The 4th Iranian International Headache Congress was held from September 16-18 in Tehran. This was the first Congress held subsequent to the Iranian Headache Association (IHA) becoming an Affiliate Member Society of the International Headache Society (IHS), which occurred in January, 2015. As such, for the first time, the IHA meeting was performed under the auspice of IHS, utilizing its “Visiting Professor program”.

The Congress was also supported by the Iranian Neurological Association (INA) in addition to one international pharmaceutical company (Sanofi S.A.) and one domestic pharmaceutical company (Dr. Abidi Co.).

In addition to Prof. Hayrunnisa Bolay from Turkey and Prof. Robert Cowan from the USA, who attended as visiting professors, Prof. Alan Rapoport, Immediate Past president of IHS, was this year’s honorary guest speaker. Prof. Rapoport played a tremendous role as facilitator between the IHS and IHA during his tenure as IHS president and his efforts throughout the collaboration and planning phases of this congress was extremely valuable to the IHA and its members. Other international invited speakers were Dr. Hossein Ansari from the USA and Dr. Farooq Maniyar from the UK.

The congress took place in one of the largest conference centers in Tehran, located at the Olympic Hotel, which also served as lodging for the international speakers and most attendees from other cities within Iran.

340 physicians and researchers from 26 different cities/universities participated in the congress. Most registrants were Neurologists and Neurology residents, however, general practitioners, Pharmacists, Nutritionists and other specialties including Otolaryngology, Neurosurgery, Psychiatry and Anesthesiology/pain also were among the participants in attendance.

The scientific program, was held over the course of two and a half days and was designed to be as versatile as possible in order to accommodate guest schedules and allow for flexibility of those in attendance. Sessions were held in Farsi during the mornings, from 8:00-10:00 a.m. After the morning coffee break all subsequent sessions were held in English.

During the Opening Ceremony, attendees were welcomed by the Chairman of the IHA, Prof. Togha, and the President of the INA, Prof. Pakdaman. In addition, Prof. Rapoport also briefly reviewed the benefits of IHA’s new affiliation with the IHS and the multiple benefits now available to IHA members.
The following topics were covered by International presenters over the course of 2.5 days:

- Prof. Alan Rapoport:
  1. ICHD-3: Updates and flaws
  2. Pathophysiology of Migraine – CGRP
  3. Migraine: abortive and preventive treatment, what is coming down the pipeline?

- Prof. Hayrunnisa Bolay:
  1. Increased intracranial Pressure / Idiopathic intracranial Hypotension
  2. Basic science research in Headache, how to use animal models
  3. Challenges in Pediatric Headache

- Prof. Robert Cowan:
  1. Out-patient management of intractable headache
  2. Non-Cephalic Migraine Equivalents
  3. The use of Technology to bring expert diagnosis and treatment to patients with headache

- Dr. Hossein Ansari:
  1. Cervicogenic Headache
  2. Cluster Headache
  3. Procedural treatments of Migraine headache

- Dr. Farooq Maniyar:
  1. Other Trigeminal Autonomic Cephalalgias
  2. Migraine: Premonitory phase, Aura, Headache and resolution: how to differentiate the symptoms
  3. Optimizing treatment of acute migraine attack: what is the indications for hospitalization

In addition to international speakers, 20 domestic speakers presented lectures on a variety of headache disorders. Well-structured lectures covered mostly diagnostic and treatment approaches to different headaches with an emphasis on Migraine. Fundamental diagnostic aspects of the International Classification of Headache Disorders, 3rd edition (beta version) were highlighted describing diagnostic criteria of named headache disorders.

Several case-presentations were utilized by presenters to illustrate diagnostic work-up. Disorder-specific treatment recommendations were based on known evidence with extra attention to currently available treatment options.

The meeting was concluded with two discussion panels and one expert meeting/case presentation whereby interesting/challenging headache cases were presented/discussed during those sessions.

Besides the theoretical lectures and panels, two workshops (Botulinum Toxin Injection and nerve block) were conducted by Dr. Hossein Ansari as satellite events, and participants were able to get some hands-on experience on injection techniques.
Lunch was provided to all participants and as part of the social program, all international speakers were taken for sightseeing tours and dinner at the conclusion of meeting every evening. Two coffee breaks were held at the Exhibit Hall, where 21 exhibitors presented their products and books during those breaks.

Also the day before the Congress, Prof. Rapoport, Prof. Cowan and Dr. Ansari were able to visit the oldest Neurology hospital in the country (Sina Hospital) and some interesting cases were presented by Neurology residents during their visit.

A booklet with the abstracts of all presented subjects was published prior to the congress and each registrant received a free copy of booklet. Also, all event-related materials are made available through the IHA website within the following link:


The first-hand feedback from the audience was extremely positive. The main strengths pointed by most audience members were the high caliber of presenters, both domestic and international, the well-structured program, which incorporated practical, theoretical, and futuristic topics and finally, the priceless chance to communicate with world-leading experts in the field of Headache medicine.

The geographical location of the event was also noted as excellent, since Tehran, as the Capital of Iran, has easy access and a multitude of transportation options to other cities domestically and abroad.

All named factors are essential for facilitating comprehensive developments within the headache field in the region. Further collaboration at an international level with neighboring countries is very much warranted and will help with the advancement of headache medicine in this region.

Sincerely;

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Prof. Alan Rapoport discussed the ICHD-3 and updates on novel Migraine medication

Prof. Hayrunnisa Bolay during one of her presentation

Prof. Robert Cevan in one of his case presentation