CONGRESS REPORT

FOURTH CONGRESS OF THE MACEDONIAN SOCIETY OF NEPHROLOGY, DIALYSIS, TRANSPLANTATION AND ARTIFICIAL ORGANS (MSNDTAO), OHRID, 21–24 JUNE 2012

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The Macedonian Society of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (MSNDTVO) held its Fourth Congress with international participation from 21 to 24 June 2012, in Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia. The European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplantation Association (ERA-EDTA) was a patron of this congress with support in the form of a one-day course for Continuing Medical Education (CME) and with a number of topics presented from members of the group for development of recommendations (European Renal Best Practice – ERBP group). For the first time at this Congress, and in general in the region, support and auspices were received from the International Transplantation Society (TTS), in the context of the main theme of the Congress – the development of renal transplantation not only in the Republic of Macedonia but also in the Balkans. Also, as a parallel event, a 1.5 day workshop was held on "Technical requirements for organ and tissue donation and transplantation" with support from the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange body of the European Council – TAIEX, which organizationally and scientifically supports candidate countries in their educational projects and, within the South Eastern Europe Health Network, co-operation through the regional health development centre for transplantation and organ donation from the Republic of Croatia.

Other sponsors were: the International Faculty for Artificial Organs – IFAO, the European Society for Paediatric Nephrology – ESPN and the International Paediatric Nephrology Association – IPNA.

A distinguishing feature of the Congress was that, for the first time in the Balkans, it was a joint meeting with paediatric nephrologists, i.e. the Fourth
Meeting of the South-Eastern European Paediatric Nephrology Working Group (SEEPNWG) and the first educational course supported by the European and the International Paediatric Nephrology Association.

On the first two days, the congress and the workshop were attended by 342 delegates from 21 countries. There were 32 invited lectures from the EU and USA presented by such eminent nephrologists as President and Secretary of the ERA-EDTA Prof. Raymond Vanholder and Prof. Andrzej Wiecek, as well as the President of the International Transplantation Society, Prof. Francis Delmonico. There were also fruitful discussions over the 36 regional leaders’ lectures in their respective areas of nephrology in the Balkans and Turkey, as well as 24 accepted topics for oral presentation and 50 poster presentations.

The work on the third day of the Congress was completely devoted to renal transplantation from both a living donor and a cadaver through a full day CME Course entitled "Improving organ donation and transplantation as current medical practice." Much interesting data was learnt about the organization of this activity as a complex multidisciplinary project from the experience of other countries, successfully organized on this issue. In addition, there were conclusions and proposals of modifications for the further progress in the development of transplantation in the Balkans and other developing countries.

The Congress was rated by all delegates and lecturers to be on a high scientific level and well organized. Of particular importance is also the fact that, after many years, all presidents of the national nephrology associations and nephrologists from the Balkans and beyond were gathered together, which enabled an exchange of experience and achievements, but also the possibility of considering an actual dimension of the achieved level of implementation of particular guidelines in the respective countries, as a special incentive for further development where it is really needed.

The Fourth Congress of MSNDTAO was successful in scientific terms, but also showed the good-will for regional cooperation and friendship for the generations of nephrologists from the wider Balkan region, showing that despite political turbulences, nephrologists remain doctors without borders and prejudices.

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