

Synergy

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synergy syn-er-gy 'sinərjē/ *noun*

Mid-19th century: from Greek *sunergos* 'working together,' from *sun-* 'together' + *ergon* 'work'

The interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.

The Presidency of AsMA comes with the privilege of setting the theme for the Annual Scientific Meeting. The theme for the 2018 meeting will be one that I have cherished and promoted from my first introduction to our Association, the synergy of multidisciplinary problem solving. AsMA's identity is centered around the challenges our community faces, rather than the disciplines of members. It thereby unites a group of experts from many different backgrounds.

This is different from other professional organizations in my experience, where members share a relatively narrow set of specialties that define a profession. Such organizations miss the opportunity to engage in the kind of multidisciplinary problem solving that we take for granted in AsMA. Our esteemed membership includes quite a variety of medical specialties, including physicians, nurses, and technicians, as well as physiologists, psychologists, engineers, and other professionals with expertise and insight to contribute to the challenges of expanding the human envelope in aviation, space, and other demanding environments. As a group, we can surround a problem and attack from all sides, integrating the many aspects needed to achieve complex, robust solutions.

Another synergy comes from AsMA's multinational membership. Last year's Annual Scientific Meeting attracted over 500

attendees from beyond the borders of the United States, representing more than 50 nations. Such representation contributes to the value of the resolutions and recommendations made by the Association, increasing the safety of all flyers and enlarging both the basis and the reach of the Association's contributions in research and education.

Some of my favorite presentations from past AsMA meetings illustrate this aspect of our Association. The amazing rescue of 33 miners trapped underground in Chile in 2010 was presented at the 2011 meeting, a most memorable example of the convergence of disciplines to solve a very immediate problem. The 2013 meeting was the venue for many talks on the successful Red Bull Stratos Jump, breaking world records for highest jump altitude, highest manned balloon flight, and breaking the sound barrier without powered assist. Probably many of you can think of similar remarkable presentations from the past. Let's highlight this remarkable aspect of AsMA in 2018.

I therefore give you, for the 89th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Aerospace Medical Association, the following theme:

Synergy: The Power of Multidisciplinary Problem Solving.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3357/AMHP.08PP.2017>



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