

# IPVC 2020

July 20-24 2020  
NOW VIRTUAL  
Barcelona  
Spain

## IPVC 2020 Conference Report to IPVS members – October 2020

### President's Remarks

Dear IPVS members,

Conference years are exciting and exhausting. Putting together a good conference is a rewarding but mammoth effort, demanding months of dedication from a small army of knowledgeable volunteers. To create a substantive and compelling scientific program that draws a high level of participation from the international community of HPV-related professionals, the science needs to be there, and people need to decide to join in. At the beginning of the year, the team could sense that things were coming together nicely for IPVC 2020.

Just imagine our consternation when the global pandemic descended upon us all just weeks before IPVC2020 was scheduled to convene in Barcelona in March 2020. The situation called for swift decisions, and a leap of faith. Looking back now, I am delighted and relieved that IPVS held a fully virtual conference. Given the pace of development in basic science, clinical research, and public health policies since we'd met in Sydney in 2018, we felt it was so important to convene this year, even if it meant missing the opportunity to meet of face-to-face. What we may have lost this time in terms of collegial camaraderie and informal networking was compensated in cultivating the conditions for accelerating progress toward our shared objectives of eliminating HPV and HPV-related cancer.

IPVS members, I want to thank you all for maintaining focus on the HPV elimination agenda during this exceptional year when COVID-19 has demanded center stage of public attention. Let's build on what we learned from each other at IPVC2020 and make our collective voices heard for science and education to defeat HPV. See you in Toronto!

*Prof. Margaret Stanley, President IPVS & Co-Chair IPVC2020*

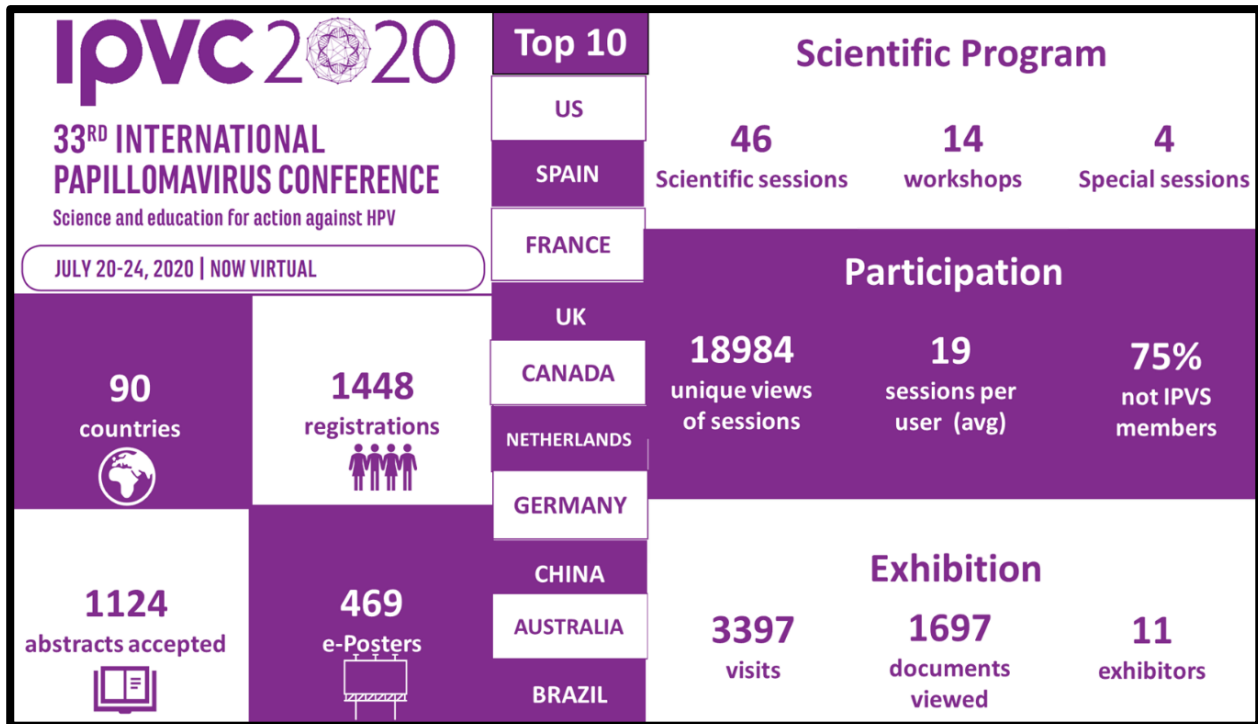
## Congress Report IPVC 2020



Interdisciplinary Workshop*	Public Health Workshop*	Clinical Science Workshop*	Basic Science Workshop*
Plenary Session	Public Health Oral Session	Clinical Science Oral Session	Basic Science Oral Session
Dedicated Symposium	Industry-Sponsored Session	Networking Events	Extraordinary Talk

IPVC 2020 was the first fully virtual conference for IPVS, and most of us did not know what to expect. Technology really had to scramble to enable us to convene, discuss and network online and make it a worthwhile experience. All things considered, we feel it went quite well, thanks to an interesting, balanced program and to the involvement of so many esteemed colleagues from various professional disciplines. The quality of the science presented, for which we count on the HPV community, was excellent. Engaging and knowledgeable speakers, insightful presentations, relevant workshops, solid industry support and of course involved participants all contributed to the success.

