

Highlights of 38th annual IUGA meeting with the Continence Foundation of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland, 2013

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This year the 38th annual meeting of the International Urogynecological Association (IUGA) took place in Dublin, Ireland, from 28 May to 1 June at the National Convention Center. The sun shone gloriously for the entire event, highlighting what a magnificent city Dublin is. Declan Keane and his cochair, Barry O'Reilly, extended a hearty welcome to the 1,549 delegates from more than 64 countries.

This year saw two notable firsts for IUGA: the physiotherapy seminar, and the inaugural IUGA golf classic, played at Royal Dublin Golf Club in Clontarf on the site of a famous battle between the Irish and Viking invaders in the year 1014.

The meeting was officially opened at the welcome reception on Wednesday 28 May; however, for the many participants in the physiotherapy seminar and workshops, the meeting was already in full swing. The workshops continue to be of a very high standard and cover a large range of specialty interests. Undoubtedly, participation allows an “up-close and personal” learning experience, with the facility for delegates to interact informally with international experts. The scientific program ran from Thursday to Saturday and consisted of 199 presentations, comprising oral, podium, poster, and video sessions.

The winner of the best abstract was Carl Gustaf Nilsson of Finland: “Long-term follow-up of the TVT operation: 17 years results,” which concluded that the TVT procedure proves to be safe and effective for at least 17 years [1].

Alana Murphy was the winner of the best video presentation; she presented two videos from Cleveland titled “Thigh exploration for excision of a transobturator tape,” and “Transvaginal repair of a neobladder–vaginal fistula” [2, 3]. The initial video highlighted the complex nature of dealing with the specific mesh complication of thigh pain; the latter was an instructional video highlighting the surgical technique in repairing this type of fistula.

The next two awards were for fellows with the best podium presentation and best oral poster. The prize for the best podium presentation went to Jaroslava Karbanova for the body of work titled “Mediolateral vs. lateral episiotomy and associated intrapartum complications in primiparous women.” This randomized control trial of 790 primiparous women found no difference between groups with respect to the rate of obstetric anal sphincter injuries (OASIS) [4]. The winner of the best oral poster presentation was Daniela Ulrich, who presented work she had undertaken in Melbourne, Australia, titled “Biomechanical properties of gelatin-coated polyamide mesh seeded with human endometrial mesenchymal stem cells.” This study concluded that such meshes were less stiff at 90 days of implantation, a property that may be desirable in vaginal mesh [5].

The State of the Art lecture—Titanic 101, the assistant surgeon's story,” was a moving, historical account of Dr. Jack Simpson, the assistant surgeon on board the ill-fated Titanic. It was presented by his great nephew, Mr. John Martin, FRCS, and was a combination of historical facts and personal detail, which transported us to the mid-Atlantic on the night of April 14, 1912. A measure of the impact of the lecture could be seen in the rapt absorption on the faces in the auditorium.

This year, Pamela Moali gave the Ulf Ulmsten Lecture titled “Exposing the science of prolapse meshes: a foundation for future products.” It was a scientific extravaganza looking at all biomechanical aspects of mesh and its evolution, with the

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power to provide a better understanding of the recent mesh controversy and that will lead to more informed debate.

A popular and lighthearted feature of the meeting was the IUGA and International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) debate on the motion that “The house believes that instrumental delivery should be abandoned in favor of caesarean section.” Don Wilson and James Dornan battled bravely and with great humor in favor of the motion but were defeated by Hans Peter Dietz and Michael Turner arguing against the motion. Linda Cardozo had the unenviable roll of chair and coped admirably with her charges.

It was with immense pleasure that the Board awarded Linda Cardozo with the Lifetime Achievement Award “for her many years of dedication to women’s pelvic health as a teacher, treater, thought leader, mentor and role model, a true IUGA icon.”

Bonds are made early in careers, and to this effect, the fellows’ day and evening affords them the opportunity to network and forge the bonds of the future. This year, IUGA Fellows’ Day was held on Wednesday. It consisted of lectures, a lively debate followed by a fellows’ paper session, and a research network meeting.

There were also three special interest group meetings held for pelvic floor rehabilitation, urogenital pain, and laparoscopic surgery.

As always is the case at IUGA meetings, the social events were well attended, allowing old friendships to be rekindled and new ones to flourish. The welcome reception at the National Convention Center saw an awe-inspiring performance from the Celtic Warrior Drummers, who heralded the start to a highly successful meeting.

The Celtic flavor continued into the gala dinner, which was held in The Mansion House, home to Dublin’s lord mayor. The angelic voices of Anuna serenaded the delegates with the songs of yesteryear. With spirits high, the Swing Cats took to the stage, and the delegates took to the dance floor for some serious dancing.

As mentioned earlier, the first IUGA golf classic took place on the hallowed greens of the Royal Dublin Golf Club in

Clontarf. Competition was high, with the honor of being the first winners awarded to Gunther Von Bunau of the Coombe Hospital, Dublin, Ireland, Maria Paraiso of the Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, USA, Craig Van Etten and Art Pleuwes. Art was the talented winner of the closest to the pin contest and Egbert Lenters had the longest drive.

The 38th annual meeting was a resounding success, and we wish to acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors and the hard work and planning of the organization committee. Special thanks to Declan Keane, Barry O’Reilly, and the rest of the local organizing committee for planning a well-rounded meeting!

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