

Editorial



Our congress edition of the SAJAA contains a large variety of articles, reflecting the contents of our exciting SASA 2011 refresher course. As we do not practice anaesthesia in isolation, we are privileged to have articles written by surgical, medical and intensive care colleagues, as well

as anaesthetic colleagues from all over the world. Numerous topics have been covered, and much of the information does not appear in our standard anaesthesia textbooks. So enjoy the literary feast.

It is three years since our last world congress, which was successfully held in Cape Town. The next one will be in Buenos Aires, a year from now. I attach an article written by David Wilkinson, secretary of the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists.

"The World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA) was founded in 1955 in The Netherlands. When it was initiated, there were 28 founding member national societies, and today this has extended to over 120. Since then, there has been a series of World Congresses of Anaesthesiologists (WCA) held in the name of WFSA, and these are listed in Table I. In recent years, other groups have held 'alternative' world congresses, often focusing on specific sub-specialties, but there is only one WFSA-sponsored WCA. This happens every four years in a different area of the world. Each WCA is organised by a national member society which imparts its own local flavour to the proceedings, but there is a specific set of targets that need to be achieved by each congress. Many people have discussed what defines a "good congress". Such debate is outside the scope of this article, but there can be no doubt that the perception of a congress depends very much on one's own circumstances.

There are four main components to a WCA. These comprise the delegates, who spend money to attend; the trade exhibitors, who commit considerable

finances in support of the meeting; the WFSA, which has to meet a series of constitutional obligations; as well as the local conference organising committee (COC). All activity is facilitated by the professional congress organiser (PCO), who in this case is Choice Live, UK, who also managed the 2008 Cape Town congress.

The majority of delegates attends the WCA to learn about developments in their professional activity. This may be with regard to activities taking place in their geographical region, often highlighted by presentations from the WFSA's regional sections. Some will look for new initiatives which may appear in programmes facilitated by specialist groups, such as obstetrics or paediatrics, while others require answers relating to their professional development and organisational requirements. Many delegates will present their own research, or a distillation of their experience, either at oral sessions, but more commonly at poster sessions. Others derive benefit from attending the plethora of workshops presented at the WCA.

One of the most important aspects of any WCA is the ability of delegates to meet others from different backgrounds and environments. The exchange of ideas and experiences takes place within scientific sessions, but also over breakfasts, lunches and evening social gatherings, and often leads to lasting friendships and facilitation of professional improvements in less affluent areas of the world.

The trade exhibition is a vital aspect of any WCA. It permits industrial companies operating in our sector to demonstrate their latest innovations and allows them to access to anaesthesiologists from all over the world. Through their funding, they enhance the meeting considerably, and their attendance, with the associated financial support, should never be taken for granted. Most delegates recognise the benefits of attending the trade exhibition through acquainting themselves with the latest innovations. Increasingly, they are also attending the growing number of scientific presentations that occur within the exhibition.

The WFSA is obligated to undertake a series of administrative duties within the WCA time frame. All of its activities are governed by the general assemblies

Table I. World Congress of Anaesthesiologists (WCA)

Year	City	Host society	Region
1955	Scheveningen	Netherlands	Europe
1960	Toronto	Canada	North America
1964	São Paulo	Brazil	South America
1968	London	United Kingdom	Europe
1972	Kyoto	Japan	Asia
1976	Mexico City	Mexico	South America
1980	Hamburg	Germany	Europe
1984	Manila	Philippines	Asia
1988	Washington DC	United States	North America
1992	The Hague	Netherlands	Europe
1996	Sydney	Australia	Australia
2000	Montreal	Canada	North America
2004	Paris	France	Europe
2008	Cape Town	South Africa	Africa
2012	Buenos Aires	Argentina	South America
2016	Hong Kong	China, Hong Kong	Asia
2020	To be decided by the venue committee in Buenos Aires		

(GAs), to which every paid up member society sends its representatives. These are in proportion to the number of declared member anaesthesiologists. These representatives accept the reports of the permanent and sub-specialty committees of WFSA, and determine the future activity of the organisation. This is often at the instigation of the elected executive committee and officers. In addition, the GA confirms the appointments of all committee members, and for the first time in Buenos Aires, will actively elect those standing for the executive committee and officer posts. All WFSA committees have the opportunity to meet at the WCA and plan their activities for the next four years.

The COC, besides wishing to run a memorable meeting, wants to provide delegates with an insight into its country and culture.

2012 congress president, Alfredo Cattaneo, writes: "By attending the 15th WCA, you will have the world of anaesthesia at your fingertips. Our scientific program strives to globalise the knowledge and practice of anaesthesia through reporting progress and knowledge in anaesthesia, promoting best anaesthetic practice, improving workshop skills, advancing safe practice in anaesthesia, and encouraging the organisation of anaesthesiologists.

The scientific program will cover the latest scientific knowledge in different areas of anesthesiology, including perioperative medicine, intensive care, emergency medicine and pain management.

Topics will include research, organisation, economy and education. The preliminary programme will be available shortly. It will be comprehensive and diverse, representing the needs of colleagues from all around the world. Delegates will be able to attend top-level, cutting edge lectures on anaesthesiology science, and acquaint themselves with the "ABC" of safe practice in this profession. We hope to host electronic poster sessions only, to prevent delegates from having to transport bulky posters. Workshops will be a special priority at this WCA, and will include simulations and the latest technology designed to improve access to new skills.

"We will also present a wide variety of social and cultural programmes, including tango lessons, parties, and samplings of our famous cuisine. I am confident you will enjoy experiencing our Argentinean culture and that it will provide you with a unique opportunity to make new friends in the world of anaesthesia. Buenos Aires is Argentina's capital city, with easy access from almost anywhere in the world. Its numerous attractions, including theatre, sports, museums, art, antiques, shopping and gastronomy, make it an excellent city to host the World Congress. Before, and/or after the WCA, delegates can also enjoy the many tourist possibilities that Argentina has to offer, such as: the Iguazú Falls, Perito Moreno Glacier, Patagonia, Mendoza's wineries, Mar del Plata, Córdoba and Litoral.

This WCA provides a unique opportunity to mix science and leisure. It will be an unforgettable experience. It will be a great pleasure for us to meet you in Buenos Aires!"

Here are a few final comments. The WCA needs to be a financial, as well as a scientific success, so that the WFSA can continue to run its extensive programme all around the world. The membership fees of member societies do not fund this activity, which is mostly financed from the surplus generated by the WCA. This, in part, determines the registration fees that delegates are charged. We hope you will attend the WCA in Buenos Aires. It will be a scientific, social and cultural triumph. Start taking your tango lessons soon!

25-30 March 2012 is the date for the next WCA in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Start planning now!

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