

Shai Silberberg, PhD  
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and  
Stroke

Devon Crawford, PhD  
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and  
Stroke

RE: Notice Number NOT-NS-18-014

Dear Drs. Silberberg and Crawford,

The Endocrine Society appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Request for Information (RFI) on Developing Experimental Design “Emoji” Symbols for Use in Scientific Presentations. Founded in 1916, the Endocrine Society is the world's oldest, largest and most active organization devoted to research on hormones and the clinical practice of endocrinology. Our members include basic and clinical investigators who are committed to the responsible conduct of research, and we recognize the value of communicating the results of scientific studies to a wide variety of audiences. We strongly support the transparent reporting of experimental design, conduct, and analysis for the appropriate interpretation and replication of scientific results. While standardized symbols could enhance the communications of scientific information, it is not clear that the use of “emojis” as described in the RFI would enhance this communication. **The Endocrine Society therefore cautions against the adoption of emojis/icons to represent rigorous research practices in scientific presentations.**

The design of basic and clinical studies includes numerous potential sources of bias and confounding factors that should be sufficiently detailed in scientific presentations for an audience to judge the rigor and reproducibility of the findings. For example, sample size, randomization, masking, control groups (placebo, standard of care, or other) and other important elements of design must be detailed so that an observer can assess the rigor and validity of the study. Furthermore, use of emojis/icons might result in the omission of important experimental details in presentations, thereby preventing reproducibility. Unless icons are harmonized across scientific fields, universally adopted, and easily interpreted, they could impede, rather than enhance, rapid and effective communication of scientific knowledge, especially among attendees at international and multidisciplinary research meetings.

For these reasons, **we recommend against the use of emojis/icons during scientific presentations unless new data demonstrate their utility for scientific and non-scientific audiences.** Thank you very much for considering our comments. If we can be of any assistance in your efforts, please do not hesitate to contact Joseph Laakso, Ph.D., Director of Science Policy at [jlaakso@endocrine.org](mailto:jlaakso@endocrine.org).

Sincerely,

Ruth Keri, PhD  
Chair, Basic Research Subcommittee  
Endocrine Society Research Affairs Core Committee

Anne Cappola, MD, MSC  
Chair, Clinical Research Subcommittee  
Endocrine Society Research Affairs Core Committee