



“Where the Spirit does not work with the hand, there is no art”

Leonardo da Vinci

A Romanian premiere in Florence

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“The World Congress is a celebration of this coming together. It’s about the legacy of bronchology, interventional thoracic procedures and patient management.”

Henri Colt, MD, FCCP, FAWM Chairman of WABIP

The first World Congress of Bronchoscopy and Interventional Pulmonology was held in Tokyo in 1978. Since then, the event has been hosted on several different continents and numerous cities. This year, Florence, arguably one of the most beautiful cities in the world, hosted the 19th World Congress of Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology / World Congress of Bronchoesophagology (WCBIP / WCBE) between the 8th and 11th of May 2016, and was a unique chapter in the history of the event and a true scientific work of art.

Florence, the “cradle of the Renaissance”, with its high concentration of art, architecture and culture, where some of the world’s most important works of art are held, was the location of meeting for more than 1,300 participants from over 50 countries.

The meeting was considered innovative, offering not only the newest information about advances in technologies, education and research, but also providing hands-on workshops on new, as well on conventional, interventional procedures.

A record number of scientific abstracts (400 abstracts from 50 countries) and video award entries (26 videos were submitted for participation in the WCBIP/WCBE Video Festival) were submitted this year, providing an outstanding program for the attendees.

Before the conference itself, there were a series of hands-on workshops where the participants practiced technical applications in interventional procedures - conventional TBNA and EBUS-TBNA, and explored the microscopic world of pulmonary cytopathology. Skilled and experienced instructors guided the participants through airway maneuvers until they gained enough confidence to take these procedures home to their patients.

The main theme of the Congress, proposed by Stefano Gasparini, President of WCBIP Florence, was Interventional Pulmonology in the multidisciplinary patient care setting, with the aim of developing the integration of these procedures in patient care pathways, providing the best possible management for patients suffering from lung, airway and pleural diseases.

The conference excelled through the complexity and multitude of addressed topics.

During the congress, there were 71 symposia and 10 keynote lectures, which combined information regarding well established procedures with the new frontiers

in interventional pulmonology, such as transcutaneous computed bioconductance measurement in lung cancer, electromagnetic navigated bronchoscopy as a possible solution for the problem of reaching solitary pulmonary nodules without airways, percutaneous or transbronchial microwave ablation representing the future of minimally invasive treatment of early stage lung lesions, the future in laryngotracheal transplantation and recent progress in synthetic materials for airway reconstruction, along with topics regarding new developments in thoracoscopy, such as ultrasound guided medical thoracoscopy in the absence of pleural effusion, and autofluorescence and narrow band imaging for the future use in medical thoracoscopy.

There was a very special interest in the EBUS-TBNA technique and its use in daily clinical practice. Prof. Jouke T. Annema had a very clear presentation on how this technique should be learned and used; Prof. Atul C. Mehta urged the audience to do EBUS-TBNA, and Prof. Kazuhiro Yasufuku presented what is new in EBUS technology. There were many interesting subjects discussed, such as what is the most appropriate sedation to use for EBUS/TBNA, how it could be obtained the optimal specimen collection for histopathological confirmation and molecular markers testing in EBUS-TBNA samples, what are the possible complications of EBUS-TBNA, and what is the predictive role of ultrasound morphology of mediastinal nodes.

The discussions about the thoracoscopic techniques in management of mesothelioma were of great interest, starting with issues in obtaining the histological diagnosis, continuing with a historical debate about the need of mediastinal staging in malignant pleural mesothelioma, and ending with the conventional approach of the pleural cavity by medical thoracoscopy or using pleuroscopic cryoprobe biopsies of the pleura.

Many different topics were addressed that revealed the growing and significant role of bronchoscopy and interventional pulmonology in clinical practice. Along with their implication in pulmonology field: lung emphysema, cancer of the lung, pleura or airways, infectious and granulomatous diseases, diffuse parenchymal lung diseases, airway foreign bodies, lung transplantation, they also highlighted other applications of bronchoscopy in different specialties: Otolaryngology, Thoracic Surgery, Oncology, Gastroenterology, Intensive Care and Anesthesiology.

