



ERS 15th Annual Congress: Copenhagen 2005 Highlights

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The world's largest respiratory congress

Once again, this year's ERS congress exceeded all expectations, with more than 16,000 registered participants, setting new standards for the future. The Bella Center was a perfect venue for the congress, with enough space for all of the different activities.

A new record for the number of abstracts submitted was also achieved, and, as such, the Scientific Programme was of the usual high standard, with good attendance at Symposia and Postgraduate Courses. Due to growing concerns regarding the increasing size and weight of the

printed Abstract Book, a new facility for printing a personalised Abstract Book was developed, called the Abstract Print Zone, and this proved to be an enormous success in Copenhagen, with more than 55,000 pages printed.

For the duration of the congress, Copenhagen and the surrounding area welcomed the delegates with mild and dry weather, providing excellent opportunities to enjoy the easy-going atmosphere of the city and its various restaurants, parks and museums.

Although some delegates were staying a considerable distance from the congress venue, the efficient transportation systems in Denmark and Sweden served the congress well.

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The Abstract Print Zone, trialled for the first time in Copenhagen, proved to be a resounding success.

A fairy-tale welcome

The Opening Ceremony was inspired by the 200-year anniversary of the birthday of Denmark's world-famous poet and fairy-tale writer, Hans Christian Andersen. The Boys' Marching Band from the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen welcomed the delegates into the ceremony and The Pantomime Theatre performed the fairy tale "The Princess and the Pea".

During the ceremony, the Presidential Award was given to Greta Barnes for her outstanding contribution to respiratory medicine within the field of education of doctors and nurses in the management of asthma. This was the first time that this prestigious award has been given to a nurse and the ERS President, Ronald Dahl, emphasised that it is the quality of care provided that is most important, not who is delivering the care. The European Lung Foundation (ELF) Award went to the outstanding statistician Professor Sir Richard Peto for his lifelong involvement in epidemiological studies on the effect of smoking in respiratory and non-respiratory diseases. The "grand old man" of Danish respiratory medicine, Dr Kaj Viskum, received the Congress Chair Award. In addition, two new awards, the Romain Pauwels Research Fund and the Jean-Claude Yernault Educational Award, were announced.

The Opening Ceremony was attended by over 3,000 delegates and was followed by a reception with food and drinks and a variety of performances.



Increasing public awareness of lung health



Following last year's tradition, the focus on lung health was continued in Copenhagen, with a high-profile media campaign highlighting the burden of lung diseases, in particular chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. The Spirometry Tent was set up in the Town Hall Square and, over 2 days, 1,114 members of the public put their lungs to the test. A total of 24.5% had airways obstruction (forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV₁)/forced vital capacity <70%) and, in 22.5%, a FEV₁ lower than 80% of that predicted was observed, which is almost double the value found in Glasgow in 2004.

Social events

The organised sightseeing tours around the most exciting places in the Copenhagen region were all sold out, and the concert performed by the Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra was well attended and the programme of music greeted with enthusiasm by the audience.

Those who attended the Speakers' Dinner, held at The Old Royal Stock Exchange, were treated to an evening in historical surroundings, together with good food and relaxed entertainment from the Royal Opera singers.

To sum up, both Congress Chairs enjoyed these exciting days in Copenhagen and we hope that this also was the case for the 16,015 participants at this year's event. We wish to thank The Copenhagen City Council and The Wonderful Copenhagen Tourist Bureau for making this year's Congress so memorable!