

Helios Hotspot

Our team has recently returned from the **ISMPP 2026 Annual Meeting** in Washington, DC, USA (Apr 20–22). The conference theme, “The Integrated Era: Purpose, Partnerships, Personalization,” invited thoughtful discussions about the importance of narratives in scientific communications, the role of deep cross-functional collaborations, and proactive engagement with emerging artificial intelligence (AI) tools, to ensure content remains trusted, discoverable, and meaningful for both human and machine audiences.



Our Key Takeaways From the ISMPP 2026 Annual Meeting

The meeting reinforced that scientific publication and communication have entered an integrated era, where impact is no longer defined solely by the act of publication, but by how evidence is generated, structured, disseminated, discovered, and ultimately used—by humans *and* AI.

The power of a unified scientific narrative

A central theme throughout the meeting was the need for strategic publication planning that incorporates a clearly articulated scientific narrative, helping readers interpret complex data, understand relevance, and retain key insights. A well-developed, strong narrative can guide decisions about manuscripts and congress outputs, extenders, and omnichannel dissemination. It also enables teams to prioritize key messages under time or format constraints, preserve consistency across channels, and avoid fragmentation as data are adapted for different audiences.

The importance of cross-functional and external partnerships

A particular keynote highlighted how partnerships strengthen publication strategy by aligning scientific, medical, regulatory, commercial, and external stakeholder perspectives to ensure evidence generation and dissemination are clinically relevant, credible, and timely. This message was reiterated across sessions and roundtable discussions, reminding us that cross-functional collaboration helps clarify purpose and maintain consistency of narrative and communications. External partnerships, such as those with authors, patients, journal editors, and peer reviewers, are also crucial for ensuring publications provide high-value impact across relevant audiences.



Designing scientific content for AI discoverability

Unsurprisingly, AI was a major topic of conversation, in sessions, in hallways, and even embedded into the day-to-day operations of the conference. As in other industries, AI is a key productivity tool for medical communication professionals, supporting literature searches, data synthesis, and, in some instances, content development. However, we must also consider the role of AI as an audience, consumer, and interpreter of the scientific content we create. As healthcare professionals increasingly use AI for clinical queries, discoverability and “AI-readability” of content will become an increasingly important factor in relevance and reach. Speakers highlighted the need for crafting well-structured and transparent content. For example, visual and plain-language summaries can help reduce misinterpretation for both patients and AI systems.

Patients: from participants to partners

Multiple sessions returned to the idea that patients must be more intentionally integrated into scientific communication. This included patient-friendly outputs, involvement as authors or advisors, and ensuring study results are returned to participants. AI-enabled tools were discussed as both opportunities and risks in patient engagement, reinforcing the need for ethical governance, equity considerations, and human mediation.

ISMPP 2026 made clear that medical publication professionals are crucial players in the emerging AI-focused ecosystem, with key roles in contextualizing evidence, developing thoughtful narratives, and utilizing technology to ensure data remain interpretable, trustworthy, and impactful in a rapidly evolving landscape.



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If you're keen to learn more about the group and our broad therapeutic area expertise, contact Helen.

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