

10TH GLOBAL DRUG DELIVERY & FORMULATION SUMMIT

Berlin, Germany, March 11–13, 2019

By Josh Lowth, Marketing Director, MA Exhibitions

The second week of March is a key date in the delivery and formulation event calendar. This is when the good and the great of Europe's pharmaceutical development community gather in Berlin, Germany, for the DDF Summit – a high-level scientific event for industry and academia.

This year, the 10th edition of the summit, was attended by 400 scientists and technologists representing, big pharma, SMEs, solution providers and academia. The summit is positioned at the intersection of high science and commercial thinking, bringing an exciting future focused angle to the content and discussions.

The three-day agenda is split into four dedicated streams of sessions: Small Molecules; Biologics; Technology & Innovation; and Device Development. This allows attendees to pick and choose the specific topics most interesting to them. The Device Development stream was added last year to reflect the growing trend in combination products and regulatory challenges around delivery devices. The sessions in the device room were packed out from start to finish.

Each day opened and closed with keynote sessions, bringing everyone together in the main room to discuss bigger picture issues and wider themes. Day One started with Kerstin Walke, Head of Pharmaceutical Development, Biologicals at Boehringer Ingelheim, discussing how next-generation biopharmaceuticals will influence formulation and device development. As formats become more complex there is a growing need for more powerful predictive tools and high throughput screening systems in early stages. She also explained how patient self-administration is playing an increasingly important role across various indication areas, as well as pointing out



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that high-volume devices are going to be important due to the challenges of high concentration formulations.

The day ended with another biologics-focused keynote, this time given by Alan Harris, Senior Vice-President, Global R&D Lifecycle Management at Ferring. Dr Harris's talk looked at the challenges and opportunities specifically for oral delivery of peptides. This has been a recurring and popular theme at recent DDF Summits and 2019 was no different. He outlined the importance of taking a patient-centric approach, which was a strong recurring theme throughout the three days in Berlin.



Day Two opened with an excellent talk by Stefan Bracht, Vice-President, Head of Disruptive Technologies at Bayer. Dr Bracht talked through the recent trends and solutions making waves in the field of drug delivery. We heard about the latest

ideas around patient centricity, specifically for children and the elderly. As well as the unmet need in parenteral drug targeting, with a focus on brain and solid tumours.

Day Two closed with the first panel session of the summit, which looked at the impact of the EU Medical Device Regulation (MDR) as it applies to combination products. The panel featured Bjorg Hunter, Regulatory Manager, Devices at GSK; April Kent, Regulatory Affairs Manager, Combination Products and IVDs at Amgen; Louise Place, Head of Regulatory at Cambridge Design Partnership; James Mellman, Device Manager at Novartis, and Torsten Kneuss, Quality Assurance Manager, Combination Products at Bayer. The main topic of conversation was Article 117 of the MDR. This has introduced the need for single integral medical products with a device component of class IIa and above to have a Notified Body opinion.

The final day kicked off with Beate Bittner, Senior Portfolio Strategy Director at Roche, on formulation and device lifecycle management. This session looked

at the factors driving the development of devices that allow self-administration. With rising healthcare costs and more complicated combination therapies coming to market, companies are looking to simplify drug delivery. The talk covered how connected devices with features such as dosing reminders, adherence trackers and patient diaries allow an ongoing dialogue with healthcare professionals.

The summit closed with a panel discussion looking at the regulatory issues surrounding patient-centric drug development. With new guidelines being released by the both the



US FDA and the EMA on patient-focused drug development (PFDD), this is becoming mandatory for the pharmaceutical industry. Sven Stegemann, Director of Business Development at Lonza; Leonie Wagner-Hatler, Formulation Scientist at Roche; and Louise Place from Cambridge Design Partnerships, suggested we should take an opportunistic view, explaining how PFDD can help create a competitive advantage by adding real value to patients and payers.

As well as the content, the DDF Summit is very much a networking event. With four hours of dedicated networking time

built into each day, roundtable discussions, drinks receptions, a poster competition and pre-arranged one-to-one meetings, there are plenty of ways for attendees to interact. After 10 years, there's a real sense of community at the summit, which gives the networking a relaxed and informal feel.

The poster competition was expanded this year with 14 posters displayed around the exhibition hall. The competition is open to all attendees and gives everyone an opportunity to contribute and display their work. Attendees can then vote for their favourite through the official summit app. This year's winner was "Protein-Protein Interaction and its Influence for High Concentrated Liquid Formulations", which was submitted by Josef Hartl of Boehringer Ingelheim.

The summit's resounding success was reflecting in the attendee survey feedback: 99% of attendees said the summit met, exceeded or greatly exceeded their expectations; 96% learned something new and useful; 96% would attend again; 98% would recommend the summit to a colleague and 84% met somebody who could help with their current challenges.

The DDF Summit returns to Berlin, Germany, on March 9-11, 2020. www.ddfevent.com



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