

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The 16th World Congress of Anaesthesiologists Conference 2016, Hong Kong – Reflection

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I and two other colleagues of mine attended the World Congress of Anaesthesiologists Conference as both paper presenters and as post graduate trainees of Shaukat Khanum memorial Cancer Hospital & Research Centre, Lahore. The 16th World Congress of Anaesthesiologists (WCA 2016) continued its successful international path by providing a scientific and networking platform in the exciting city of Hong Kong from 28 August to 2 September, 2016.

WCA 2016 is the premium event that ensures all areas of anaesthesiology and its sub-specialities are presented to a truly global audience, with over 9000 delegates attending the congress. The programme showcased the latest research and findings in anaesthesia, pain medicine and intensive care as well as delivered the benchmark for best practice.

The 7 day conference began with a warm welcome from the President of World Federation of Society of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA), Dr David Wilkinson, whom I met twice before in the 11th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation – Association of Anaesthesiologists (SAARC-AA), Nepal and 13th International Conference on Anaesthesia, Pain & Intensive Care (Apicon), Pakistan.

The conference continued with an overwhelming opening ceremony with an astonishing new idea of playing music in hospitals to provide a relaxing environment for the patients and their attendants, after which they called upon a group of musicians to play live for the audience. The recommendation (Grade A) states that: Use of music in the preprocedural period may reduce psychological anxiety and reduce the volume of sedative drugs required to manage anxiety (Grade A means Strong support that merits application). Even though their music was violin instrumental played by a famous band, we still missed our desi cliché music.

After the opening ceremony, the food served was amazing looking which apparently could be eaten only by locals. Not that I mean it was bad, it was just not meant for us. Unluckily, this omen followed us till the last day of conference. Nothing more to say on that part.

Following day was a big day for us. All decked up to present our papers. They had a total of 11 theatres to present a whole bunch of posters/e-posters and papers. Each theatre was designated to a separate entity, mine was Airway and Respiration. I had the pleasure to be a part of a group with consultants from all over the world including Australia, Egypt, India, Spain etc. The discussions lead to

a few healthy arguments and difference in opinions were gracefully accepted among each other. Quite a learning experience it was.

The same day we met Prof. Dr. Miller, author of the book Miller's Anesthesia who was giving off signed copies of his latest edition. We requested to take pictures with him after which in a small talk he asked where we were from. Upon saying Pakistan, he looked at us with a surprise and asked "How did you get here? Which flight flies from Pakistan?" And we gave a detailed answer to his query. We also invited him to Pakistan for our conference and he gladly wrote his phone number and email address on one of the flexicare cards we had.

Third and the fourth days were dedicated to the promotions and new technologies in Anaesthesia including various companies flaunting and advertising their products and latest innovations. In the afternoons and evenings we attended workshops with hands on experience in regional and peripheral nerve blocks, ACLS, thoracic anesthesia, apps and other information devices for anesthesia, transcatheter aortic valve replacement, cannot intubate cannot oxygenate emergency in children, difficult intravenous access in pediatrics – interosseous approach, ultrasound tips and tricks, fibreoptic bronchoscopy, etc.

Fifth and the sixth days we attended two hours of conference in the mornings and left for sight-seeing and other recreational activities which included visiting Peak Victoria, the highest peak point with an amazing view of the entire city. Then we headed to Disneyland Resort where everything was magical (for the kids) and huge scary rides (for us). Our next destination was Ocean Park, a bigger and better version of Sozo water world in Lahore, with amazing water rides and thrilling experience, especially with the roller-coaster.

Overall, with very expensive taxi fares and memorizing bus and subway routes, holding the map every time in our hands, was a new and extraordinary experience.

Attending a conference is a professionally rewarding experience. In addition to socializing with colleagues from other institutions and a trip to a possibly exotic locale, the main reasons to attend a conference are to hear presentations and to converse with other researchers. By far, WCA is one of the best conferences a medical practitioner must attend. Looking forward to attending the 17th WCA 2020, Prague.