

First Joint Meeting in Argentina a Huge Success

The first Joint Meeting of the Argentine Federation (FASO) and the American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery was a huge success. It was held November 17–19, 2005 in the seashore city of Mar del Plata, Argentina, 400 km south of Buenos Aires. Planning for this event began at the 2001 annual meeting through Hector E. Ruiz, MD, the Argentine representative on the Academy's Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Advisory Group (SPAG).

At this highly productive joint meeting, more than 1,500 ENT physicians attended from Argentina and neighboring countries. **Moises A. Arriaga, MD, Ricardo L. Carrau, MD, Jesus E. Medina, MD, and J. Pablo Stolovitzky, MD** ably represented the Academy. Dr. Ruiz, FASO's representative on the Academy's Board of Governors, organized and presided at the meeting, which was arranged in five program areas that addressed every topic in the specialty, with 120 scientific and research works and posters.

Dr. Ruiz noted, "The specialists showed great interest, not only in the topics but also because it was the first Academy meeting in our country. Obviously, in this specialty, the Academy's annual meeting has a leadership and a worldwide scientific actualization, which is why many Argentinean otolaryngologists attend every year to exchange a great deal of information. That is the reason for the success in this start of our relationship with the Academy that we hope will continue through the years. We especially want to thank past President KJ Lee, MD, Coordinator for International Affairs, for all his support and Catherine Lincoln, Director for International Affairs for the big help she gave."

This joint meeting was held in conjunction with the 13th Argentine Rhinology Meeting and the first International Meeting of Voice and Phonoaudiology, developed by Ingo R. Tizte, PhD from USA as homage to Juan Manuel Tato, MD, the Argentine pioneer in Latin-American hearing surgery.

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Global ENT Reaches Santa Ana, El Salvador

Not far from the Guatemala border in the northern part of El Salvador is the pueblo of Santa Ana, wherein lies the Hospital de San Juan de Dios. The hospital, which is surrounded by multiple gardens and a tranquil environment, serves a population of close to half a million people (El Salvador has a population of 6.7 million), of which 37 percent are under the age of 14.

The El Salvadoran healthcare system is under the direction of the Ministry of Health and the country is divided into 14 districts. Healthcare clinics are scattered through-

out the country and there is a well-organized public health system, with experience in national disasters like volcanoes and earthquakes, which are known to the area.

As in most developing countries there is a shortage of trained specialists, equipment, and the needed skills among their physicians to perform the delicate middle ear surgery so needed. The impoverished, who make up 36 percent of the population, frequently lack the funds needed for travel to regional medical centers, where there is the specialized care they need. As a result of economic hardship, neglected benign disease, such as cholesteatoma, is often diagnosed when advanced and/or presenting with a complication such as meningitis, vertigo, facial paralysis, or brain abscess in the developing world.

Through a new program called ENT CORPS, which is like a small ENT peace corps program, Global ENT Outreach is reaching out to address the shortages of ENT physicians, to train ENT physicians overseas to become self sufficient with advanced surgical skills, but even more so to provide humanitarian surgical services in otolaryngology.

The program is open to any ENT who is a humanitarian and shares the common interest of helping those with limited access to care. Residents and fellows in otolaryngology, as well as medical students with interest in ENT are encouraged to consider reaching out beyond the borders of the USA to help others. The warmth of the people and the need for humanitarian assistance in performing surgeries makes a visit to El Salvador or any other country one to remember.

Margaret Mead, the famous anthropologist said, "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

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Surgical Missions to Honduras

Since 1995, Academy Life Fellow Howard W. Smith, MD, DMD has been training Honduran surgeons to repair cleft lips, cleft palates, aural atresia, and other disorders in Hospital Escuela, Tegucigalpa, Honduras. In 2002, 772 procedures were performed in 2003, 778 procedures and, in 2004, 772. The Columbia University otolaryngology department faculty, including Joseph Haddad, MD, have joined in this overseas teaching program, most recently in late January 2006. Edward W. Chang, MD, DDS, who participated, states, "In his efforts, Dr. Smith has stressed the importance of training native surgeons to undertake surgery on their own and to work self-sufficiently without foreign help."

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