

The ASGBI Annual Scientific Meeting this year became the 'International Surgical Congress of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland.' This reflected the closer International and European links that have developed through the Association's Designated Societies and Strategic Partners and the increasing pan-surgical nature of the meeting, with the 2008 Congress comprising of over 30 Specialty Associations. Around 1,600 people were on site over the three days, of which 1,077 were medical delegates, and 1,070 abstracts were submitted in total.

The theme of the meeting was '**The Making of a Surgeon**' and the main symposia, lectures and workshops discussed numerous themes in education, training and professional development and the 'cradle to grave' issues confronting surgeons in the workplace throughout their surgical lifetime.

Lord Ara Darzi, Minister of State for Health and a Fellow of ASGBI, officially opened the Congress and the scientific programme opened with an International Perspective on education and training from the UK, USA, Ireland and Australasia presented by Sir David Carter (Edinburgh), Dr Timothy Flynn (Gainesville, Florida), Professor Frank Keane (Vice-President, RCS Ireland) and Professor John Collins (Melbourne) respectively. This was followed by Dr John Daly (Philadelphia) providing a patient's perspective and recounting his experiences of liver failure and transplantation entitled 'To give and to receive: thoughts of a recipient' and a motivational session returning to Everest, in which Professor Monty Mythen (London) and Dr Michael Grocott (London) discussed the challenges of altitude research and its benefits for critically ill patients.

Symposia focused on pan-surgical, multi-disciplinary themes rather than specialist content and demonstrated a rich variety of interest, including Cancer Reform Strategies, Evidence Based Surgery, Surgical Simulation, Hernia Management, A Bad Day On-Call and Leadership. Several non-general surgical associations used their sessions to update delegates on what general surgeons need to know from their specialist areas and lively discussion was stimulated in sessions on Service Redesign, General Paediatric Surgery and the 'Hot Topic', which asked 'Is the Sub-Consultant Grade Inevitable?'

Further discussion was provoked by a number of Medico-Legal sessions on the last day of the Congress, with barrister Ms Mary O'Rourke and Dr Stephanie Bown (The Medical Protection Society) examining a selection of medico-legal cases and Sir Graham Catto (President, The General Medical Council) proclaiming 'The GMC; Honestly, I'm a Friend' in an examination of 'The GMC and the Surgeon; Friend or Foe?'

In addition to a varied programme of taught courses and workshops, Bournemouth saw the launch of a number of interactive advice sessions, starting with 'All you need to know about...Your Financial Affairs' with Cavendish Medical and 'All you need to know about...Leadership' with Leeds Metropolitan University and My Peak Potential. These sessions were complimentary but ticketed and proved a successful addition to the programme.

In all, 598 short papers were presented at the meeting in both oral and poster format and this year saw the introduction of E-posters for those posters marked *Posters of*

*Distinction.* E-posters were presented orally and on plasma screens around the trade exhibition and an E-poster lounge was provided where delegates could view and search posters at their convenience throughout the meeting.

The meeting was widely judged a success, with a stimulating mix of scientific and political sessions, a new professional advisory service, a varied trade exhibition and a number of innovative features including E-Posters, interactive advice sessions, a Concierge Desk and of course the sticks of rock and an ice cream man! A Drinks Reception hosted by the Association's Corporate Patrons and the Association's Annual Dinner at the Bournemouth Pavilion provided the ideal opportunity for friends and colleagues to meet up and renew acquaintances. Bournemouth proved an attractive location for the conference and Clive Tyers, Head of Conferences, Exhibitions and Events at the Bournemouth International Centre reflected "It is the first time the ASGBI have selected the BIC for this international event and we were delighted to be able to play a part in its success."

Images and recorded highlights of the meeting are available to view and download from [www.asgbi.org.uk/bournemouth](http://www.asgbi.org.uk/bournemouth) along with full details of the Association's 2009 International Surgical Congress, 'Delivering a Modern Surgical Service', to be held in Glasgow from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009.