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The Three Questions You Should Be Asking About Outcomes

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The Three Questions You Should Be Asking About Outcomes

Outcomes. Despite the extensive coverage dedicated to this topic in industry publications and conferences, the underlying "how best" questions that many in the IME community have remain unanswered. Often, it's not in knowing all the answers, but rather in understanding the impactful questions to ask that ensure a program's outcomes plan provides metrics that matter.

With more opportunities than ever to reach learners online, the questions become, "What are the best solutions?" To evaluate these online education options, it is critical to have a plan that assesses impact and performance to determine how well an activity meets different kinds of aims. For example, when evaluating a plan for an IME program, knowing how and to what extent it will be evaluated can help determine if the level of reported data needed to demonstrate effectiveness can be achieved. This is more important than ever, as a large number of programs have moved to digital formats and medical teams need to evaluate how well these activities are meeting goals. We have outlined 3 important questions to keep in mind when evaluating IME program designs.

1 Everything went from in-person to digital last year. How does that change what I should be looking for with my CE programs?

Digital learning is the new norm. Nine out of ten clinicians use online CE as their primary source of education. It's important for medical affairs teams to choose wisely when selecting a digital CE provider to ensure you're working

with someone who has deep roots and a proven solution - not a "MacGyvered"-together program that's trying to replicate an in-person event. As you're determining what digital solution will best deliver on your educational goals, consider asking questions like these:

- How does the online education design support the educational goals?
- How are digital technologies being used to realistically engage the learner?
- What kinds of practically valuable outcomes information will I receive from my program?

Digital education solutions should enhance the goals of an educational program through flexible design. Instead of trying to reproduce an in-person event online, CE providers should be leveraging the best of what technology has to offer, such as:

- New ways to reach active HCPs and patients with trusted information across the internet
- Practical insights about how learners engage with online content
- Multiple content types designed for audiences across platforms (e.g., short- and long-form video, downloadable assets, supplemental education designed for social media, and patient tools)
- The ability to follow up with learners over time, whether by revisiting material on-demand, planning a series of serial activities, or delivering follow-up surveys to gauge the sustained impact of education

The best outcomes methodology measures not just the immediate impact of an educational program (did participants learn something?), but, more importantly,

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the sustained impact (did participants change their behavior because of the education?). One of the greatest benefits of digital CE is the "digital learner footprint" - the ability to measure and assess outcomes throughout the entire learner journey from start to finish, measuring both the

immediate and sustained impact of the program. Well-designed digital education solutions also follow each learner's journey - who are the learners, by profession, practice setting, geographic location; how much of the program did the learners complete and what other actions did they take? Did they ask questions, respond to in-program polls, download slides, or revisit the content on multiple occasions?

Well-measured digital programs not only impact clinicians and patients, but can also elevate a program's visibility and impact through the presentation of outcomes during scientific and clinical conferences. Overall, digital CE enables a much richer story of impact and value, due to the depth of quantitative data and qualitative insights

The icing on the cake? When you find a partner who specializes in digital education, chances are they can help you share your outcomes insights internally, too, allowing you to demonstrate the value of the supported education on behalf of your medical affairs strategy.

2 How can I optimize the value of the data I share with my colleagues for our supported IME programs?

Outcomes aren't just a requirement. Think of them as your organizational currency.

The outcomes from your supported education can give you a clear, strong voice at the organizational table. With solid outcomes and insights, you're better able to tell the story of the impact of your activities and speak more clearly with internal audiences about the work you're doing and how it benefits the entire medical team. Well-designed medical education activities have the right mix of range and depth to ensure the evidence-based content reaches the audiences who need it most and complements other medical affairs tactics. Solidly designed activities

It's the story behind the numbers

add value to and align with your larger, more comprehensive plans for equipping interprofessional providers with the knowledge and skills they need to put evidence into practice. For example, CE program data can demonstrate that learners were exposed to key publications and evidence, as well as measure the impact of that exposure among specific audiences. CE also offers strong data insights and the potential to reach broader, as well as targeted, audiences, all while remaining fair and balanced.

Because of its interactive, long-form nature, outcomes from CE programs can typically tell a much stronger story about the audience, the impact of the education, and where any gaps in knowledge persist, while also offering real-world data to demonstrate the uptake of evidence into practice. Well-implemented CE programs offer so much more in their outcomes reporting than metrics on knowledge and competence change. Outcomes insights can also reveal why and how change occurred, illustrate the impact those changes had on patient care, and determine the long-term value of your CE activities. Educational initiatives that include a holistic approach to outcomes will help you tell a story that demonstrates the full value of your initiatives by

The story behind the numbers - it's more than knowledge and competence change:

- Impact of education on patient care
- Insights into why and how behaviors changed
- Qualitative and quantitative data
- Change by cohort and trends
- Engagement rates and actions taken
- Long-term impact of CE activities

looking at the big picture, including qualitative and quantitative data, changes by audience segments or cohorts, engagement rates, trends, and more. It's the story behind the numbers that often brings the greatest value and helps provide context to the data you see across strategies.

3

All CE programs require outcomes, so I am often swimming in data. How can I identify and highlight what's most important?

This is an often-cited question among grantors. Most frequently, the answer lies in parsing through outcomes data on visibility vs engagement or recognizing what the data tell us about meaningful impacts among learners. This question is essentially rooted in the need to winnow through metrics to tell an accurate story on the metrics that matter.

IME decision-makers often have a wealth of data at their fingertips. However, the sheer volume of that data from multiple programs can make it difficult to summarize into cohesive, meaningful reporting for the larger organization. This is where the value of IME can shine! As organizations assess the impact of tactics that moved to digital in 2020, how these data are presented becomes more important than ever. A hallmark of well-designed digital education is reporting that includes clear and consolidated outcomes and insights data (both qualitative and quantitative) that tell an impactful, purposeful story. Reports should illustrate the impact on knowledge and skill uptake, applications in practice, and behavior changes within the target audience, as well as providing insights on barriers and perspectives that still need attention.

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Look for program evaluation and outcomes plans that include outcomes summaries to highlight the vast data-collection advantages of digital education (the "digital learner footprint"). Search for those programs that leverage the

strengths of digital technology to provide reporting that is more easily shared with your internal stakeholders, like links to metrics dashboards or infographics. An ideal report is one that provides graphical presentations of data that are consumable and digestible for a range of organizational stakeholders.

Well-designed digital education will include a clear outcomes assessment plan that enables a cohesive, yet detailed, story on program impact. Ensure the impact of supported digital education is clearly visible to your entire team by highlighting the following core elements:

- **Who** the learners are--specialty, profession, or practice details; geographic setting
- **What** the learners did--exposure to education by time in program, downloads of evidence-based materials or tools, reinforcement actions through re-exposure to content or questions
- **To what extent** the education improved understanding or skills, what impact the education had on real-world behavior, including details and quotes
- **What remains** as persistent gaps or needs, based on barriers, skills, and performance data on application in practice

Finally, digital education, by its very nature, is shareable and translatable: sharing links to program sites, downloadable resources, and tools will enable you to highlight what your supported education looks like and provide your organization with the full experience of digital content, making it clear why you chose high-quality digital education to meet your learners' needs.

About PlatformQ Health

PlatformQ Health is the leading provider of interactive digital medical education for clinicians, patients, and caregivers. The company's proprietary platform allows participants to engage in real-time discussion with scientific, research, and patient care experts – and the integrated learning solution enables advocates, administrators, health systems and plans, foundations, societies, member organizations, and associations to measure the impact of their education.

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