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Wonderful, Wonderful Copenhagen

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In 2008, the European Society of Anaesthesiologists (ESA) will hold its annual scientific meeting, Euroanaesthesia, for the first time in Denmark at the Bella Conference Centre, Copenhagen. We look forward to welcoming you to this beautiful city. Yet again, intensive care medicine will have a high profile at this four day meeting, with two symposia based on sepsis, and five refresher courses covering weaning strategies (Grasso, Italy), renal replacement therapy (Schuerholz, Germany), and monitoring of the microcirculation (Stuber, Germany). ScvO₂ and treatment strategies for secondary peritonitis will also be discussed. Pro/con debates will cover the use of insulin in the management of the critically ill (Scheeren vs. Pearse), and the use of hydrocortisone in septic shock (Martin vs. Druml). Coagulation in sepsis will be covered in detail, as will mechanical ventilation.

In other sections of this large meeting, paediatric resuscitation (Habre, Geneva) and trauma resuscitation (Brattebo, Norway) are covered, as are "hot topics" in emergency medicine. These include management of severe head trauma and spinal cord injury, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. A symposium on thrombolytic treatment in emergencies, chaired by Jerry Nolan (Bath, UK) looks promising, with the management of myocardial infarction, pulmonary embolism and ischaemic stroke being discussed. Non-invasive ventilation in the pre-hospital setting and the use of therapeutic hypothermia for traumatic brain injury will be studied in detail in specially designed workshops.

Ethical issues in the critically ill receive coverage, including "Beyond end of life care". Living wills, do not resuscitate orders, and refusal of care in the intensive care unit will be discussed. Nonheart beating organ donation and ethical developments in transplantation medicine will be considered, as will discrimination against the morbidly obese patient.

Communication in critical care receives detailed consideration both from the patient and the staff perspective – how should we teach communication skills in this context? Maire Shelly has some suggestions. Coping with stress in this clinically demanding area is considered and explanations for its causes are given. A session on new systematic reviews in critical care is chaired by Arash Afshari (Denmark).

A joint symposium on monitoring in anaesthesia and intensive care in 2008 will consider functional haemodynamic monitoring in sepsis and acute lung injury and metabolic monitoring. An update on EEG monitoring in the critically ill by Vakkuri and Yli-Hankala (both from Finland) will be given in detail.

Of the 1300 abstracts submitted for poster presentation, several are covering aspects of intensive care. A Best Abstract Prize Competition will be held at the meeting, with judges choosing the best three out of a short-list of six abstracts.

The winners will all receive cash prizes and a ticket for the conference party on the Sunday evening. The next best 12 abstracts will also have the opportunity to present their abstracts verbally.

The social programme is a fun part of the congress. The Euroanaesthesia 2008 Opening Ceremony promises to be an extraordinary show as the Danish Peter Schaufuss ballet – the first independent, internationally touring ballet company in Denmark – is putting together an unparalleled performance. Make sure to book a ticket for the networking evening at the Statens Museum for Kunst, where masterpieces can be enjoyed with delicious refreshments – the perfect opportunity to mingle with your colleagues from around the world. And last but not least, visit the Euroanaesthesia Trade Exhibition where international companies will display the latest within the field of anaesthesia and intensive care medicine. Stop by at the ESA stand where many of our National Societies will be exhibiting, sharing information about their activities. And if you are considering taking the exam for the European Diploma in Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care the ESA stand will feature a simulation test that will help prepare for the exams.

So there is plenty in the scientific and congress programme to tempt intensivists to Copenhagen from May 31st –

June 3rd 2008. I am grateful to Professor Gernot Marx, Chairman of the intensive care subcommittee of the Scientific Programme Committee of the ESA and all his team for their efforts in putting together such an exciting aspect to this year's programme. I look forward to seeing you all again. I am confident that we will all receive a very warm reception from the Danish Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care Medicine in Copenhagen.

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