

President's Page

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AsMA - A Worldwide Organization

I've had the pleasure of representing our organization at recent international meetings. This past September, I attended the 4th European Conference in Aerospace Medicine (ECAM) in Bucharest, Romania. ECAM is a biennial meeting of the European Society of Aerospace Medicine (ESAM), which is made up of European national aerospace medical organizations; currently, members come from 33 European countries. There are also six international associate organization memberships which include AsMA. The primary purpose of ECAM is to provide a forum for scientific exchange, discussion, and consensus on European aerospace medicine (AsM) issues.

The theme of the meeting was "How we screen for and prevent health problems in aviation" and I was invited to give a presentation on AsMA's recommendations regarding mental health screening in pilots. Part of the meeting concentrated on the proposal for Aviation Medical Examiners to consider providing preventive medical care to aircrews as part of the routine Aviation Medical certification examination. There seemed to be general agreement that this was a good way to improve flight safety but also acknowledged were the potential administrative, legal, regulatory, and even cultural hurdles associated with this proposal.

Other topics presented at the meeting included European commercial spaceflight medical standards for suborbital and orbital flights; a 5-year study on medical conditions affecting Russian flight safety; screening for silent myocardial infarction in Italian and Russian flight crews; cardiovascular disease screening in Swiss pilots; fatigue/stress and wellness screening of Moldavian pilots; aviation preventive medicine strategies in the Czech Republic; metabolic syndrome in Italian Air Force Pilots; Coriolis illusions and hypoxia in Polish flight instructors; non-penetrating glaucoma therapy; genomics; use of CogScreen; and the latest aviation medical issues and approaches related to the Ebola outbreak. During their General Assembly, I also had the opportunity to give a brief talk on the latest related activities of AsMA. The Romanian Civil Aviation Authority and Romanian National Military Aviation Authority were superb meeting hosts who also provided opportunities to enjoy Romanian culture during our social gatherings. It was a very interesting and informative meeting.

In October, I attended the 62nd annual International Congress of Aviation and Space Medicine (ICASM) held in Mexico City, Mexico. This meeting was conducted under the auspices of the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine (IAASM) and is held in a different country around the world, traditionally alternating every other year with a country in Europe. IAASM is an academy of senior AsM professionals, selected by nomination from across the global community. The annual meeting provides a forum similar to AsMA's annual scientific meeting, only on a much smaller and more international scale. Several Academicians in IAASM are former presidents of AsMA.

Topics presented at this year's ICASM included side effects of "go/no go" medications in India; fatigue and blue light circadian synchronization, genomics, and stem cell replacement therapy, all from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); research conducted by Mexico's new space agency; 3D printing of surgical instruments from Canada; portable anesthesia delivery from Japan; cardiovascular risk factors in Dutch pi-



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lots and in Iranian pilots; in-flight medical emergencies from the U.S. including those involving children; Argentinian flight attendant health; and renal calculi in Chinese pilots. Also presented were recent activities by the Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. Navy and Army aviation medicine research centers. An added panel by colleagues from the International Civil Aviation Organization, again on the Ebola outbreak, was presented. Truly an international concern.

The Mexican Association of Aviation Medicine and the Mexican College of Aerospace Medicine, the meeting's hosts, arranged for very interesting site visits to a major Mexican Air Force base in Santa Lucia, to Aeromexico's hangar at Mexico City International Airport, and to an aviation industry complex in Queretaro. There were also several historical and cultural tours enjoyed. Once again, another interesting and informative international meeting.

AsMA is undeniably the premier international leader and voice in Aerospace Medicine. I am convinced there is no equal. Yet, if we truly wish to be the worldwide leader, we should do better. We need to expand our international scope and provide more value to our global members.

In that regard, here are some initiatives undertaken so far this year:

- To co-sponsor non-North American AsM meetings. We have arranged this for the 2016 ECAM meeting.
- To increase global representation in AsMA leadership. There are 3 non-U.S. members in the AsMA Executive Committee, which brings in important global perspectives.
- To increase awareness of global AsM activities by publishing international and regional affiliate reports on our web site and providing further exposure via poster displays at our annual scientific meetings.
- To continue to assist countries in establishing AsM residency certifications for those who desire them.
- To support and provide expert guidance in worldwide travel-related health issues.

Finally, I propose we consider eliminating the term "international member" within AsMA. It has no purpose in defining the membership of an already international organization. We are all just "members" wherever we come from.

As this year winds down, let us all reflect on how we have made a difference in our global field of aerospace medicine and the work still ahead, and let me wish you continued success in this great endeavor in the coming year.