

Society Newsletter 2006

A Report on the 33rd Annual Meeting of the International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery - Paul Steinbok

The 33rd Annual Meeting of the International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery was held at the Westin Bayshore Hotel in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada from September 11th to September 15th, 2005. The conference was organized by Dr. Paul Steinbok, Chair of the Congress with the assistance of Dr. D. Douglas Cochrane, Secretary of the Congress and with the support of Venue West Conference Services. The conference was attended by 170 neurosurgeons, 25 residents/fellows and 23 nurses/nursing practitioners and 38 accompanying persons, in addition to the exhibitors. In addition, there were 4 invited guest speakers. The participants spanned the globe representing 38 countries from 5 continents. Honored guests included Dr. Mark Hamilton, President of the Canadian Neurosurgical Society, Professor Ed Laws, immediate past president of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies, and Dr Amin Kassam, invited guest of the ISPN president, Dr. Enrique Ventureyra.

The Scientific Committee chaired by Dr. Tad Tomita selected 96 abstracts for platform presentation and 55 abstracts for electronic poster presentations. All abstracts were reviewed independently by the members of the Scientific Committee comprising Dr. Paul Steinbok, Dr. Gianpiero Tamburrini, Dr. Tai-Tong Wong and Dr. Edgardo Schijman. The entire process of abstract submission and ratings was completed electronically with the able assistance of Dr. Gianpiero Tamburrini, Chair of the Communications Committee. The Scientific Program included sessions on endoscopy, hydrocephalus, trauma, craniopharyngioma, congenital brain abnormalities, craniofacial abnormalities, tethered cord, brain tumours and epilepsy. There were two round table discussions, one on intracystic treatment for craniopharyngiomas and the other on the management of the craniocervical junction in Down's syndrome. There were also special presentations by invited speakers on transsphenoidal approaches to the skull base (Dr Kassam), frontal lobe epilepsy (Dr. Mary Connolly) and molecular biology of tumours (Dr Poul Sorensen).

There were a number of innovations that were introduced at this conference. The posters were all electronic posters, with power point presentations loaded in advance on to a number of computers with large monitors such that individuals could use any of a number of computers to review the electronic posters. Based on the evaluations completed at the end of the meeting, this format had mixed reviews. For the authors of the posters, the ease of displaying their work was a positive and for the viewers, the ability to go through the power point presentations and to stay at one station to review multiple posters was seen as a positive. On the other hand, there was less opportunity for interaction between the authors and those viewing the posters. The other innovation related to the platform presentations. In order to provide adequate discussion time and to keep on a tight schedule, platform presentations were limited strictly to the allocated time. Participants were advised in advance of the meeting and again at the meeting that shortly after the eight minute time allotment, the microphones would be turned off and the computer presentation would be discontinued. This difficult task was left in the hands of the audio-visual team and not

in the hands of the moderators. These innovations proved to be very effective in that no speaker exceeded their allocated time. There was adequate time for discussion from the floor after each talk and the meeting ran on time. Based on the evaluation forms this was seen as a very positive feature of the meeting. For the first time the Scientific Program of ISPN Meeting was accredited formally for CME credits. This was done by the Department of Continuing Medical Education of the University of British Columbia.

The social events at this meeting included an opening reception held in the garden of the Westin Bayshore Hotel and a Banquet and Poncho Ceremony which were held in the Vancouver Aquarium. The Poncho Ceremony turned out to be spectacular with the hand-over of the poncho from Dr. Enrique Ventureyra, outgoing president of the ISPN, to the incoming President, Dr. Joong-Uhn Choi amidst a backdrop of curious white beluga whales. We were fortunate to have excellent weather throughout the conference, thus allowing participants to enjoy the natural beauty of Vancouver in the best light.

Paul Steinbok
Chairman of the 33rd Annual Meeting of the ISPN