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CONFERENCE REVIEW

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The EMS Today Conference & Expo
Baltimore, USA, 21st-25th March 2006

Cindy Hein

I am very pleased to report on my experience at the EMS Today Conference & Expo 2006 which I was sponsored to attend by both the Australian Prehospital Emergency Health Research Forum (APEHRF) and the Australian College of Ambulance Professionals (ACAP). This exchange was as a result of being awarded the inaugural winner of the APEHRF Best Paper Competition at last year's ACAP conference in Canberra.

The EMS Today Conference & Expo was held in the beautiful inner harbour area of Baltimore, USA, 21st-25th March 2006. This was the largest event in the conference's 24 year history with over 3600 people attending and some 227 exhibitors. The conference was jam packed with presentations of latest information on the new recommendations on cardiopulmonary resuscitation and had excellent speakers on trauma, legal and ethical issues facing paramedics, terrorism, systems management, medical simulation, and of course emergency services research.

During the conference, the prehospital care research forum consisted of oral and poster presentations in the areas of medical, operational, ethical, volunteerism, patient refusal of service, cyanide in fire smoke and of course my own presentation on the Laryngeal Mask vs the SLIPA. These abstracts are now available in the March 2006 issue of "JEMS". (Unfortunately my visit was a little hurried and the organisers were unable to include my abstract, however I am always happy to supply a copy!).

My research was acknowledged at the oral presentations and also at the closing ceremony where the winner of the “best research” of the conference was named by Dr Baxter Larmon, who was the organiser of the research presentations at the conference. As this exchange will now perpetuate each year, the new “winner” will have an opportunity to visit Australia, the US or the UK.

The exhibition hall was the largest that I had experienced with more “trucks” than you could park on the MCG! The conference, being organised by the producers of the “JEMS” magazine, held the JEMS games “Clinical Competition” which consisted of thirteen teams from around the world (FDNY won the gold medal).

Dr Baxter Larmon and Cindy at presentations of research awards

The highlight of the conference for me was attending the pre-conference workshops, the first of which was an Advanced Airway Course conducted by First Sgt. Charlie Eisele, Director of Training and Flight Paramedic for the Maryland State Police Aviation Command (MSPAC), and his crew.

Trouper/Fight Paramedics from the MSPAC who conducted the Advanced Airway Course at the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore

The airway workshop was held at the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore (which is where the famous “golden hour” came from) and we had access to several cadaver specimens. In the course, participants could practice invasive airway skills such as endotracheal intubation, novel laryngoscopy techniques, surgical airways, chest decompressions, Laryngeal Mask Airway insertion (my study area) and the Combitube (very popular in the US).

At the completion of the conference, I was invited to spend a shift with the MSPAC in their “ambulance” (an American Eurocopter SA365 Dauphin, N3) (see photos of “norm” pilot & “Jo” Trouper/Flight Paramedic).

These paramedics are highly skilled professionals and not only provide an aero-medical service, but also law enforcement, search & rescue. That’s right, Paramedics with guns! During our shift we attended several missions which provided a better “tourist view” of the Baltimore area than I could have ever planned!

“Norm” MSPAC Pilot

"Jo" Trouper/Flight Paramedic MSPAC

I can only say that this was a truly awesome experience and those of you who have visited my office would have seen the many photos of this experience decorating the walls.

The second pre-conference workshop was in the format of a symposium which covered clinical controversies surrounding trauma care. This was presented by physicians & paramedics, some of whom are authors of the Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) books. There was great debate on endotracheal intubation, rescue airways, haemorrhage control, fluid resuscitation, spinal immobilisation and penetrating trauma. The

discussions that ensued were evidence based and created very lively discussion to say the least! With the conference and workshops over, I managed to spend a few days in New York City. A little more work saw me have a ride along with the Fire Department New York (FDNY). Yes that's right, Paramedics with fire hoses!

It was an interesting experience responding to emergencies in the very busy streets of Manhattan but at least we drove on the left hand side of the road for a while! But it wasn't all work and no play. I did visit the Empire State Building, Ground Zero, Central Park, Wall Street and of course the Statue of Liberty.

Fire Department New York Ambulance

Ground zero (World Trade Center site)

In closing, the value of this sponsorship to attend the EMS Today Conference is immeasurable. It was a great opportunity for me to present my research at an international conference and an honour to be representing Australian prehospital researchers. The conference itself has given me many contacts which will be beneficial for my future research and academic career, but also for my clinical

practice. I can only say to those of you who are considering presenting your research at this year's ACAP Conference in Adelaide, should you win the Australian Prehospital Emergency Health Research Forum competition and choose to go to the next EMS Today Conference and

Exposition in Baltimore (6th-10th of March 2007), try the crab pancakes at "G&M's" crab restaurant.

Acknowledgements

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Statue of Liberty

LINKS

www.EMSTodayConference.com

<http://nyc.gov/html/fdny/html/home2.shtml>

<http://www.acap.org.au/conference/>

<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/mucaps/apehrf/call-for-papers.html>

<http://www.mspaviation.org/>

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