Here are a few of the highlights from IPVC2020:



Conference performance is measured and assessed on many parameters of course. Feedback from the post-congress participant’s survey was encouraging, but also gave us insight into things to improve for future virtual events.

We asked IPVC 2020 co-chair Silvia de Sanjose and incoming IPVS President (2021-2023) Suzanne Garland to share their impressions from the conference.



Silvia de Sanjosé

**Q: What was your impression of attending a fully virtual conference?**

*A: To me, it was so important to make the effort to come together this summer and discuss our work - Sydney was such a long time ago. Like most people, I would have preferred to meet in person. I missed some of the interaction with my colleagues by meeting face-to-face, and the focus of attention that comes with travelling to a conference. ‘Attending’ as I sat in front of my computer in my study was strange. However, **we achieved a great deal** in this virtual setting, progress that would otherwise been delayed.*

**Q: Why do you think people are saying the scientific program was particularly good?**

*There are multiple reasons: First, we received **many substantive abstracts on a broad range of topics**. The review process went smoothly, and the panel did an amazing job vetting them. Much of this content found its way into the sessions – like the new advances in immunotherapy treatment and the developments in the identification of pathways in the carcinogenic process.*

*Secondly, IPVS had the good fortune that quite a few **highly reputable experts and speakers** were available to contribute to engaging plenary sessions that drew large audiences.*

*It also seemed to me that we found the balance for good interaction between basic science and public health. The **interdisciplinary workshops** served the purpose of enriching attendees’ understanding about topics outside of their own expertise. This*

creates common ground from which we can work effectively toward our goals. The track sessions provided opportunity to focus and advance on very specific issues, which is also necessary.

Finally, I thought that the **Women @ the Center Film Festival** fit perfectly to IPVC 2020 and added the human element to the conference. At the end of the day, this is about people. I know that many participants appreciated the moving stories shared in these short films – they brilliantly captured the emotional and social consequences that barriers to

healthcare services have on women, their families, and communities.



Suzanne Garland

**Q: What did you think of IPVC 2020?**

At the time, it was my very first virtual scientific meeting and I thought navigating around the program was relatively straightforward and it all came together well. I appreciated the possibility to **review session material at my leisure** and I am glad that IPVS members will continue to have access to most of these materials even after access ends for registrants on October 24th.

Of course, the informal collegiality of a physical meeting was lost this time. Particularly for young professionals, it can be so useful and inspiring to make contact with colleagues in person. However, the pandemic gave us no choice and we did make the best of the situation.

I sincerely congratulate the Organizing committee for so swiftly and seamlessly bringing together a great virtual meeting: remember we were all about to hop on airplanes to the meeting when the pandemic hit, so it took real commitment there.

**Q: Have there been any specific sessions that stood out to you personally?**


The plenary sessions were a highlight for me. I also enjoyed the **live sessions** very much, particularly

the closing plenary, that among other noteworthy speakers included a memorable speech from Prof. Xavier Bosch highlighting achievements to date and where we should focus attention in the future of HPV research and the special message about the WHO's Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategy from Princess Nothemba Simelela. Overall, the meeting was great publicity for our IPVS, and strengthening the link in people's minds between HPV and cancer.


I am still delving into various presentations from IPVC 2020: the virtual meeting does mean one can do this at one's leisure! To accelerate the pace at which we eliminate HPV and HPV-related cancers we require **cross-discipline collaboration** and I believe the interdisciplinary workshop topics provided a **rich resource for this**.

Let us hope that in a year's time when we are due to assemble in Toronto, COVID-19 will not be the same menace we face today, and that we will have the option to safely convene in person. If that is not the case, then at least IPVC 2020 has demonstrated that **virtual conferencing is a valuable alternative**.

**Maurice Hilleman Award**



Dr. Koutsky is a Professor Emeritus in the School of Public Health at the University of Washington and holds a PhD in Epidemiology. She is recognized internationally for her studies on HPV infections and the diseases they cause. Laura is acknowledged as a pioneer in HPV research beginning in the late 1980s when she started studies on the acquisition and natural history of genital human papillomavirus (HPV) infections and the prevention of HPV-related genital tract neoplasms.



IPVC 2021 – Looking Ahead



Believe it or not, the [34<sup>th</sup> International Papillomavirus Conference in Toronto, Canada](#) scheduled for **November 15-19<sup>th</sup>, 2021**, is just over a year away,. We are planning for a face-to-face meeting and preparing for the eventuality that we may need to go at least partly virtual, depending on the circumstances for safe travel and assembly at that time. To the extent that we meet online, the technology supporting virtual conferencing will have surely made impressive gains in twelve months’ time, so it is likely to be an interesting experience once again. We look forward to seeing you there.

