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Meeting report

Report on the 2nd Florence International Symposium on Advances in Cardiomyopathies: 9th meeting of the European Myocardial and Pericardial Diseases WG of the ESC

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A bridge between clinical and basic science aiming at cross fertilization, with leading experts presenting alongside junior investigators, is the key feature of the “2nd Florence International Symposium on Advances in Cardiomyopathies”, 9th Meeting of the Myocardial and Pericardial Diseases Working Group of the European Society of Cardiology, which was held in Florence, Italy on 26 – 28th September 2012.

Patients with cardiomyopathies, with an estimated 3 per thousand prevalence in the general population, constitute an increasingly large proportion of patients seen by most cardiologists.

This class of diseases, which are mostly genetically determined with different transmission modalities, can cause important and often unsolved management problems, despite rapid advances in the field. On the other hand, few other areas of cardiology have seen such an impressive contribution from basic science and translational research to the understanding of their pathophysiology and clinical management. The course was designed to constantly promote close interaction between basic science and clinical practice and highlight the top scientific and translational discoveries in this field in 10 scientific sessions. It was preceded by two mini-courses, which included the basic concepts of cardiomyocyte mechanical and electrophysiological properties and mechanisms, how-to sessions for clinical diagnosis and management and illustrative case study presentations of different cardiomyopathies.

By general consensus, the meeting was very successful, considering that over 300 physicians, clinical researchers, cardiologists, pathologists, basic scientists and young investigators attended from 30 different countries including the United States, Australia, Argentina, Egypt and Qatar. Both the Minicourses and the Main Sessions received enthusiastic response from the audience, and the meeting rooms were consistently well attended until late in the evening. We need to give credit to the Faculty for the outstanding quality of the talks.

Furthermore, at least two novel aspects of the meeting deserve to be highlighted:

1. There was an intentional and unprecedented level of integration between basic and clinical science, in each individual sessions, combining genomics and molecular biology with clinical management. This fostered a very close interchange between physicians, geneticists and clinical scientists, which enormously enhanced the investigative conversation that keeps cardiac research moving forward.
2. Each of the main sessions included keynote lectures by senior investigators as well as presentations from young scientists and physicians, with original contributions selected by the

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scientific committee. This formula was particularly stimulating due to the complementary nature of the contributions; the right mix of experience and enthusiasm was truly contagious and enjoyable. The quality of the abstracts and the 3 winning abstract presentations, showed outstanding enthusiasm from the young investigators in basic research. They bring a sense of optimism and courage to all of us.

The II Florence Meeting 2012 provided all the attendees with an opportunity to improve their understanding in this challenging area of cardiology and to stimulate further research in the field. *“Meetings are for meeting, and must be inspirational”*. This is particularly true for this II International Florence meeting, thanks to the Scientific Committee and the Faculty for their valuable contribution. We do hope to organize the third one in the near future.

For those that couldn't make it, the final program and most of the talks are available on the Qatar Cardiovascular Research Center website: <http://www.qcardio.org/knowledge-hub.php>