Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award Lay Conference Summary

Background
The Society for Medical Decision Making (SMDM) is a professional research organization promoting scientific and methodological rigor in healthcare decision science and behavioral science, and their application to clinical care and health policy. SMDM Annual North American Meetings address important issues in medical decision making and health outcome research. This year’s meeting, the 39th Annual North American Meeting, was held in Pittsburgh PA from October 22-25, 2017. The meeting theme was “Better Decisions Through Better Data Processes.” The general objectives of the meeting are to advance research methods in the field of medical decision making; provide education, mentorship, and career development for trainees in the field; and support the dissemination and impact of research in medical decision making and health policy.

Further meeting objectives, supported by PCORI, were to 1) Advance comparative effectiveness research methods in medical decision making relevant to diverse populations including women, children, minority populations, and older adults; 2) expand the project team’s forum for researching methodologic advancements to more specifically address areas pertinent to PCORI (i.e., patient engagement and involvement, support for decisions, and shared decision making; and 3) facilitate dissemination of research findings.

Conference Summary
The meeting was a great success. Attendance the highest it had been over the last several years, and meeting evaluations by regular attendees were, in general, very positive. Meeting sessions began with short courses on meeting’s first day – PCORI supported 2 of the short courses presented, covering patient preferences and methods for shared decision making. The remainder of the meeting saw a mix of scientific abstract and poster sessions, symposia, and opportunities for interaction and networking. PCORI support was pivotal for 2 scientific abstract sessions on elicitation and use of patient preference data and on tools to support shared decision making, as well as a symposium on patient reported outcome use in a large hospital system. In addition, though PCORI support, all PCORI sessions were recorded and are freely available on the SMDM website (http://smdm.org/meeting/page/pittsburgh-in-review-video/39th-annual-north-american-meeting) to assist in the dissemination of SMDM Meeting proceedings.

An additional PCORI-supported component was to have a patient/stakeholder group attend the meeting, going to sessions (alongside usual SMDM meeting attendees) geared toward patient engagement, shared decision making, and patient data use in medical decision making. At these events (the PCORI-supported abstract sessions and symposium outlined above), followed by a debriefing session, patient/stakeholders evaluated and critiqued these sessions, seeking their input on how to make the meeting more useful and relevant to patients and how to incorporate patients’ views into
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Society for Medical Decision Making Annual Meeting
planning for future meetings. To plan this evaluation and to perform the evaluation itself, we enlisted
the assistance of the University of Pittsburgh Community Research Advisory Board (CRAB). Prior to the
meeting, we met with the CRAB to review SMDM meeting objectives and evaluation aims, and to recruit
meeting evaluators. Four CRAB members volunteered for this role, attended the meeting (through
PCORI support), and provided an evaluation. The patient/stakeholder meeting evaluators, who we
termed Patient Ambassadors, were welcomed by the other meeting attendees, and were an impetus for
further consideration of patient roles in future SMDM meetings and other SMDM activities.

Key Findings
The meeting was a great success. Meeting attendance the highest it has been over the last several years,
and meeting evaluations by regular attendees were, in general, very positive (see file: 2017 Annual
Meeting Evaluation with Responses.pdf).

Patient/stakeholder evaluations found that the meeting was aimed at an expert audience but also found
it intellectually beneficial. They recommended a session where experts and patients exchange
perspectives and findings.

Patient/stakeholders and SMDM leadership completed similar questionnaires regarding opportunities
for patient engagement in SMDM. SMDM leadership, like the patient evaluators, found physical
accessibility and accommodation for disabilities a priority for future meetings, and suggested that
patient participation in meetings should enhance them.

This project should facilitate and motivate the participation of patients/stakeholders in the planning and
execution of future SMDM Annual North American Meetings, based on the findings of the patient
evaluators and SMDM leadership survey findings. Planning for the next SMDM Annual Meeting, to be
held in October 2018, will include a patient/stakeholder representative as a meeting co-chair, and the
meeting facility will ensure physical accessibility.

A major component of SMDM’s patient and stakeholder engagement plan is to continue and extend
SMDM leadership in the investigation of patient engagement: how to do it well and what the effects of
patient engagement are on decisions and health outcomes. Another component will be the
dissemination of best practices for patient engagement and investigations of patient engagement
outcomes. PCORI support of conference components and the filming of conference sessions has
facilitated those ends.

Dissemination Plans
Filmed SMDM Annual Meeting sessions are freely available via the SMDM website.

Results of the patient/stakeholder evaluations and the SMDM leadership survey are being and will be
used to plan future SMDM meetings and serve as a catalyst for patient engagement and involvement in
the organizational structure of SMDM. We also plan to feedback evaluation results to the CRAB.