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Connecting with Our Colleagues Abroad: How ASNC Continues to Build Its International Presence



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Despite advances in technology, cardiovascular disease (CVD) continues to be the leading cause of death in the western and developing world. The latest available data from the World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that 17.2 million people around the globe die of CVD each year. World deaths from coronary heart disease (CHD) in 2004 totaled 7.2 million. Therefore, early and accurate detection remains crucial to curbing the worldwide death rate from CHD.

By identifying the presence and severity of ischemic heart disease in at-risk patients, nuclear cardiology continues to have proven value worldwide and plays a key role in management decisions and treatment strategies in patients with known or suspected CHD. As such, ASNC's continued collaboration with international societies and organizations is essential to ensure worldwide patient access to nuclear cardiology studies.

ASNC'S WORLDWIDE INITIATIVES

Since its inception ASNC has been a Society of and for the global nuclear cardiology community and, more recently, the global cardiac computed tomography community. International ASNC members were part of

the core nucleus that founded the Society, and others showed their commitment by joining ASNC as international founding members. Currently, ASNC members span the globe representing 55 countries on six continents.

Activities of the Society involve the international membership in a variety of ways, including the International Council, the ASNC Board of Directors, and the *Journal of Nuclear Cardiology* Editorial Board. ASNC also works with international societies, agencies, and stakeholders active in non-invasive cardiac imaging.

The International Council of ASNC represents the international membership and comprises representatives of 40 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, North America, and South America. Countries may have up to three national representatives drawn from the fields of nuclear medicine, nuclear cardiology, cardiology, and cardiac computed tomography practice. The Council is chaired by an international ASNC member and meets during ICNC, the International Conference of Non-Invasive Cardiovascular Imaging. The role of the International Council is to monitor international affairs in the field relating to clinical practice, research, resources, and training, to advise the ASNC Board of Directors on these matters, and to provide input to the ICNC program committee. The list of member countries continues to exhibit healthy growth. International Council activities are coordinated by the ASNC International Advisory Committee, a smaller group of international members.

One of the highlights of ASNC's international activity is ICNC. First held in Cannes, France in 1993, ICNC has grown to the largest international conference in the field and is hosted by ASNC, the European Association of Nuclear Medicine, and the European Society of Cardiology every two years in Europe. Cities hosting past conferences include: Cannes, France (1995); Florence, Italy (1997 and 2003); Athens, Greece (1999); Vienna, Austria (2001); Lisbon, Portugal (2005); Prague, Czech Republic (2007); and most recently, Barcelona, Spain in May 2009. Planning is already underway for ICNC10 in Amsterdam in 2011. These conferences have attracted up to 1200 delegates from around the world.

The International Council increasingly works on behalf of ASNC to cosponsor national and regional

meetings, partnering with host groups to produce programs relevant to local needs. This initiative began in Sydney, Australia, in May 2002 at the World Congress of Cardiology/Cardiac Society of Australia New Zealand conjoint conference. To date, ASNC has helped produce similar sessions in Singapore; Nagoya, Japan; Seoul, South Korea; Porte Alegre, Brazil; Brasilia, Brazil; Madrid, Spain; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Cairo, Egypt; Munich, Germany; and Cesena, Italy with upcoming collaborations scheduled in Beijing, China; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and Mexico City, Mexico in 2009.

Another significant new initiative was the involvement of nominated International Council members and ASNC officers in a forum convened by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at its world headquarters in Vienna, Austria, in May 2008. This group of thought leaders and experts examined global trends in coronary artery disease and discussed available and

projected resources in non-invasive cardiac imaging. Participants produced a report with recommendations for future needs in instrumentation, personnel, and training in nuclear cardiology around the world, especially in developing nations. A summary of this report was presented at the American College of Cardiology meeting in 2009 and is to be published in full later this year.

In 2009, ASNC and the world of cardiovascular imaging faces increasingly global challenges. Material and human resource availability and utilization, education, guidelines, certification, regulation, appropriateness criteria, multimodality imaging, and isotope production/availability are issues that must be addressed on an international scale. The best outcomes in these areas will come from fostering the further growth of international collaboration within ASNC and working with our colleagues around the world.

CALENDAR

Please note that the programs listed below are sponsored or cosponsored by the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology (ASNC). For more information, visit the ASNC Web site (<http://www.asnc.org/event.cfm>).

November 13-14, 2009. Nuclear Cardiology Physics Course. Baltimore, MD.

ASNC would also like to provide a reminder about the following deadlines for the certification exams in nuclear cardiology:

Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology Exam

www.cbnc.org

Late deadline date (certification & recertification):
October 9, 2009

Cancellation deadline: November 19, 2009

Examination dates: November 30-December 5, 2009