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European Society of Intensive Care Medicine: 25 Years of Progress and Innovation

In 2007, the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM) will celebrate 25 years since it was founded

in Geneva in 1982. To mark this anniversary, the Society's Annual Congress in Berlin this year will combine the special celebrations with an exciting and novel scientific programme.

ESICM's Annual Congress has, over the recent years, been going from strength to strength. Each year, the number of attendees is growing with a total of over 6,000 participants contributing to last year's successful event in Barcelona. The Society's meeting is rapidly becoming the main event in the world for the presentation of research pertinent to critical care. Last year, there were over 1,400 abstracts submitted for presentation at the meeting. This year, a similar number is expected. The emphasis that ESICM puts on the presentation of novel research data and the time allotted to the debate of this topic allows not only young researchers to develop their skills, but also more established names to extol their theories. We believe that this open environment on the one hand provokes interesting and fruitful discussion and on the other hand, that it helps to improve our understanding of the practice of critical care and the new theories and developments that emerge constantly.

Prior to the meeting this year, there will be a number of pre-congress courses. These will cover topics such as echocardiography, weaning from mechanical ventilation, sepsis, disaster medicine, and stress metabolism. There will also be a 'refresher' course, designed to cover all the basics of critical care in a day and a half, with the aim of both educating towards the European Diploma and providing updated information to the more senior members of our specialty. These courses are often very popular and usually sell out quickly, so it is worth booking your place well in advance.

Furthermore, this year, the main programme has been designed to reflect the progresses and innovations relevant to intensive care medicine as a specialty that has grown and matured over the last 25 years and has become an established, relied upon and respected part of hospital medicine. To recognise recent developments, as well as past advancement, the congress will follow a thread on fourteen of the most significant topics pertinent to these changes. This will allow attendees, if they wish, to update their knowledge on all the major advances of our specialty. In order to recognise the achievements of the last 25 years, all attendees will also be presented with the book 25 Years of Progress and Innovation by the most senior members of the Society regarding the changes and current concepts that would be discussed at the meeting.

Throughout the three-day congress, there will be ten parallel sessions contributing to a comprehensive overview of critical care medicine. These sessions will provide a mixture of 'state-of-the-art' data, professional development, clinical challenges and core competencies. They will cover virtually every topic relevant to our specialty and will give attendees the opportunity to acquire new information not only on the basics but also on the modern theories and controversies of our field that are still widely disputed. An outstanding international faculty will represent all corners of the globe and will be able to provide insights, opinions and debates that we can all learn from.

Celebrating our anniversary whilst providing a programme, designed to maintain the highest standards of scientific excellence and education, will become a powerful combination. In addition to this, visitors will also be able to sample the cultural and social delights on offer in Berlin. This should make for an exciting and popular meeting this year and we look forward to welcoming you at the opening ceremony.

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