Among the symposia, there were several joint symposia of WABIP (The World Association for Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology) with different national or international societies, including the European Association of Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology (EABIP), European Respiratory Society (ERS), International Bronchoesophagological Society (IBES), American Association for Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology (AABIP), and Italian Association of Hospital Pulmonologists (AIPO). Many interesting topics were discussed, such as lung volume



Figure 1. Romanian Specialists from the main bronchoscopy centers of Romania and Moldavia and colleagues from different various countries who have studied in Romania



Figure 2. Romanian Specialists from the main bronchoscopy and oncology centers of Romania and the United Kingdom (from left to right): Petronela Fildan, Ruxandra Ulmeanu, Laura Mazilu, Elena Dantes and Tudor Toma

reduction, bronchopleural fistula, or palliation of malignant central airway obstruction.

Pediatric bronchoscopy was given a particular interest, represented by a special Session of the WABIP Section of "Pediatric Bronchoscopy". The discussions focused on the role of bronchoscopy in the pediatric area: diagnostic indications, airway foreign bodies extractions, cricotracheal surgery, and airway stenting in children.

Another interesting and innovative chapter of this congress was the interest on the bronchoscopy education, with an excellent lecture given by one of our Romanian colleagues, Septimiu Murgu, associate editor of the WABIP Newsletter, regarding novel approaches in bronchoscopy education: "flipped classroom" model and "problem based learning" exercises.

The Romanian delegation, supported by Stefano Gasparini, President of WCBIP Florence, included more than 20 specialists from the main bronchoscopy centers of our country (Figure 1,2). The presence of Romanian pulmonologists was extremely appreciated at this congress particularly because we organized the first common Symposium of the Romanian Society of Pneumology and World Association of Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology, entitled

“Lung cancer diagnosed through bronchoscopy - What is different for Eastern Europe?” WABIP / SRP Joint Session.

This symposium addressed topics of great interest and was notable by the large number of attendees and by the numerous questions for the lecturers.

Ruxandra Ulmeanu, elected President of Romanian National Society of Pneumology, opened the symposium with a very interesting lecture, “Improving bronchoscopic diagnosis of lung cancer – the point of view of bronchologist”, followed by the lecture of Laura Mazilu from “Ovidius” University of Constanța, who added the oncologist’s opinion on “Improving bronchoscopic diagnosis of lung cancer – the point of view of oncologist”, and, at the end, Mărioara Șimon, member of the WABIP Board of Regents (Regent for Romania), revealed the Romanian experience in EBUS-TBNA in her lecture, “EBUS-TBNA in Romania – we just started!”. (Figure 3)

The symposium highlighted the technological and professional progress registered by the bronchoscopy field in our country, but it also highlighted the problems and the needs that we are facing as well.

Furthermore, Dr. Mărioara Șimon was chair on a Pro/Con session, regarding “Rapid-on site evaluation by pulmonologist”, and on a very interesting oral session about “Bronchoscopy in TB and diffuse lung diseases. BAL and cryobiopsy”.

The exhibition of medical equipment dedicated to specific interventions was represented by almost all large companies in the world. At the exhibition corner the participants were able to try different equipment and to be informed about the novelties in this field.

The World Congress was also the site of the first WABIP Academy (<http://www.wabipacademy.com/>) dedicated symposia chaired by Drs. Herve Dutau (Marseille, France, Section head, Image Library) and Roberto Casals (Houston, USA, Section head, Literature Library). These symposia will become regular events at all future WABIP World Congresses and plans are already beginning on the construct of greater interactivity with an international (onsite- and distant) audience during the World Congress scheduled for Rochester in June 2018.

In conclusion, this meeting offered many opportunities to renew friendships, meet colleagues from around the world, share experiences with others, improve skills and knowledge of procedures and disease processes, and indulge in a variety of great cultural experiences in the setting of Renaissance Italy. This is the main reason why Prof Dr. Stefano Gasparini said that “Interventional Pulmonology should no longer be thought of as a specialty for few experts, but must be considered as one of the main pillars of Pulmonary Medicine”.

Furthermore, Prof. Dr. Stefano Gasparini, as a sign of appreciation of our National Bronchology Section (president Mihai Alexe), accepted an invitation to lecture at the Congress of Romanian Society of Pneumology, scheduled for Poiana Brasov in October 2016.

We conclude this review with an invitation to all new or veteran practitioners of our growing bronchoscopy organization to join us in building a high performing “school” of bronchoscopy and interventional pulmonology. ■



Figure 3. The moderators and speakers of the WABIP/SRP Joint Session :Marioara Simon , Ruxandra Ulmeanu and Laura Mazilu