



## Webinars and Online Surgical Conferences: Is Fatigue Settling in?

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With the COVID-19 pandemic causing chaos in the field of healthcare delivery, it had disrupted both physical training of residents in the operation theatres and academic teachings including CMEs, seminars and conferences like no other. However, because continuing surgical education was paramount, there was the need to continue surgical teaching, in spite of all odds and disruptions [1]. To overcome the ‘void’, there gradually started a boom in online conferences since the lockdown started. But after almost a year of such virtual CMEs, one wonders is it really serving the purpose, and are there one too many? This Letter to the editor is in reference to the published article in *Indian Journal of Surgery* and its current relevance [2].

Video-streaming and virtual surgical education was a great idea in pre-COVID times, and currently it has become almost indispensable. Online meeting platforms courtesy of the likes of Zoom (Zoom Video Communications, Inc., San Jose, CA) and Webex (Cisco Systems, Inc., San Jose, CA, USA) have played great roles, among others. However, if the recent updates are anything to go by, there are already too many of them happening even in Europe and the Americas [3]. If one wants an idea of the number of ‘virtual’ surgical conferences that had happened the last year in 2020 and those that are planned the world over in 2021, including the USA, Asia-

Pacific and Europe, one needs to click on to [www.mdlinx.com/surgery/conference.cfm](http://www.mdlinx.com/surgery/conference.cfm), [www.conferencewebsite.com](http://www.conferencewebsite.com) or [www.surgerycongress.conferenceseries.com](http://www.surgerycongress.conferenceseries.com). The most awaited surgical meet in the USA for surgeons, the American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress 2020, was also held virtual. In the Indian subcontinent, although a comprehensive stacked data is lacking, one can have a fair idea if logged on to [www.medicalconferencesindia.com](http://www.medicalconferencesindia.com). This year’s Annual Conference of The Association of Surgeons of India- ASICON 2020 too was held on a virtual platform for the first time ever. Apart from the conferences of the parent body, the other surgical bodies including IAGES, SELSI, AMASI, HSI and AWRSC had organised up to 112 virtual events between April 2020 and December 2020. One wonders if the information ‘tsunami’ brought about by the flood of virtual meetings led to an ‘information fatigue’ among many, often termed ‘Zoom fatigue’. The novelty that was there in the beginning has started to wear out, as things have started to seem repetitive with hundreds of webinars on offer.

The trend in virtual events is hopefully gradually coming to an end with major conferences across the world slated to be ‘physical’ events from the end of February 2021. With air travel opening up, the COVID numbers drastically coming down in Australia, USA and Asia-Pacific, large-scale vaccination drives, the conference organisers are being hopeful of return to the old-world style meetings. To begin with, the European Hernia society and American Hernia society are coming together to organise the largest Hernia congress in 2021 in Copenhagen which optimistically is physical. Surgeons across the world are awaiting the post-vaccine scenario with crossed fingers.

**Abbreviations** IAGES, Indian Association of Gastro-intestinal Endo Surgeons; SELSI, Society of Endo- Laparoscopic Surgeons of India; AMASI, Association of Minimal Access Surgeons of India; HSI, Hernia Society of India; AWRSC, Abdominal Wall Reconstruction Surgeons Community

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## Declarations

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**Consent for Publication** Not applicable

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