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EUROSON Preview

Interviewee

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The European Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology (EFSUMB) holds its 26th Congress (EUROSON 2014) in Tel Aviv from 26-28 May. EFSUMB was formed more than 40 years ago, and has a key role in education, research and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The European Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology has the slogan “Building a European Ultrasound Community”. As EFSUMB’s President how do you see that goal being realised?

What we have done is to create pillars to identify and promote our community. For example, for teaching we have created an EFSUMB course book and course book student edition. We produce scientific guidelines and recommendations. We have guidelines on ultrasound and contrast-enhanced ultrasound, which were created in cooperation with our member societies. We also have recommendations on reporting and on minimum training requirements. The other pillars of our Federation are the EUROSON Schools, and the EUROSON Congress. We cooperate at every kind of level in various activities.

EFSUMB has produced several guidelines, including those on CEUS and elastography. What other guidelines are being developed?

We have published guidelines on contrast-enhanced ultrasound for liver (Claudon et al. 2013) and non-liver applications (Piscaglia et al. 2012). The former was a joint venture between the EFSUMB and the World Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology. I am currently editing a book about interventional US in German and English, covering technical and clinical aspects and also endoscopic guidance. This was behind the idea and basis to initiate a new generation of evidence based EFSUMB-guidelines, which will be available early in 2015.

Ultrasound as a modality is used by many specialist doctors. Can you comment about standards and quality of training in Europe?

There's a lot of work going on in education and training at every level. We have defined standards for every level, from the student up to very specialised doctors. We can only offer our quality standards to be approved by the local authorities of the respective countries, as we are not a regulatory authority.

EFSUMB has proposed the term "Echoscapy" for bedside focused, clinically simple applications with handheld scanners (EFSUMB Executive Bureau 2013). Can you explain more about this and how does it differ from point-of-care ultrasound?

You can do point-of-care ultrasound with a high-end ultrasound machine, with a mobile unit, which has sophisticated features, and you can do it with a hand-held device. However, the term point-of-care ultrasound does not imply which machine and what level of expertise the doctor performing the examination should have. This is our definition of “point-of-care”, and the term “echoscapy” means it's not a ultrasound examination, it does not exclude pancreatic or liver tumours. It's a term that covers limited clinical questions that can be answered by a handheld device. It can be used after biopsy, for checking fluid, or if there is bleeding, to look for pleural and pericardial effusion and ascites, in the shock patient, for contractility of the heart and also for the gall bladder and other abdominal organs and vessels.

You edited the comprehensive EFSUMB Course Book. Please tell us more.

The EFSUMB course book on ultrasound can be freely downloaded all over the world. The idea behind it was to build the ultrasound community in Europe. We bring together three authors from three different countries on each chapter, working together, and to me that is building an ultrasound community in practice. All countries are invited to review the book chapters. The book includes a learning system and is accompanied by videos on examination techniques, tips and tricks. It is particularly useful for those countries, which might not have so many resources. Therefore up to now we offer the book as a free download or as a print publication at a reasonable price.

Can you tell me more about the Ultrasound Learning Centres project of the EFSUMB?

There are qualified learning centres all over the world, which not only promote courses but also offer US learning according to defined criteria.
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This project is in process in Europe.

What are you looking forward to the most at EUROSON 2014 in Tel Aviv?

I believe in building up a European ultrasound community. That's the real challenge, so it is good to hold the congress in the 'periphery' of Europe. The congress offers the opportunity to continue building up a European ultrasound community with high technology and collaboration with colleagues and industry.

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