

European Urology Today

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Stockholm congress examines prospects and challenges

Urology veterans stress importance of humane medicine and technological advances

By Joel Vega

Urological advances and prospects in a rapidly evolving information age vis-a-vis the challenge of maintaining humane strategies of treatment that place the patient in the forefront are among the overarching themes at the 29th Annual EAU Congress held in Stockholm, Sweden from April 11 to 15.

"The future challenges in urology remain the fusion of technological advances and the fundamental relationship with the patient," said EAU Willy Gregoir Medal awardee Prof. Michele Pavone-Macaluso (IT). "My advice to young urologists is therefore to focus on making time to listen to their patients and build a solid doctor-patient relationship."

With 11,911 participants from 118 countries, including exhibitors and press members, Secretary General Prof. Per-Anders Abrahamsson (SE) welcomed the delegates during the opening ceremony that featured classical Swedish music. Abrahamsson, who has formally announced stepping down from the post by 2015, noted the achievements not only of the EAU in creating solid links amongst its members but also the dynamism it has nurtured in education, research, and multidisciplinary collaboration.

Europe sessions that involved 12 countries and regional urology groups.

Among the key messages from the sessions were the increasing antimicrobial resistance that requires prudence from all doctors, the challenge of coming up with solid evidence on minimally invasive techniques particularly robot-assisted surgery, and a range of concerns in uro-oncology that were tackled in the Urology Beyond Europe particularly prostate cancer diagnostics, medical treatment in kidney cancer and developments in bladder cancer research.

Opening the second-day were eight meetings of the EAU Section Offices with the EAU Section of Uro-Technology (ESUT) leading the sessions with live surgeries transmitted from Karolinska Hospital. The sessions highlighted minimally invasive techniques with experts demonstrating a line-up of some of the most novel and innovative procedures such as the use of robotic flexible ureteroscopy, 3D-HD-videotechnology for laparoscopic procedures and image-guided endoscopy, among others. Andrology and healthy ageing were the themes in Plenary Session 1 with key messages such as a team-led approach in resolving male infertility issues, translating basic research results into clinical use, and the controversy on the safety of testosterone supplements and its impact on the cardiovascular which is still unresolved.

With nine Thematic Sessions on the third day and a Plenary Session on bladder and testis cancers, topics ranged from prostate biopsies, new technologies, surgical complications, neuro-urology and paediatric urology, to name a few. On new technologies, Prof. Richard Satava (USA) noted the impact of advances in the

information age. "People of my generation have grown up in an industrial age, but this is a different world, an information-based age," said Satava as he underscored the prospect of completely non-invasive surgery using ultrasound or electromagnetic rays. Prof. Alexandre Mottrie also reiterated the challenge: "With the new era of information technology, surgery will change completely in the future. As urologists, we need to stay on top of that wave."

Unresolved issues

The third Plenary Session tackled issues in functional urology, while in 10 simultaneously held Thematic Sessions experts spoke on specialised issues including castration-resistant prostate cancer (PCa), tumour biology, non-surgical stone management, kidney cancer and reconstructive urology. Functional urology experts discussed treatment options such as Botox versus sacral neuromodulation, urodynamics and the development of drug therapies. In high-risk PCa, a discussion whether surgery is better than radiation therapy provided a mixed message with both sides agreeing that a multi-disciplinary approach is more viable than sticking to a black-and-white debate.

As in previous annual meetings, some of the most compelling messages were set aside for the last Plenary Session which examined the most fiercely debated issues on PCa such as early detection and prevention, PSA-based screening issues, active surveillance and the management of oligometastatic disease. Among the highlights was the results of the



Live surgery transmission at the 29th Annual EAU Congress in Stockholm

Phase 3 Preval Study on enzalutamide which showed significant benefit to PCa patients including delaying the progression of metastatic disease, reducing the mortality and delaying the start of chemotherapy.

"Enzalutamide did translate to significant overall survival to an unprecedented extent," said Prof. Bertrand Tombal (BE) during the Late Breaking News segment. From one of the Souvenir Sessions, Prof. Peter Albers (DE) said imaging in urology is undergoing rapid changes but current research needs to change and should concentrate on well-designed and high quality studies.

"Imaging is really an evolving field in urology. However, the way we look at it is not really scientific," said Albers.

In his closing remarks, Prof. Abrahamsson noted the excellent work by the Scientific Congress Office, led by Prof. Arnulf Stenzl (DE), for not only delivering a comprehensive programme agenda but also screening the record number of abstracts submissions (4,019

poster abstracts and 250 video abstracts). From the 4,269 submissions roughly 29% were selected for presentations in 102 sessions. Abrahamsson also invited the participants to next year's event, the landmark 30th Anniversary Congress in Madrid from March 20 to 24, 2015, the second time since 2003 that Madrid will be hosting the event, and the fourth annual congress to be held in Spain.

(With reports from M. Van Hout, L. Keizer, A. Leon and T. Parkhill)



Prof. Chris Chapple (middle) gets elected during the General Assembly as the next Secretary General

Outside the Scientific Programme of the five-day congress, the EAU's General Assembly elected Prof. Chris Chapple (GB) as Secretary General Elect and Prof. James N'Dow (GB) as Guidelines Office chairman, and Dr. Michiel Sedelaar (NL) as chair of the Young Urologists Office. Among the top awardees (See inside stories for a complete list of awardees), Prof. Louis Denis (BE), who received the Frans Debruyne Lifetime Achievement Award, reiterated the challenge of pursuing innovations that are anchored on solid medicine and patient-oriented approaches. "It will become more challenging to combine holistic personalised care with optimal medical treatment. Urological care increasingly needs to be both evidence-based and cost-effective," he said.

Interdisciplinary and regional consultations

To reflect the EAU's emphasis on multidisciplinary and inter-regional collaboration, the first day featured the EAU-ICUD Consultation on minimally-invasive surgery in urology (MISU), the Joint Meeting of the EAU Section on Infections in Urology (ESIU) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and the simultaneously held Urology Beyond



Prof. Per-Anders Abrahamsson delivers the opening remarks

29th Annual EAU Congress Stockholm 11-15 April 2014

30th Anniversary EAU Congress

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