

CONFERENCE REPORT

**1st International Emergency Medical Services Congress,
Dubai, UAE, 2003**

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The 1st International Emergency Medical Service Congress was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The theme for this congress was to bring together EMS at both regional and international levels to exchange and discuss pre-hospital care; particularly on road trauma, and debate the progress and development of the most up to date research, practical methodologies, and clinical practices and training.

The conference was conducted over three days with concurrent sessions being conducted in the main conference room and an ambulance paramedic clinical practice workshop in the conference exhibition hall.

W. Alan Murray, Managing Director, Fitch and Associates, opened the congress. Alan was formerly Chief Executive of the Ambulance Trust in Belfast, Northern Ireland and Surrey, England.

The major sponsors included the Ministry of Health UAE, Dubai Police UAE, Emergency Medical Services Kuwait and Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

The main conference room had a number of local and international experts in EMS present to discuss current issues. Each presenter put forward their topic in a 'case study' format that stimulated good discussion and feedback from the floor. An example of these case studies included such topics as *Road Traffic Accidents – Their Impact on EMS In the Middle East*; *EMS – The Oman Experience*; *Medical Emergency Response For Remote Areas* and *EMS – The Dubai Experience*.

The ambulance paramedic clinical practice workshop also followed the trauma theme with a focus on clinical research, new and emerging EMS clinical practices and EMS assessment and management. Case studies and attendees' participation was the flavour of this workshop.

Monash University played an integral part in this conference with a number of representatives presenting papers and conducting workshops. Associate Professor Frank Archer, Director, Monash University Centre of Ambulance Paramedic Studies (MUCAPS), presented a number of papers both at the main conference forum and at the ambulance paramedic clinical workshops, Mr David Shugg, Senior Lecturer MUCAPS, Mr Omer Sakaf, Head, Training Department, Dubai Police Ambulance and Jeff Allan, Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) Paramedic, Melbourne and sessional lecturer MUCAPS, conjointly conducted the clinical workshops.

The collaboration between respective education and training institutes strengthened and enhanced the common goals of EMS of both East and West. In all, there were three full day workshops conducted, two clinical paramedic workshops for 95 attendees and one workshop of 65 nurse trainers from health facilities around the UAE.

The program content of the Clinical Workshops consisted of the following themes:

- Road trauma – ambulance assessment and management: a case-based approach
- EMS research – a potential for international collaboration
- New and emergent ambulance clinical practice – in search of best practice
- Ambulance paramedic education - the future
- Mental health and welfare – supporting ambulance paramedics

Feedback and workshop critiques indicated that the workshops were well received. One of the highlights of these workshops was the interaction between all participants who came from various level of EMS within the Middle East and the willingness to share experience and knowledge.

From my perspective, the opportunity to be involved in a collaborative education and training forum of such a high quality conference as both an attendee and presenter was both challenging and rewarding. It also highlighted how in both a cultural and different working environment, such as the Middle East, paramedics have the same goals as in Australia. It does not matter where the EMS is located, the conditions or the beliefs; emergency health carers are professionals, dedicated to patient care and preservation of life.