

The Pursuit of Excellence

Valerie E. Martindale, Ph.D., CASP, FAsMA

AsMA Members and Professionals, I am continually impressed by the depth and breadth of the activities in which our members engage, and the tireless pursuit of excellence by members of our professional community. From Dr. Quay Snyder representing AsMA at the 2017 Aviation Medical Society of New Zealand and Australasian Society of Aerospace Medicine Conference, held in Queenstown, New Zealand, in September, to Dr. Dan Danczyk representing AsMA at the upcoming Congreso Internacional de Seguridad Aérea in Mexico City in November, AsMA members contribute far and wide to the furtherance of health and safety in aviation. The Bellagio II Summit, described below, saw members bringing the benefits of space research to Earth, while the imminent AsMA Scientific Program Committee meeting will prepare the slate of speakers and subjects for the largest international meeting dedicated to aerospace medicine and human performance, our own 2018 Annual Scientific Meeting. In addition to these rewarding activities, AsMA members have performed the difficult and underappreciated task of ensuring that research published in the public forum that does not meet our standards is challenged.

This month, the AsMA Scientific Program Committee (SPC) will meet in Alexandria, VA, to consider over 500 abstracts for inclusion in May's Annual Scientific Meeting. The process has evolved a great deal in the 15 years that I have been involved, but the core of the activity remains the careful, dedicated work of the volunteers who ensure the final selections meet quality standards for scientific rigor and for value to the conference attendees. I extend my thanks to all the committee members for their time and vigilance, and invite interested members to look into joining the committee.

In September, 30+ members representing a dozen countries met in the beautiful Lake Como region of Italy to participate in the Bellagio II Summit, organized by past AsMA president Dr. Marian Sides. The delegates prepared ahead of time by reading articles and studies to assess the state of space science and identify potentially high-impact research and countermeasures applicable to terrestrial human health, performance, longevity, and well-being. At the meeting, members presented the information gained, and the group then spent several intensive days choosing the most mature science to present as promising translational medicine for terrestrial applications. Members of the Aerospace Medicine Student and Resident Organization (AMSRO) were key

to the proceedings, leading and recording discussions, drafting and refining abstracts, and working late into the night to ensure each day's meetings were productive. In the coming weeks and months, participants will continue to work on those areas identified as high-return, to produce presentations and a publication communicating the terrestrial value of medical advances made in the pursuit of manned space exploration.

The exercise of rigorous investigation and careful presentation of facts is not always as easy or enjoyable as the examples above. When representation of the scientific evidence is difficult and even opposed, that is when it is even more important for the professionals to stand up and be heard. In June, members of the AsMA Air Transport Committee, in concert with the Airline Medical Directors Association and the Civil Aviation Medical Institute, authored a critique of a controversial publication in the journal, *Public Health Panorama*. The paper, from Michaelis et al. on "Aerotoxic Syndrome," raised serious concerns among these experts about the quality of the research and the validity of paper's conclusions. The critique of this article was drafted by multiple experts in a range of relevant specialties, and ultimately signed by the Aerospace Medical Association, the Civil Aviation Medical Association, the European Society of Aerospace Medicine, the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine, and the Royal Aeronautical Society Aerospace Medicine Group. It is published in the September issue of the *Public Health Panorama*. It is an outstanding example of undertaking the more difficult work that is the hallmark of professionalism, remaining objective in what can be an emotionally charged issue. I commend the authors for their meticulous work and objectivity.

The hard work, dedication, and passion for excellence of the AsMA membership continues to shine, making AsMA a resource for consultation, a center for professional development, and a source of pride for its members.



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CONTACT DETAILS:

Email: President@asma.org • **Web site:** www.asma.org • **Facebook:** Aerospace Medical Association • **Twitter:** @Aero_Med