

STS/EACTS/Latin America Cardiac Surgery Conference 2019

Rising attendance, and a very successful meeting

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The third edition of this educational programme took place 22–24 November under the direction of leading members of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) and EACTS, and prestigious surgeons from Latin America.

The two-and-a-half-day conference was held at the International Convention Centre in Cancun, Mexico – a very large venue fit to gather the more than 300 in attendance from Central and South America, as well as many other countries all over the world. About one fifth of the attendees were able to get a scholarship of close to \$1,000 provided through the Thoracic Surgery Foundation thanks to the generous donations of Edwards and GoreTex. A special fee was also offered for young surgeons coming from Latin America.

The main hall was used for plenary sessions on mitral and aortic valve disease treatment, discussion on the last trends in the pathology of the aorta and to emphasise the importance of getting high-quality data to build better databases on the epidemiology and outcomes of the surgical procedures. Sessions with experts presenting complex and unusual cases for open discussion were well attended, as was a very successful session focused on reviewing the latest breaking trials in the cardiovascular field. Lunch symposia offered by industry were also very well attended.

When no plenary sessions were taking place, the conference was divided into three separate and parallel lecture rooms: one devoted to adult cardiac surgery, another to heart failure and its treatment (including transplantation and circulatory assistance), and a final room to congenital heart diseases and their treatment.

Abstracts were selected and allocated to the different sessions, and the award for the best abstract presentation, which includes free registration for the next Latin America Cardiac Surgery Conference, was obtained by a surgeon from Bogotá, Colombia. Posters also proved very interesting and, this year, an award was given to a Belgian author (currently residing in the US) of two posters that explored the attendance level of women at meetings within our specialty.

This year, for the first time, we also incorporated wet labs to serve as workshops on mitral and tricuspid valve repair, aortic valve replacement and the Ross procedure. Pigs supported on platforms were used to guide attendees in performing mitral or tricuspid ring annuloplasties, and to learn how to implant artificial chords in the papillary muscles and the leaflets. Implantation of a mechanical prosthesis in the aortic position, dissection of the pulmonary valve and trunk for the Ross operation, or the implantation of a graft in the aortic position were also part of the hands-on sessions.

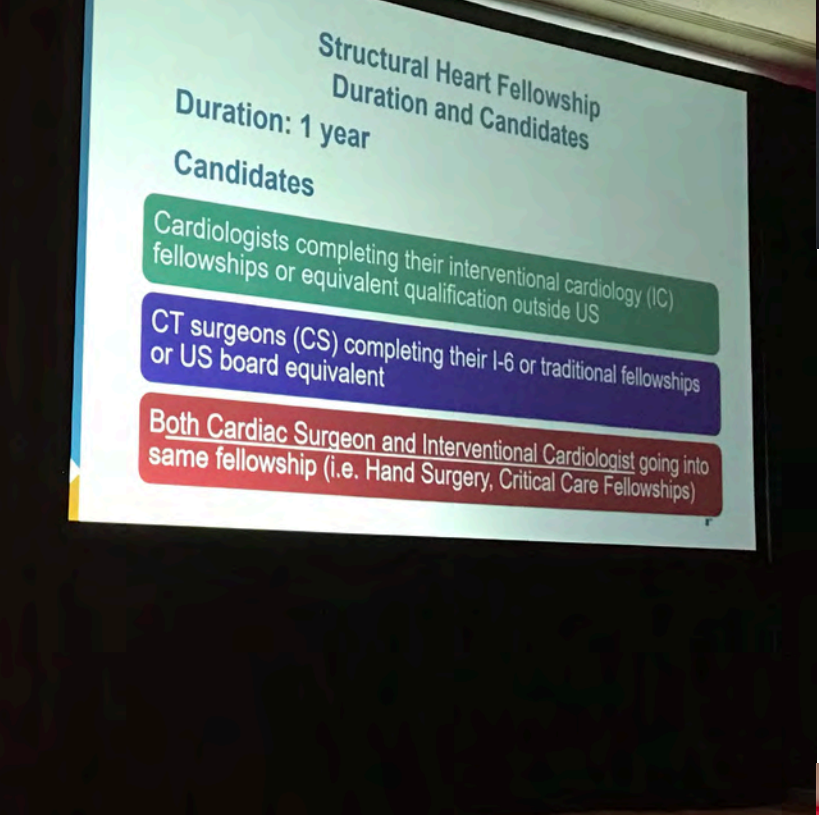
The three differentiated labs were, for three hours each, an exceptional forum where attendees not only received help from some of the world's leading experts, but where they also had, with the aid of adequate surgical instruments, the possibility of performing learned techniques and discussing appropriate tips and tricks with the tutors.

Finally, social events – including a reception in a typical Hacienda – allowed for outstanding networking among all participants, opening up a unique chance to discuss details not completely understood during the oral sessions.

In summary, this third STS/EACTS/Latin America Cardiac Surgery Conference proved that efforts by such an outstanding faculty and organisation are worth pursuing in order to achieve a continuous education in cardiac surgery in this wonderful part of the world. Furthermore, the Conference fostered networking between top specialists in the USA, Latin America and Europe in order to expand the exchange of

Directors of the Conference, this year led by EACTS, were: José L. Pomar (Barcelona, Spain); Patrick Perier (Bad Neustadt, Germany); Lorenzo Galletti (Rome, Italy); Joseph Bavaria (Philadelphia, USA); Vinod Thourani (Atlanta, USA); Juan Pablo Umaña (Bogotá, Colombia) and Nestor Sandoval (Bogotá, Colombia).

The support and permanent help of the Mexican Society of Cardiac Surgery through the past President, Alejandro Rey, the current President, Jose Antonio Heredia, and the Editor-in-Chief of CIRUGÍA CARDIACA EN MÉXICO, Ovidio A. García-Villarreal, along with many of its members, has set an example of collaboration that we hope to achieve in coming editions of the Conference.



STS/EACTS Latin America Cardiovascular Surgery Conference

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knowledge and surgical skills between senior and younger colleagues.

In addition, it served as a confidence boost for industry in supporting this exceptional conference for the coming years, and supported ways in which to obtain adequate resources for better data acquisition and analysis.

The next edition of the STS/EACTS/Latin America Cardi-

ac Surgery Conference will take place November 19–21, 2020 in Santiago, Chile.

Head to <https://www.cardiovascularsurgeryconference.org/> to learn more.

