



EDITORIAL

Our SECOT congress



A few editorials ago, our Editor-in-Chief said times are changing. Change is an uncompromising necessity in a scientific Society such as ours. One of the greatest showcases for change in a society is its Annual Congress.¹ If you don't communicate change, it's as if it didn't exist. In this spirit of change, and with many hours of enthusiasm, the Board of Directors has worked hard to try to offer members the best scientific, professional and personal experience they could have at an Annual Congress. Communication in the widest sense of the word is inherent in a congress and in our profession too. The need to communicate, share, and learn, within the framework of a Congress, finds a whole range of experiences, brainstorming, and networking which subsequently foster new initiatives, publications, grants, contacts, work visits and friendships that digital encounters cannot provide.² In a recent SECOT survey, our members expressed their desire for face-to-face encounters and the recovery of the spirit of coexistence that had been taken away from them. All of us who have had the privilege of being in Seville have experienced this need to return to normality. The congress activity is directly nourished by healthcare and surgical activity in the same way as healthcare and surgery are directly nourished by courses and congresses.³

In Seville we had the opportunity to introduce changes which we believe should mark a present and a future in the training of our specialty within the congress. Most changes were adopted with an incredible naturalness, which reflects on the great scientific and human quality of our members. Asking a colleague to talk to us about how to invest our savings; how to write a successful abstract, whilst defending conventional surgery against robotics and telling us about their worst cases, was accepted with dedication and complicity. For veterans and young professionals to throw mud at each other and openly argue over matters to then go and have a coffee as friends; for a previous chairperson to debate with a resident physician or young specialist and share experiences; for communications to be reduced to three minutes so as to ask and discuss more and netter; for residents to be able to see and touch experts; for the old guards to meet up again with their mentors, and all under the same roof, is a priceless experience.

Some collectives moved me in particular. So many ex-chairpersons who came to Seville participated actively and debated in a lot of forums with the enthusiasm of a resident, and this is something our Society has to take care of to enjoy the privilege of their example of a lifetime dedicated to their profession. The monographic societies deployed scientific programmes with teaching for all educational levels of our collective, with leading figures in each field and with a mixture of veteran and youth to ensure the transition to an exciting future. The group of residents and young interns had to adapt to the restriction in the number of papers. This was completely premeditated, was initiated in Seville and will be followed up in Valencia. We believe that the Congress should reflect the culture of effort and teach the young that nobody gives anything away for free in our profession. A resident should not have to contribute an oral mediocre lecture every year to an empty room (if it is Friday morning it won't even be attended by his fellow residents and interns). We are sure that a single end-of-residency oral communication will be of exceptional value and will be a just reward for several years of work. We must all get involved with this. Besides, what they cannot communicate in three (or four/five) minutes is better not to communicate at all. The value of one minute, so well understood and accepted in social media, has to be conveyed and accepted in our profession. In our Congress, each minute is and will be as precious as gold. The session of the best papers was the example of the value we are searching for. My heartiest congratulations to all the participants and winners of awards. Thanks also go to the sector that has made our congress possible with its financial, technological and marketing support that is so essential for our professional progress. Its involvement in the Congress teaching programmes was vital to making Seville an unforgettable experience.

The social dimension of our Congress was extensive and left its mark on many of us. The cooperation programmes; the manifold training grants; the interaction with the City of Seville; the ecological certification of the congress; the electric cars and bikes; the breakfast with footballers and engineers; the SECOT games; the interviews with that rogue touch by Entretraumas, and the opening and closing ceremonies which taught us how to ensure that good things happen to us.

Congress digitalisation will become a reality beyond the pandemic. Global access to knowledge will mean the Congress can be recaptured as many of you will already have experienced through our web site. Being able to review a paper or an intervention from the Seville Congress three weeks later, in the comfort of your own home, at the airport, or in a train means we can experience a new dimension to the Congress that was unimaginable in the past. The professional workshops will also have increased impetus with deferred attendance to them all, proffering undeniable added value to everyone. We can return to the Congress many times for months, as if we were actually there in Seville.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity offered by our Journal to express my thanks to the Organising Committee with its chairman Pedro Cano for its work and dedication, to our SECOT Secretariat with Ana Recuero at its helm for its constancy and professionalism; to the whole Board of directors with our Chairman Luis Ramos as its guide, for its perseverance and passion, and above all to all our members who as lecturers or attendees have dedicated their time to sharing, teaching, learning and making SECOT Seville

an extraordinarily educational experience. Thank you everyone for making SECOT Seville 2021 possible. Since our trip back from Seville (and I promise you this is literal) we have already been working on the next SECOT Valencia 2022 Congress, for it to be even bigger and better. We promise you changes and surprises that we will announce in time and we are sure you will stamp the date for SECOT VALENCIA 2022 in your diaries. See you all in Valencia!

References

1. Oester S, Cigliano JA, Hind-Ozan EJ, et al. Why conferences matter—an illustration from the international marine conservation congress. *Front Mar Sci.* 2017;4:257, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2017.00257>.
2. Sarabipour S, Khan A, Seah YS, et al. Changing scientific meetings for the better. *Nat Hum Behav.* 2021;5:296–300.
3. Zierath JR. Building bridges through scientific conferences. *Cell.* 2016;17:167.

Manuel Monteagudo

SECOT spokesperson for teaching and ongoing professional training