

ERS 17th Annual Congress: Stockholm 2007 Highlights

After more than a year of preparation, the ERS Congress in Stockholm passed with great success. Once again it was a very successful event, with 15,700 registered participants. We will leave it to others to judge how well the local organisation performed, but as Chairs of the meeting we would like to provide some reflections.

The leading respiratory congress

The ERS Congress is now established as the major annual meeting in respiratory medicine, including specialists in thoracic surgery, intensive care and general practice. With respiratory diseases climbing globally as the third or fourth largest group of chronic diseases, the close collaboration with primary care medicine has become very important as most patients are primarily seen and treated by general practitioners (GPs). Therefore, it was timely that this year the Congress began with a Primary Care day, which also included collaboration with nondoc-toral health professionals. This initiative should be developed in the years to come, as the barriers between different specialities need to be broken down in order to improve diagnosis and treatment of patients with respiratory diseases. Collaboration with professionals in allied health, such as physio-therapists and registered nurses, is becoming increasingly important for patient care and for research in healthcare. Extension of an allied health programme could be another future initiative.

An improved scientific programme

There were many other new initiatives this year, such as the lunchtime seminars. The seminars included "How to write scientific papers: an editor's advice" and "How to get the Nobel Prize", as well as reports from ERS fellowship recipients. The new session on late-breaking clinical trial results also attracted a large audience. The Scientific Committee and all those involved in the Assemblies should be applauded for the hard



Session Type

Session Type	Number
Symposium	47
Grand Round	6
Hot Topic	16
Year in review	5
Lunchtime programme	5
Practical Workshop	1
Primary Care	8
Evening Symposium	22
Postgraduate Course	23
Meet the Professor	18
Educational Workshop	1
Jean-Claude Yernault Lecture	1
Oral Presentation	80
Electronic Poster Discussion	66
Electronic Poster Session	6
Thematic Poster Session	102
Members' Meeting	33
Total	440



the local task force led by Anne Renström and Inger Kulle for the dedicated recruitment of approximately 60 volunteer nurses and doctors who carried out the tests, and the smooth organisation with ELF and a number of Swedish patient and volunteer organisations that made the event a success. We are also grateful to Boeringer Ingelheim for the unrestricted grant that was the prerequisite for the whole event.

*Sven-Erik Dahlén
Gunilla Hedlin
Congress Chairs*

work that resulted in these new areas of the programme, as well as the main programme that was once again of a very high scientific quality.

Electronic is the way forward!

The Electronic Posters are here to stay! However, the format for poster discussions and other practical details need to be developed. We probably also need to change the way Session Chairs are selected and give them better training as coordinators.

A school success

The ERS School offered 23 different Postgraduate courses at the Annual Congress and, for the first time, an Educational workshop on "Epithelial cell biology: culture methods and functional studies". The ERS School continues to work on harmonising education and training for European specialists in respiratory medicine and has announced the launch of an inaugural HERMES European examination at the 2008 ERS Congress in Berlin.

A worthy recipient

The ELF award was presented to Bert Brunekreef from the Netherlands and was particularly well timed, as during the ERS Congress the European Parliament discussed the clean air directive. The role for this advocacy by the ERS is very important, as several countries in Europe are still not in support of air pollution measures that are already enforced in other countries, for example in the USA.

Healthy lungs in Stockholm

Last but not least, the successful spirometry testing event held in the Central Railway station in Stockholm helped to put a focus on COPD and other respiratory diseases in Sweden. Of the 2,882 individuals tested over the two days, approximately 15% had a lung function that was abnormal, and 2% had severe, or even very severe, airways obstruction that had not been diagnosed before. Many of those with pathological findings had not previously visited their health-care provider. We would like to thank

