

The AsMA Global Connection Story with ESAM

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Dear readers, members, and friends of AsMA,

In this edition of our Journal I am particularly pleased to interview Dr. Anthony Wagstaff from Norway, a very good friend of mine for many years, and currently President of ESAM, the



Anthony Wagstaff

European Society for Aerospace Medicine. I will also be giving RIES Simons, the busy chair of the ESAM AB (scientific Advisory Board), a chance to add a few lines. Both Anthony and I have a special connection to ESAM, since we were among the founding fathers of this relatively new association in 2006. One of the reasons for founding this association was the creation of a new European Agency

responsible for aviation safety in Europe (EASA), in which we wanted to give all European aerospace specialists a voice on decisions and regulations in our domain. It is also special for me because I was the first elected president from 2006 until 2012, at a time when we managed to expand from a few member associations to almost every existing aviation and space medicine association in Europe. Associations, because ESAM membership is not for individuals but for national European aerospace medicine associations; in this way we wanted to maintain the history and networks forged by the existing national associations as well as helping countries with no association to set one up. Our story in Europe is a testament to what can be achieved by international collaboration, not only with the EU and national regulators, but also with our sister associations around the world such as AsMA and other professional associations (for pilots, psychologists, etc.). We also try to assemble researchers and scientific colleagues within our scientific advisory board, chaired by RIES Simons.

So, Anthony, please introduce yourself and tell us a bit about what your association is doing.

I am currently the President of the European Society of Aerospace Medicine (ESAM). This is a scientific society which works for the health and safety of persons involved in aviation and space operations, including passengers. It is a pan-European independent forum for aerospace medicine and coordinates European aerospace interests in the applicable fora. This means that we try to develop projects and meet governmental or other parties where we can influence or promote an understanding of important

aeromedical scientific knowledge for safe flight. So we participate actively in working groups at EASA, the European Aviation Safety Agency, as well as making scientific policy statements, collaborating with other organisations, and supporting and organising conferences. Right now, we are working hard at developing the European Conference of Aerospace Medicine in the autumn of this year, which I would like to tell you more about.



What is your and their relationship with AsMA and how long has it existed?

I have been an AsMA member since 1991, and before that my father was a member from the late sixties I think! I was very proud to become a Fellow in 2012. AsMA has been an important part of my professional life. ESAM was founded in 2006 so it is quite a young Society, but modern and thriving! We have over the years developed a very good relationship with AsMA, and we organised our first conference together in 2016. It was great having AsMA on board, boosting the science and the organisation parts at this Oslo conference. We hope to repeat the success in the fall of this year, in the beautiful City of Prague, where ESAM again will organise a conference together with AsMA and our Czech colleagues. For over 10 years now the leadership of both associations have been meeting for business lunches to discuss common projects and activities such as our joint congresses in Europe. ESAM and AsMA are both affiliated with each other also, so one could definitely say that our bonds are very strong now.

What already works well in this relationship and what could be improved in our collaboration?

ESAM is a regional organisation for Europe—I think ESAM can learn a lot from the know-how, organisational culture, and scientific weight that AsMA carries in a very strong tradition. At the same time, I think we Europeans have some international skills that AsMA could learn from for its further development. After all, in Europe diversity in culture and language is a large part of our daily life—in politics, society, culture, and science.

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Do you have ideas for AsMA? For our support to your association, and/or for the dissemination of information from your association?

Well, I think the current trend of reaching out to fellow aerospace associations around the world is a good one. It will be interesting to see the next step in this direction. Certainly, your being the first President from a non-English speaking European country is in itself something new and refreshing. I think science has no boundaries, so AsMA as the world-leading organisation in aerospace medicine will gradually become even more international and develop our global collaboration with regional organisations around the world.

Are you interested in participating in the work or getting involved in the leadership of our Association??

I enjoy being able to make a difference if I can, and of course it would be an honour. At the moment, as President of ESAM, and also a Council member of the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine, I have many important and rewarding tasks which keep me rather busy, on top of being Head of the Institute of Aviation Medicine in Oslo. Who knows what the future may bring? As a Scandinavian (and of course, half of me is English), I enjoy the fact that international collaboration is a necessary part of my professional life—and maybe one of the most rewarding aspects of being part of the great family of aerospace medicine.

Dear Ries, could you add a few words on the ESAM Advisory Board?

ESAM's scientific Advisory Board (AB) was founded in 2007 and is tasked with providing scientific advice on aerospace medical questions to the Executive Committee [EC]. It is an independent body within ESAM in which all member societies are represented. The day-to-day work is carried out by the Advisory Board

Committee (ABC), consisting of 10 members, who are assigned by the EC after nomination of the member societies. I am very proud to be the chairman of this active team in which a variety of medical specialties are represented. The AB has produced position papers on Fatigue Risk Management, Medication and Flying, Insulin Dependent Diabetic Pilots, and has reviewed several NPAs of EASA. Advice and recommendations included the use of new anticoagulants (NOACs) and cardiovascular risk assessment.

The ABC extended contacts between ESAM and the European Association for Aviation Psychology (EAAP) and participated actively in the founding of the European Pilot Peer Support Initiative (EPPSI) in collaboration with EAAP, ECA (European Cockpit Association), and the Mayday Foundation. The ABC declared its intention to encourage researchers and students to engage in aerospace medical research. The ABC is keen to collaborate with AsMA working groups in order to learn from each other and expand our mutual expertise. Personally, I am active in the Air Transport Medicine Committee, Mental Health Working Group, and AMHP editorial board. I think I have missed only two AsMA annual scientific meetings since my first one in 1990!

My dear friends and colleagues from ESAM, many thanks for your interesting information about this pan-European collaborative association, and I am very much looking forward to continuing to work together!

Roland



Ries Simons