

Physician Views: How do oncologists value medical affairs teams – what could they be doing better?

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Abstracts

Medical affairs teams are playing an increasingly critical role for pharmaceutical manufacturers. They are in a prime position to navigate the industry's continued transition from merely selling drugs to playing an integral role in the efficient workings of healthcare systems. Not only do medical affairs personnel sit at an interface between the R&D and commercial spheres, but represent the voice of the company in communication with a growing range of stakeholders.

As with other stakeholders, pharma's relationship and means of communication with physicians has evolved significantly in recent years, with medical affairs teams playing a pivotal role in this shift. As the role of the typical sales representative has diminished, medical affairs personnel have emerged, largely in response to regulatory changes that require a clear firewall between promotional and non-promotional activities.

With the role of medical affairs largely defined by their non-promotional duties (thought leader management, medical science liaison, medical education and information, clinical research operations and outcomes studies, for example) and interaction with a large number of stakeholders, pharma has endured some difficulties in measuring the success and value of these teams.

FirstWord's latest Physician Views poll seeks to gain some insight into how physicians value the role that medical affairs personnel play. Specifically we asked US and EU5-based oncologists:

How important they view medical affairs teams in enabling effective communication between physicians and pharmaceutical companies?

Which activities undertaken by medical affairs teams they consider the most valuable?

What skills they value the most from a medical science liaison (MSL)?

What their preferred frequency of contact is with medical affairs professionals?

What areas they think pharmaceutical company medical affairs teams must focus on in order to deliver better service to physicians?

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