

Volume 13 - Issue 2, 2013 - Perspectives

Hospitalar- The Leading Medical Fair in South America

Interviewee

Dr. Waleska Santos

President of HOSPITALAR

Interviewed by

Claire Pillar

Managing Editor

Each May Brazil hosts the Hospitalar Fair and Forum, which is the leading medical fair in South America. HealthManagement spoke to its founder and President, Dr. Waleska Santor.

Hospitalar has grown from its beginnings in 1992 to become the leading medical fair in South America. What are your ambitions for Hospitalar for the future?

It is our intention to constantly reiterate our importance to the industry by providing updated information, responses to health requirements, proposals for solutions to problems and suggestions for making better decisions. At the same time, our objective is to introduce new equipment, devices and services, so as to obtain better results in patient care.

We want to continue making a difference for the healthcare industry and to work to maintain the influence we have achieved. That is why we are permanently alert to trends and changes. Our intention is also to foster telemedicine, tele-assistance and e-Health, which in my opinion represent the shortest and most economical route for disseminating knowledge and providing distance support for basic patient services.

What were the highlights of Hospitalar 2013?

Worthy of mention is Digital Health, which had a 15% larger exhibition area and offered several professional enhancement events involving technology and health. We were also treated to new ideas at the forum which, year after year, is becoming diversified, hosting new partners interested in introducing quality content about healthcare management. The new departures in 2013 at the forum were the CISS – the International Congress on Healthcare Services and the 1st Einstein Nursing Meeting, which was held in partnership with one of Brazil's top hospitals.

The numbers of international visitors to Hospitalar is growing year after year, and in 2013 we hosted professionals from 74 countries who came in search of new ideas that the Brazilian and global industry has to offer, given that we had 615 foreign exhibitors (out of a total of 1,250) from 36 countries.

Proof of the international importance of the event is the fact that four European ministers of health came to the fair to find out more about the Brazilian healthcare market and to build closer relationships and partnerships. They were: Daniel Bahr, Germany's Minister of Health; Kenneth Clarke, Minister without Portfolio, in the government of Prime Minister David Cameron, for promoting British business overseas; Arlene Foster, Northern Ireland Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment; and Pia Olsen Dyhr, Danish Minister of Trade and Investment. Hospitalar is increasingly becoming the meeting point for countries, and we intend to encourage this healthy exchange.

What other events are held in parallel with Hospitalar and what were the highlights in 2013?

In terms of exhibitions there were three parallel events to Hospitalar: "Diagnóstica" – the International Fair for Products, Equipment and Services Clinical Analysis and Pathology; "Hospfarma" - the International Fair for Hospital Pharmacy and Drugstore Products; and Digital Health – the International Fair and Forum for Telemedicine, Tele-Healthcare and Information Technology for Healthcare, which held its second edition in 2013 and has become a huge success with exhibitors and visitors.

In the case of the Forum, HOSPITALAR holds about 60 events simultaneously with the Fair. In 2013, worthy of note was the CISS – the International Congress on Healthcare Services, which replaced the Latin American Congress and introduced a more global approach to healthcare issues, with speakers from Russia, the United States, Scotland, Colombia, Spain and Brazil. entire process and work on a personalised medicine approach. Since all labs do not have the infrastructure to store data in their servers or set up a bioinformatics division, there are a few cloud based data storage software that have been recently developed. However, much more needs to be done in this aspect to develop more publicly available data repositories and tools that will simplify the entire data storage and exchange process.

Healthcare Systems Face Two Major Challenges: 1) Increasing Costs and Limited Budgets and 2) Ageing Population, Increase in Chronic Diseases. How are Innovative Technologies Meeting this Challenge?

One example is the advent of OMICS technologies and tests based on biomarkers: Predictive and/or screening tests that can help early diagnosis have been introduced in several countries, which help in informed decision making and also reduce healthcare costs in the long-run.

Medical Imaging was Identified by the New England Journal of Medicine as One of the Top Developments in Clinical Medicine in the Last Millennium. What do You See as the Leading Development in Medical Technology in the 21st Century so Far?

Hybrid imaging is seen as one of the leading developments in medical technology. Hybrid imaging is defined as the fusion of two or more imaging technologies into a single form of imaging. Ideally, this mode of imaging is considered to be most powerful, more powerful than the individual modalities. Some of the hybrid imaging modalities may be used to illustrate only anatomical details, and more and more hybrid imaging modalities are being used to explore in vivo molecular processes rather than anatomical details. Some of the hybrid modalities that are now in existence include ultrasonography (US)/magnetic resonance (MR) imaging, computed tomography (CT)/ angiography, MR imaging/angiography, etc. Researchers believe that the potential for hybrid imaging is immense and in future it can be used for the development of personalised medicine.

Can You Identify Trends in Medical Devices and Imaging Technology Innovation? What's Driving These Innovations?

There is a clear trend towards molecular diagnostic and imaging technologies. More and more imaging technologies are focusing on the spatiotemporal distribution of molecular and cellular processes for diagnostic and therapeutic applications. The bottom line is to detect the disease at the cellular level to prevent its occurrence at macroscopic level.

Imaging is an Easy Target in Healthcare Budgets, as the Costs are Easily Seen and have Rapidly Increased Over the Last Few Decades. How can Industry Work with Clinicians to Prove the Benefits and Value of Medical Imaging?

OEM vendors are now focusing more on the clinical benefits of the imaging modalities. Manufacturers need to be more innovative in order to provide accurate, reliable and end-user friendly equipment. The current trend is towards streamlining workflow procedures so that patient turnabout rate can be increased. Another focus is on the use of big data to improve healthcare delivery. Healthcare big data requires advanced algorithms for effectively processing the data with tolerable speed so that hospitals and medical centres can collect, search and share data without compromising on security. Hospital big data analytics can be implemented for enhancing hospital operations, tracking outcomes of clinical and surgical procedures, tracking patient history etc.

Do You Think Enough is Being done to Educate Patients and Society about Innovative Medical Technologies?

Patient-resource websites play a key role in the adoption of new innovative medical imaging technologies. Most medical imaging companies have a page on their website dedicated to patient imaging, covering issues such as who needs a particular medical imaging procedure for which type of medical disorders.

Are Barriers to Innovation such as Pressures on Reimbursement, Economic Recession, Concerns Over Diagnostic Radiation Hampering Innovation in Medical Technology?

To a certain degree such factors are acting as challenges for medical imaging innovations. However, at the same time, there are funding bodies (government or private) that are financing the development of healthcare technologies. Healthcare technologies and IT developments have always remained the top priority of all developed and developing nations. Economic recession and reimbursement cuts have definitely impacted the healthcare industry, but manufacturers have started focusing on streamlining workflows with their imaging solutions within hospital environments so that hospital turnover can be increased. Also with the increased concern over diagnostic radiation issues, many companies are now working on low-dosage high-contrast image generation.

What's on the Horizon for Medical Imaging?

The trend is towards molecular imaging where the bottom line is to detect at the microscopic level before the disease starts to manifest at the macroscopic level. Imaging has progressed from displaying anatomical shapes to describing the internal functions of the main organs. Medical imaging is progressing towards more improved disease management along with personalised treatment. In the future, there is will more predictive diagnosis and personalised medicine for the prevention of chronic diseases.

Published on : Thu, 19 Sep 2013