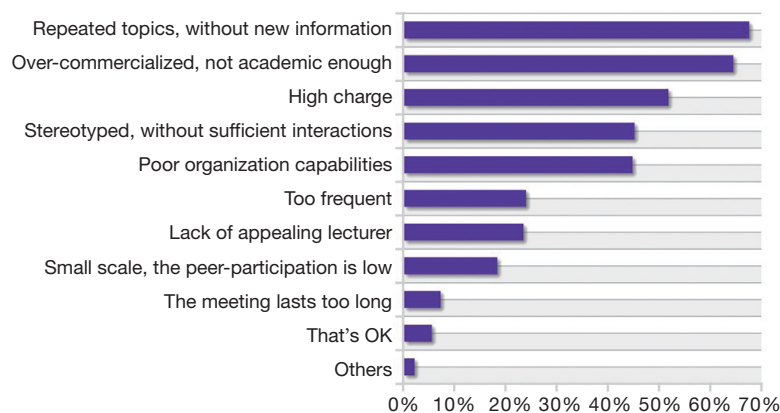


Figure 11 Are there any areas for improvement? (Check all that apply)

inclusiveness and encourage academic debates; (II) linking the academic lectures with the “real world” clinical practice; (III) avoiding out-of-date information; and (IV) improving the registration and receipt processes, finding a balanced point between academy and commercialization.

About DXY

DXY (www.dxy.cn) is the largest online academic portal for five million Chinese physicians and life science professionals, with average daily page views of 1.8 millions. It was established in 2000 and it has over three million registered members now.

DXY features 100+ columns to facilitate communication, information sharing and collaboration of medical professionals within practically all sub-specialties of clinical medicine, basic medical research, life sciences, and pharmaceutical sciences.

DXY has already helped over 700 pharmaceutical companies, life science companies and marketing survey companies to reach Chinese physicians and scientists in the past five years.

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