

EuroEcho-Imaging 2013: No Heart Disease Diagnosis and Treatment Without Imaging



As highlighted though the sessions dedicated to interventions during EuroEcho-Imaging 2013, it is not just the diagnosis of cardiovascular disease that would be impossible without imaging, successful treatment is also becoming increasingly depending on the various techniques available.

Prof Gilbert Habib, EACVI President Elect, from France's La Timone Hospital in Marseille explained how important it was for clinicians to have a solid overall knowledge of the different imaging techniques in order to select the most appropriate strategy for individual patients. He went on to describe the evolution of the echo congress into an imaging congress that included echo, MRI, CT and nuclear imaging, with the key message that several imaging techniques are now available.

EuroEcho-Imaging 2013 has become by far the largest international medical meeting addressing imaging, welcoming 3,300 delegates from 90 countries over four days and once again proving a record breaking event offering scientific and individual sessions. The impact of imaging on the diagnosis and treatment of heart failure was one of the main themes this year, with abstract submissions up 20% from last year.

Associate Professor Omac Tufekcioglu, EuroEcho-Imaging 2013 local host, from Turkey Yuksek Ihtisas Hospital in Ankara, and Chair of the Turkish Cardiac Imaging Working Group of the Turkish Society of Cardiology said that Imaging played an essential role in addressing heart failure, which is a real issue in Turkey. He listed the other areas where imaging was vital as interventional cardiology, congenital heart disease and valvular heart disease, mentioning that patients may not realise it, but they all benefited from these new imaging technologies.

Professor Gilbert Habib said: "The main objective for the future will be to show that imaging may be of prognostic value with patients with heart failure. We are sure that the results of imaging studies will have an influence on the prognosis and treatment of patients with heart failure".

The second theme was imaging in interventional cardiology, as recent advances in minimally invasive percutaneous interventions would not have been possible without the parallel developments in cardiac imaging, allowing precise guidance of catheters, optimisation of results and detection of complications. As Dr Eric Brocher from Paris' Hopital Bichat in France stated, it was critical that interventionalists and echocardiographers maintained a constant dialogue regarding anatomical structure and function, as well as progress throughout the procedures. He further stressed that in order to ensure communication is good, they needed to work together on a regular basis and learn to speak the same anatomical language.

Imaging experts were able to depart from this meeting having heard all the latest research in cardiovascular imaging for a practical day to day approach of the patient as imaging was central to clinical decision making. EACVI President, Professor Patrizio Lancellotti, from Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Liege, Belgium said: "The patient-centered strategy often requires a multi-imaging approach to define the appropriate management and clinical decision making. Stratifying the type of exams in a dedicated patient, clearly depends on the clinical context. The added value of new technologies from each modality is indisputable".

The NORRE study that was presented at Euro-Echo Imaging 2013 was mentioned as a key study during the inaugural session, with Professor Lancellotti explaining that NORRE was the first European multi-centre study aiming to provide a set of normal values for echocardiography using modern technologies. He said that it gave applicable data for clinical routine that would be swiftly implemented in all echocardiographic laboratories, with the potential of changing the life of all imaging stakeholders practicing echo routinely.

The inaugural session focused on the tenth anniversary of EACVI with talks from EACVI's first President Professor Fausto Pinto who is now ESC's President-Elect, and Luc Piérard, also a European imaging pioneer who took the audience through ten years of imaging history, starting with the early 2D echo days through to the most recent techniques. Predicting what the future will hold for the next ten years, Professor Lancellotti believed that the imaging community will most certainly grow and become influential at all different European and international levels.

Professor Habib concluded he would definitely ensure continuity by carrying on the fantastic work of his predecessors, particularly in the fields of education and research. According to him, young investigators represented the life blood of the EACVI organization and the future belonged to them. Rather than just focusing on one imaging technique in the course of their careers they were likely to use a variety of them and having a good overall knowledge of the different techniques would enable clinicians to determine the most appropriate strategy for their individual patient.

Associate Professor Tufekcioglu intends to continue to strengthen his excellent collaboration with EACVI, in terms of teaching and increasing the number of Turkish members in the EACVI's Club 35, the ideal platform to network with the rest of the young European imaging community.

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