

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Enabling the Future - Developing the Space Workforce (5)

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ESTABLISHING A SPACE MEDICINE AND LIFE SCIENCES OUTREACH & EDUCATION
PROGRAM USING A VIRTUAL GLOBAL WEBINAR SERIES

Abstract

Purpose

The development of space medicine is an important element of humankind's advancement into deep space. Expertise within the field is highly specialised, though dispersed globally, as space medicine is still a niche topic for many space agencies, industry, and academia. In recognition of the need to connect professionals in this field, the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC) initiated a new project group on Space Medicine and Life Sciences (SMLS). One of the programs started by this group was a virtual 'Health in Space' webinar series. The overall objective of this program is to disseminate knowledge of specific space medicine topics and connect students and professionals in the process. This paper evaluates the approach, impact, and challenges of this program.

Methodology

The design of the program is described in detail including key principles and considerations such as content, technical infrastructure, promotion, accessibility, and global reach. The impact of the program is evaluated by the number of registrations, attendees, and recording views. On a qualitative level, experiences of attendees are sampled and shown. Finally, organisational and technical challenges are described.

Results

As of March 2021, seven episodes have been organised, and four are planned for the remainder of the year. Twelve speakers have participated in panel presentations on multiple topics: medical emergencies in deep space, designing for health and well-being of astronauts, and space suits, among others. The first seven episodes attracted over 1314 registrations, 610 live attendees and a total of 1853 views on our online recordings.

Conclusion

This paper presents the lessons learned of the new 'Health in Space' webinar series. Organising a global online webinar series appears to be a feasible way to disseminate highly specialized knowledge on a diverse range of topics in a way that connects students, young professionals and researchers around the globe. The impact of this effort will be reviewed and recommendations shared to highlight the value and significance of these education and outreach efforts.