

AADSM Members Look Forward to the 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting

As we count down the days until the AADSM's very first virtual annual meeting, we reached out to some of our members to reflect on the previous year and share what they are most looking forward to at this year's meeting as well as share some thoughts about what they hope for the future of dental sleep medicine.

Dr. Walter Pfitzinger, DDS, D.ABDSM, wrote that while in the past he may have had to choose between two sessions that interested him, this year he can go to as many as he likes with access to recordings for up to a year after the meeting:

*"Although I will miss meeting with exhibitors, there is one aspect of a virtual meeting that I am looking forward to - often there are two lectures scheduled at the same time and I would have to choose one or the other. With the virtual meeting I can attend both. As an example, I am looking forward to hearing Jonathan Parker speak on *The Importance of Identifying and Managing Non-OSA Problems in your DSM Practice*, but I also want to listen to Kate Sutherland when she speaks on *Recent Advances in the Prediction of OAT Outcome*. This year I can attend both of their presentations!"*

Chair of the Annual Meeting Committee, **Dr. Omar Mahmassani, DDS**, shared how despite the disruption of the pandemic, he is pleased to see the annual meeting still move forward:

"The Annual Meeting Committee was putting the final touches on the 2020 meeting when I got the call in late March that the Board had decided to cancel the meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I have to admit that it was disappointing to see months of dedication and hard work by the committee members struck down by an invisible virus. We all hunkered down and brainstormed ways to make the best out of a bad scenario. The successful series of webinars we had during the summer and fall assured us that advancing our knowledge and creating connections is not dependent on a physical location. I am looking forward to being connected with my colleagues and friends at the 2021 Annual Meeting. The speaker lineup and the broad range of topics covered promises to be both informative and inspirational. Additionally, we have the unprecedented opportunity to access all forty-two hours of lectures and information by re-watching those that we cannot attend live. The unfortunate circumstances of a global pandemic gave us all the unforeseen opportunity to be pioneers of virtual professional learning."

For some, like **Dr. Marijke Dieltjens, PhD**, the annual meeting affords opportunities to still network virtually, despite COVID travel and meeting restrictions:

"Every year, I look forward to the annual AADSM meeting since it is a unique opportunity to get updated on relevant topics in the field of dental sleep medicine. Furthermore, its international context allows me to meet other researchers and make new network connections at the president's reception, lunch sessions or breaks. Due to the COVID pandemic and related travel restrictions, I first thought that attending this year's annual meeting would be impossible. However, going virtual allows me to attend anyway! The combination of livestreaming the lectures, real-time chat rooms, a virtual exhibit and poster hall and even a president's reception on the first night creates an enthusiastic feeling and same opportunities as a real-life meeting and will probably reach even more attendees across the world."

We are also excited to welcome members of the dental sleep medicine team including office manager, **Mrs. Briana Turlington**, who is looking forward to attending her first AADSM meeting:

"This is my first time participating in any AADSM Annual Meeting and in these challenging times I look forward to every opportunity to connect with my fellow dental sleep medicine (DSM) colleagues and collaborators. Since the entire meeting is being held virtually, I am even more excited that I can participate knowing I am being safe and helping others stay safe, by not traveling unnecessarily while still getting the chance to learn from and enlighten others."

As the meeting rapidly approaches, others like **Dr. Leila Chahine, DMD, D.ABDSM** reflected on all the things she has learned and hopes that the dental sleep medicine community continues to focus on the future:

"[We are] rethinking clinical practice in the face of the Coronavirus. This incredibly challenging year has highlighted the value of flexibility and need for immediate access to healthcare providers."

She went on to explain her hopes to see further advancements in telehealth to manage patients with sleep-disordered breathing:

"We need a HIPAA compliant online vehicle that

enables us to offer a reliable consultation/follow-up protocol to our patients [and a] model in which a specific set of standards and guidelines is utilized by dentists across the nation. [We should] establish the tools we need to incorporate this model into our daily practice and to reassure our patients of the added value of the commitment and the care they are receiving.”

future, we can all look forward to meeting each other in person again:

“What I most look forward to is that with the pandemic winding down, this will be our last of such “non-live” annual meetings. No technology could ever replace the comradery of physically learning together.”

Finally, Dr. Mahmassani shared his hopes that in the

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AADSM members look forward to the 2021 virtual annual meeting. *J Dent Sleep Med.* 2021;8(2).



**Top Row (Left to Right): Dr. Walter Pfitzinger, Dr. Omar Mahmassani, Dr. Marijke Dieltjens
Bottom Row (Left to Right): Mrs. Briana Turlington, Dr. Leila Chahine**