



# The ESNR Congress recovers from COVID!

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic had an important impact on society as a whole but also on medicine. All sectors were affected and resources had to be reallocated in order to fight this disease. Since the initiator was an airborne virus, this led to an important limitation of meetings, internal to the hospitals, national or international. The international meetings were also hit by the travel restrictions. However, much was also learned with the development of electronic means to perform meetings. Therefore, it was still possible to transmit knowledge beyond borders. However, the many other interpersonal aspects of meetings, especially the exchanges during scientific presentations were somehow lost. After a successful online meeting in 2020, it was decided to hold the 2021 ESNR Congress in person in Geneva. The congress was a success of hybrid means with both speakers and participants being partly on site at the Geneva International Congress center or partly online. This shows that by using appropriate measures for protection, it will be possible to hold these types of conferences and hopefully to soon be back to normality with on-site meetings, so the ESNR Annual Congress and the Advanced courses were back in hybrid fashion in Geneva in 2021. When news of the COVID-19 pandemic first broke in early 2019, we had no idea how this would affect our lives or our work. As it became obvious that online meetings started to replace travel and personal proximity, medical society meetings one by one replaced their physical meetings to online meetings. While the use of online tools had certainly been suboptimal before, the replacement to only virtual meetings clearly showed that medical society meetings lived not just from the scientific and educational content but also from all personal contacts and networks built over the years. Pure teaching courses seemed to have suffered too but maybe less. It has been clear that the scientific conferences did not allow extended discussions related to the scientific materials presented orally or in poster format. In addition, for a specialty that is partly industry-driven like ours, the lack of contact with industrial partners sometimes did not allow us to follow the pace of equipment development during the past year. While the 2020 ESNR annual congress as an online meeting was a success, we felt it important to have a real face-to-face meeting again. This is despite regulations being different from country to country and constantly changing in a dynamic way out of our control. Therefore, despite all possible obstacles, we decided to prepare a full teaching and scientific program in the event that the 44<sup>th</sup> ESNR Annual Congress would take place. We could, thanks to the WHO generosity, host the ESNR Annual Congress in the Centre International des Congrès de Genève for 5 days. It was the 4<sup>th</sup> ESNR Congress in Switzerland and in order to ensure attendance, the Swiss Society of Neuroradiology chose to adjourn its meeting until next year. Starting with a pre-meeting course on 7 T MR imaging, the program moved on to the Advanced Courses in Diagnostic and Interventional neuroradiology that have become the ESNR congress standard. Topics covered in the diagnostic part were emergency neuroradiology as well as neuro-COVID, and in the emergency session, both technical and clinical topics were dealt with. In the interventional course, we heard state-of-the-art lectures on the diagnosis and treatment of acute ischemic stroke, as well as what is happening in the fascinating world of aneurysm diagnosis and treatment. After that the first official day, the Annual Scientific Congress took over the program and topics such as epilepsy management, news in neuro-oncology, or even technical developments were addressed. The same was true for the interventional sessions that covered over stroke, aneurysms, carotid artery disease, and so much more. The ESNR congress program was, as in previous years, extremely balanced and gender equal. Speakers from all over the world had been invited and participated even if, unfortunately, several of our overseas colleagues could not attend in person, due to travel restrictions from their country or institution, but did so by recordings that thrilled the audiences. We were thus able to provide the usual collaborative sessions with the ASNR, ASPNR, and ASSR as well as with the ESHNR. The different keynote speakers represented novel aspects of neuroradiology such as policymaking, and the use of teleradiology for

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developing countries. Topics believed were very important especially since this meeting was held in the heart of the Place des Nations, with the European UN headquarters within sight of the congress venue. This demonstrates the wider view of the ESNR and of the discipline neuroradiology as an encompassing and inclusive specialty that goes beyond its primary aims to review and report radiological images and perform specific neuroradiological interventional treatments. Despite all the uncertainties on the way to this successful ESNR Annual Congress, we would like to thank the more than 50 speakers and 600 attendees as well as the members of the scientific committees for making this a year like one of those memorable years before the COVID pandemic. We are happy that the ESNR Annual Congress is back as primary physical meeting even if hybrid this year 2021, and are looking forward to see you all in person for the 45<sup>th</sup> ESNR Annual Congress in Lisbon, Portugal, in September 2022.

**Author contribution** Both authors conceived, wrote, and corrected the paper.

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**Code availability** No software involved.

## Declarations

**Ethics approval** None is necessary since there is no patient data involved.

**Consent to participate** None is necessary since there is no patient data involved.

**Consent for publication** Both authors consent for publication, but see above: no patients involved.

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