

Midwest Biopharmaceutical Statistics Workshop (History)

The Midwest Biopharmaceutical Statistics Workshop grew out of the very successful "Statistics Days" conference held at Ball State University during April 1976. Mir Masoom Ali of Ball State University organized the "Statistics Days" conference, and one of the invited speakers was Charles B. Sampson of Eli Lilly. Because of the success of the "Statistics Days", Ali and Sampson discussed the possibility of a continuing statistics conference in the Midwest during 1976. Both felt that a conference in biopharmaceutical statistics would be most appropriate in the Midwest. Sampson and Ali invited the chief "statistical officers" of the midwestern pharmaceutical companies to Indianapolis, on July 14, 1977 to discuss the initiation of a statistical conference. Attendees at this first meeting were Mir Ali (Ball State University), Wen-Dar Cheng (Dow), Ken Falter (Searle), Saul Gitomer (Marion Laboratories), Bernie McDonagh (Riker), Tony Orlando (Mead Johnson), Lyman Ott (Merrill-National), Ron Platt (Miles), Alan Sampson (Abbott), Charles Sampson (Lilly), Roy Sandford (Baxter), John Schultz (Upjohn), Ron Schwartz (Amar-Stone), and Tom Spradlin (Lilly, the first scribe). The group decided to proceed with the conference with the emphasis being on the applications and the theory relevant to the pharmaceutical industry. Since the pharmaceutical industry spanned a wide range of research and development activity – basic biological and chemical research, clinical research, process development, assay development, dosage form development, stability, quality control, quality assurance, and manufacturing – it was decided that at least three "parallel tracks" were necessary in order to better serve the pharmaceutical statisticians. The founders also pledged to provide opportunities for young statisticians to present, discuss, and interact with some of the more experienced and well-known industrial, academic, and government statisticians.

During these years those attending MBSW have had the chance to meet and discuss important issues with some of the most important contributors to the statistical literature, both practice and theory. Those involved in the beginning have been pleasantly surprised to see this conference grow and prosper over the last thirty years. They are particularly pleased that there are several statisticians who have attended almost every one of the thirty conferences. They wish to thank all those past attendees for making this conference successful.

It is important, if the MBSW is to continue to be successful, that young people step forward with new ideas for conference structure and content. The conference shouldn't become too predictable, or too entrenched. New people and new ideas are always welcome.