

Third National Congress of the Spanish Association for Paediatric Cardiology and Congenital Heart Disease

Carlos Mortera (Head of Cardiology and Cardiac Catheterization Unit, Spanish delegate of the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology, Hospital Sant Joan the Deu, Central University Hospital of Barcelona, Spain. E-mail: cmortera@hsjdbcn.org)

OVER THE LAST THREE DAYS OF MAY, THE specialists in paediatric cardiology and paediatric cardiac surgery from Spain gathered in Madrid to hold the third National Congress of the Spanish Association for Paediatric Cardiology and Congenital Heart Disease. The Association meets annually to provide an update for cardiologists, paediatricians, surgeons, intensivists, and cardiac anaesthetists with particular interest in a multidisciplinary approach to the management of children and adults with congenital heart disease.

This year, our symposium was dedicated to the memory of Manuel Quero Jiménez, a great Paediatric Cardiologist with a particular interest in cardiac pathology, who died at a tragically young age 2 years ago.¹ Our dedication was not only a tribute to the memory of his major contributions in the field of cardiac morphology, but also to recognise his pioneering role in creating Paediatric Cardiology as a specialty in Spain. He was an outstanding teacher, and a good friend to all who have continued his work and his hopes for this specialty in Spain. It was fitting that the Congress was organized by those remaining in the Department he created at the Hospital Ramon y Cajal in Madrid, namely Jose Perez Leon, and María Jesús Maître Azcárate.

The Congress was held in the Medical College for Physicians and Surgeons, a classic building furnished with a large auditorium full of original murals from the eighteenth century, and situated in the centre of Madrid close to the Prado Museum, the Thyssen Museum, and the Reina Sofia Art Centre, together making up one of the nicest areas of Madrid, and offering a good cultural background for those wishing to continue their activities after the scientific sessions.

The organisers had invited several experts from outside Spain, including Bill Mckenna from London, who opened the meeting with a review of the recent genetic discoveries in the field of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. This was followed by a plenary lecture on pulmonary hypertension, given by Maurice Beghetti, from Geneva, Switzerland.

The main sessions of the meeting had been planned to cover all the latest aspects of paediatric cardiology. The session devoted to Interventional Cardiac Catheterization was presented by José Santos de Soto, the president of the Association. It included presentations on closure of interventricular communications, by Luigi Ballerini, from Rome, and implantation of stents for treatment of aortic coarctation, by Ramón Bermúdez-Cañete.

The session concerning fetal cardiology was led by Jim Huhta, from St Petersburg, Florida, and included two subsections, the first devoted to fetal interventions and their indications, and the second to fetal cardiac embryology, this being a part of the meeting entitled "The Future in Paediatric Cardiology".

The presentations concerned with paediatric cardiac surgery were delivered by a distinguished faculty, which included Miguel Barbero-Marcial, from Sao Paulo, Brasil, Mark Hazekamp, from Leiden, the Netherlands, and José Maria Caffarena, from Valencia and Barcelona, who addressed the issues concerned with the Ross procedure for neonates. The second part of the surgical session was dedicated to the techniques required for unifocalisation of major aortopulmonary collateral arteries, this excellent presentation being given by Adriano Carotti, from Rome.

Our session devoted to controversies revolved around the current roles of surgery as opposed to

interventional catheter techniques as the optimal treatment for aortic coarctation. The conclusion reached was that both approaches were needed if we were to achieve the very best results for all patients with coarctation. The closing plenary lecture, concerning the use of stem cells in paediatric cardiology, was delivered by Christoff Stamm, from Rostock, Germany.

In addition to the specific lectures emphasised above, 101 selected abstracts from 25 Institutions were presented in 14 sessions of excellent high level and quality, with an attendance of almost 200 specialists. From these, 10 communications had been selected for consideration for the “Manuel Quero Award”, all again showing an outstanding high level of display and content. The winner was “Surgery in hypoplastic left heart syndrome: correction by a conduit placed between the right ventricle and the pulmonary arteries”, presented by Teresa Cantero et al., from Hospital Gregorio Marañón, Madrid. All of the scientific contributions were published in the book of abstracts.

During the General Assembly, it was pointed out that the dates chosen for our fourth congress, to be held in the north of Spain, at La Coruña, unfortunately coincided almost exactly with the dates of the next meeting of the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology, to be held in Basel, Switzerland, from 21st through 24th May, 2006. Barcelona was nominated for the fifth congress, to be held in 2007.

In closing my brief report of this excellent meeting, I congratulate my colleagues from Madrid for their efforts in providing a congress of such quality. It is my hope that, in future years, we will be able to coordinate the dates of our Spanish meeting so as not to clash with the annual meeting of the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology.

Reference

1. Maître Azcárate MJ. Manuel Quero Jiménez, 1941–2003. *Cardiol Young* 2004; 14: 231–233.