

# Conference reflections

## A FOUNDATION PERSPECTIVE

*Haemophilia Foundation Australia President Gavin Finkelstein spoke with HFA about the Conference and its impact from his perspective.*



Gavin Finkelstein, HFA President, opening the virtual conference

### What were your overall impressions of the Conference?

The Conference was a great job in difficult circumstances. It was very important to keep the continuity of conferences taking place, even during the COVID-19 epidemic, when we couldn't meet in person.

There is a lot that is happening in the haemophilia space, with the new treatments, and there also needs to be an increased awareness of the issues for women with bleeding disorders. Everything is changing very rapidly and people in the bleeding disorders community are hungry for the latest information. It was great to have information that is practical and delivered in a way that is very accessible.

### What stood out for you?

The whole paradigm of accessing information has changed and we need to make use of the platforms available to us. A lot of us prefer to meet face-to-face for a conference, but when we can't, this digital space can still be very dynamic and bring information to people. The short personal stories were invaluable, and they impact on a lot of people because they sit and watch them and think about what it means for themselves.

### What was your take-home message?

We just don't know what's going to happen in the future, so it's important to be flexible and go with the flow.



## THE HTC PERSPECTIVE

*Haemophilia health professionals reflected on their experience at the conference.*



### *Conference speakers - Managing bleeds under new treatments*

The last few years in have been challenging for many in the world, virtual conferences and zoom meetings have become the norm rather than the face-to-face meetings and conferences we had been familiar with. Some of the positives of these virtual forums are less/no travel time, being able to watch at suitable times, re-watch sessions and the ability to watch concurrent streams; negatives would be lack of in person networking and opportunities for discussion around the issues presented.

The HFA conference embraced the changes that have become our healthcare reality in recent times and made the conference even more accessible with most sessions viewable on demand after the event.

*Sue Webzell, Haemophilia Clinical Nurse Specialist, Hollywood Private Hospital*

The 20th Australian Conference on Haemophilia, VWD and Rare Bleeding Disorders 2021 was an interactive, informative conference to attend virtually. Even though we could not see in each other in person, the event was thought-provoking and provided great insight into haemophilia, VWD and rare bleeding disorders.

Some sessions in particular resonated with me, providing further understanding and prompts on what patients, families and health professionals can do to improve the care of people with bleeding disorders.

*Jaime Chase, Haematology Clinical Nurse Specialist, John Hunter Children's Hospital*

A screenshot of the conference website. The header includes the title '20th Australian Conference on Haemophilia, VWD and Rare Bleeding Disorders 2021' and navigation links like 'REGISTER NOW', 'SEARCH', and 'LOG IN'. The main banner features the title and 'On-Demand' with 'REGISTER NOW' and 'PROGRAM ON DEMAND' buttons. Below is an 'About the Conference' section with a 'Watch Now' section and a 'Thank you to our sponsors' section.

## WHAT DID THE DELEGATES SAY?

*‘Overall I can’t commend HFA enough for the efforts taken in organizing the conference and making it accessible through the wild circumstances we find ourselves in this year.’*

*‘This conference has provided me with a much greater understanding of living with a bleeding disorder as well as appreciate even more the connectedness this community has with everyone involved.’*

*‘The conference has made me reconsider the way that I approach exercise and active living.’*

*‘Increased knowledge but missed the F2F connections.’*

*‘I would have loved face to face from a very selfish point of view, but I appreciate the opportunity that this has given to participants who usually can’t travel easily. I think it also facilitated more questions being asked, for example in the sex, sexuality and intimacy session that I think people would have shied away from.’*

*‘One of the best conferences I have attended. Great variety from all different angles. Thank you!’*