

US Medical Library Association report for EAHIL



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Report on MLA '21 vConference

As some of you may remember, MLA '21 was due to be held in Washington DC again this year. The first MLA meeting that I ever attended (in 1995) had been held in Washington DC, so I was looking forward to a return visit but the global pandemic saw to it that that did not happen. Instead of an in-person event, MLA '21 was held as a virtual conference (or vConference) again this year, as it had been last year.

I hope that some of you were able to attend the vConference remotely this year. You may have had conference funds in your budgets that you had been unable to spend on attending conferences in person this year and the ability to watch the sessions immediately after they had taken place went a long way towards solving any issues around time differences between Europe and the US.

The meeting, which was spread over 3 weeks from 10-27 May, was a great success with c. 1,200 registrants (more than the most recent in-person annual meeting) from at least 12 countries. There were three major keynote presentations, the John P. McGovern Award Lecture delivered by Damon Tweedy, the Joseph Leiter NLM/MLA Lecture delivered by Mitzi Baum and the Janet Doe Lecture delivered by Sandra G. Franklin. In addition, there was the usual NLM Update. Damon Tweedy, author of the *New York Times* bestseller "Black Man in a White Coat", selected by *Time* magazine as one of the top 10 non-fiction books of 2015, has published articles about race and medicine in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and other medical journals. His columns and op-eds have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and various other news publications, focussing on the impact of race on the medical profession at all levels. He is a graduate of Duke University School of Medicine and Yale Law School and completed both his medical internship and psychiatry residency at Duke Hospital. He is currently an associate professor of psychiatry at Duke University School of Medicine and a staff psychiatrist at the Durham Veteran Affairs Health Care System. He spoke about his experiences growing up as a black American, from his school days through his experiences at medical school, to his present position as a practising physician. Here are some quotations from his presentation:

"Not everything that is faced can be changed but nothing can be changed until it is faced". (James Baldwin).

"The need to move away from the notion that 'being black is bad for your health'".

"We should all think about our sphere of influence, because everyone has one".

News from us MLA

“If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way” (Martin Luther King Jr).

The other keynotes are still on my To Do list, as they all only took place a couple of days before the deadline for this article.

With respect to the contributed programme, c. 100 papers and c. 50 “Lightning Talks” were presented, which could be viewed as videos / slidecasts online, listening to the presenters in your own time and interacting with attendees and presenters in virtual sessions and through “chat”. Additionally, there were c. 100 posters (with over 10,000 poster views), which could also be viewed online with presenter / audience interaction as above.

This year there were again c. 20 Immersion sessions, described as follows. “They are intended to: provide an in-depth perspective on areas of interest to MLA members. They are your chance to design and offer the programming that you want to see. Immersion sessions should strive for excellent engagement and can vary in format from a panel of invited speakers to a single invited speaker, a facilitated book discussion, as well as less-conventional sessions like an 'unconference' or flipped session. The only type of programming excluded from immersion sessions are paper presentations”. These were an innovation in the 2019 MLA programme.

Presentations remain open to meeting delegates exclusively for one year after the event and thereafter, from 1 June 2022, they are available for 3 years to all MLA members.

The Exhibition again was fully virtual this year with c. 40 exhibitors and sponsors. Delegates were able to view the exhibit booths (there were 12,000 booth views), set up appointments with the exhibitors and participate in or watch on “catch-up” the c. 20 Exhibitor Solution Showcase presentations, with live Q&A, which were attended by 1,500 delegates.

Networking events, of which there were 17, were also fully virtual this year, with over 1,000 attendees taking part.

Continuing Education courses, which would normally be held during the two days prior to the conference, were held throughout the year instead, including instructor-led courses, self-paced courses and webinars.
<https://www.mlanet.org/p/cm/ld/fid=412>

The MLA '21 Blog, as usual, provided coverage of a range of topics including programme sessions, plenary sessions, exhibition, activity and virtual social events, before, during and after the meeting.
<https://www.mlanet.org/p/bl/et/blogid=155>

Additionally, attendees and others were able to follow the meeting on Twitter with the MLA '21 hashtag #mlanet21 and follow MLA more generally on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/MedicalLibraryAssn>

Future MLA annual meetings - dates for your diary:

New Orleans, Louisiana 2-7 May 2022 (with some virtual content)

vConference and Exhibits (subject to change) May 2023

Portland, Oregon 18-21 May 2024

Membership of MLA

MLA offers International Membership to individuals at a reduced rate. This category applies if you work or have worked in a health- or health-information-related environment and live outside the US or Canada. The current annual subscription rate for International Membership is 150 US dollars (or 25 US dollars if you are from a HINARI-eligible Group A or Group B country).

<https://www.mlanet.org/join>

News and publications from MLA

The latest issue of the *Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA)* (Volume 109 (1) Jan 2021) is now available (open access) at:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/journals/93/latest/>

Open access to back issues of the *JMLA* (and its predecessors back to 1898) is available from:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/journals/93/>

Preprints of articles from the forthcoming issue of the *JMLA* are no longer available. *JMLA* does, however, encourage self-archiving at any point in the manuscript preparation or peer review process:

<http://jmla.mlanet.org/ojs/jmla/article/view/877>

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