



ERS Annual Congress

“UNITING EXPERTS WITH A COMMON GOAL”

The world's largest respiratory congress

The ERS Annual Congress is not only Europe's largest annual scientific gathering in respiratory medicine but it is also the largest in the world, with nearly 15,000 participants and growing each year. This event provides a platform for important improvements in the understanding and treatment of lung diseases, with speakers from among the world's leading experts in this field. It provides the perfect forum for the presentation of research findings and exchange of knowledge.

The 2004, 14th ERS Annual Congress was held in Glasgow (Scotland, UK) and exceeded all expectations.



Micheál Martin (Irish Minister for Health and Children), speaks during the opening ceremony of the ERS Annual Congress

A new record was set for the number of abstracts submitted and the scientific programme was of the usual high standard with good attendance at the Symposia and Postgraduate Courses. A novel event, introduced in 2004, was the Primary Care Conference held immediately before the main meeting and which attracted over 500 delegates.

The Scientific Programme

Since the first ERS Annual Congress in Brussels in 1991, an increasing number of participants, including physicians, researchers, young and senior scientists (both basic and clinical), allied professionals, exhibitors and industry managers, with either a professional interest or personal curiosity in respiratory medicine, have been attending the ERS Annual Congress. From the few thousand attendees at the first Congress, the number of attendants now consistently hits the 14–15,000 mark. Several thousand, as shown by the abstracts submission/acceptance bars in figure 1, attended the Congress to present and discuss their original data in many oral presentation, poster discussion and thematic poster sessions.

The aim of the ERS Congress is to provide participants with up-to-date information, combined with a vision for the future. The ERS Annual Congress is a real international arena with attendants and delegates coming from over 100 countries from all continents (table 1). We are

“The world’s largest respiratory congress”

particularly pleased that, while the traditional European Countries confirmed their strong presence, the newly affiliated EU countries also increased their participation, the Russian Federation is becoming more influential, and both the Middle-East and the Asian Pacific areas increased their scientific interaction with the ERS.

The Annual Congress is not only an outstanding chance to improve scientific knowledge, but it is also a great opportunity to meet friends and colleagues. The success of the Congress is determined by the participants and the quality of the science, and we are dedicated to continued improvement and development of the Scientific Programme.



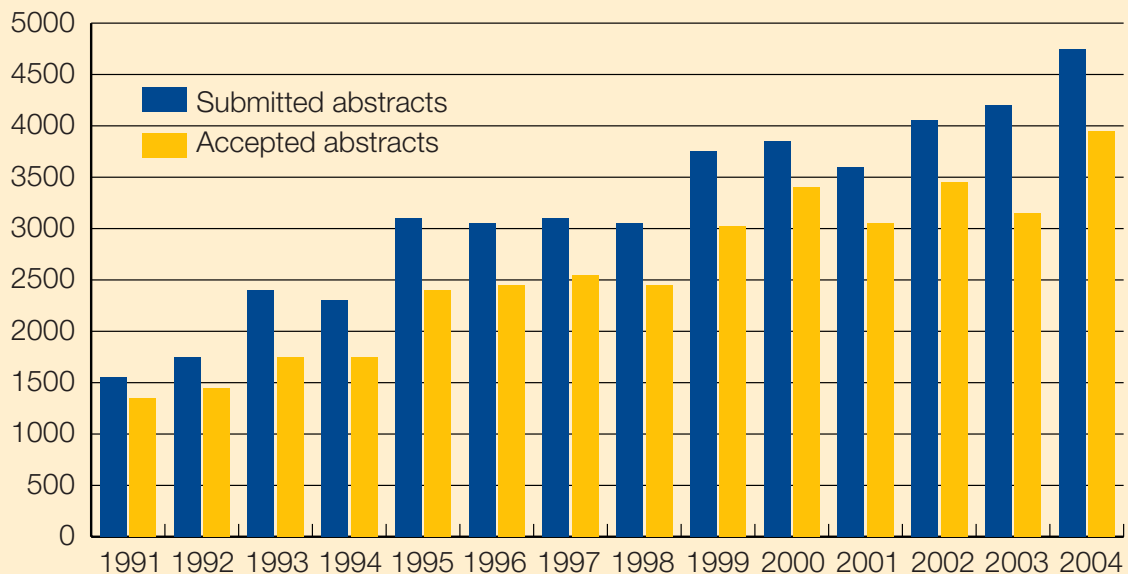
Table 1 – Top 10 participating countries in 2004

UK	1630
Germany	788
Italy	698
France	682
Spain	512
USA	505
Turkey	465
The Netherlands	439
Switzerland	363
Greece	356

Increasing public awareness: the “Breath of Life” campaign

During the Congress, the ERS and the European Lung Foundation (ELF) hosted a 2-day spirometry testing event in the centre of Glasgow. With the theme, “Take ten minutes. Put your lungs to the test”, this event aimed to raise public awareness about lung disease and, in particular, about COPD. This initiative underlines the ERS commitment to promote better understanding of lung disease to the general public.

Figure 1 – Number of abstracts submitted and accepted for the ERS Congress over the years



Media coverage on television, most evenings leading up to the congress, combined with extensive press and radio coverage, drew over 2,000 people to the tent during the weekend. Response from the public was very positive, and people frequently commented that they were surprised how simple it was to test their lungs. People queued both days outside the tent well before its official opening time. A team of volunteer nurses, technicians and doctors tested 1,000 people and more than 11% of those tested showed impaired lung function



Volunteer nurses tested 1,000 people at the spirometry tent

and were given an official letter advising them to seek further guidance from their general practitioner (GP).

Press activities

The 14th ERS Annual Congress was also a success in terms of onsite press activities, media attendance and the interest generated from journalists worldwide. There were 180 registered journalists from 32 countries, and 90 media organisations from all corners of the globe who requested our embargoed press releases by e-mail.

The three ERS press conferences, which essentially covered six different themes, were also very successful, thanks to the efforts of the 12 distinguished speakers who were kind enough to take up our invitation.

> www.ersnet.org/congresses

Honouring significant contributors to lung health

The following awards were presented during the opening ceremony:

- **Presidential award:** Professor Eliot A. Phillipson (Toronto, Canada)
For his contribution to respiratory medicine particularly in the area of breathing disorders during sleep.
- **Congress Chair award:** Professor Sir John Crofton (Edinburgh, UK)
For his pioneering work in tuberculosis, and for being one of the “giants” of respiratory medicine.
- **European Lung Foundation:** Professor Robert Loddenkemper (Berlin, Germany).
For his contribution to respiratory medicine through the conception and coordination of the *European Lung White Book*.
- **Special Award for exceptional achievement in lung health:** Micheál Martin (Ireland, UK) the Irish Minister for Health and Children
In recognition of his political leadership in introducing legislation for banning smoking in the workplace in Ireland.

Glasgow Congress Committee

Chairs

William MacNee & Robin D. Stevenson

Walter McNicholas

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William MacNee

Robin D. Stevenson