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Back home full in oxygen after Antalya: A report of the European Airway Conference 2023

Antalya is a wonderful city in Turkey, pearl of Turkish tourism and at same time a snapshot of history, tradition and culture. Not a case, the European Airway Management Society (EAMS) decided to run the European Airway Congress (EAC) 2022 just in Antalya, to make a memorable retour to face to face meetings after the COVID-19 pandemic, with the congress motto of *breathing again*.

The organization was articulated in a series of online meetings and on-site preparation, with unpredicted and unpredictable challenges due to the potential evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eventually, organization included accreditation by the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) and the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME).

The EAC 2022 counted almost 300 participants from 40 different countries (the most represented being Turkey, UK, Spain, Italy, Qatar, Germany and the Netherlands), with 234 face-to-face and 59 online registrations. The EAC 2022 also included a collaborative meeting between EAMS and Turkish Society of Intensive Care, which represented a significant opportunity of brainstorming and building of future cooperation.

The conference was articulated in a pre-conference course for the Teach the Airway Teacher (TAT) EAMS program followed by two and half full immersion conference program, embedding lectures and workshops, meet the experts and industry supported session.

The program was rich and attractive, with a scientific committee led by Prof. A. Timmermann (EAMS Executive Director) including up to date topics. A session on guidelines focused on the progress of the Project for Universal Management of Airway (PUMA, www.universalairways.org) [1], with reference to the recently published guidelines for prevention of unrecognized esophageal intubation [2]. The American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) 2022 guidelines for management of the difficult airways [3] were also presented and debated, given also the contribution of EAMS members in the ASA task force.

New insights on tubeless [4] and small tube ventilation [5] were the topic of a second main lectures session, with international speakers contributing their data and clinical experiences, including the group of experts authoring the recent largest ever Cochrane review on use of videolaryngoscopes for airway management [6].

The main lectures program included two lectures from the EAMS international cooperation, with a contribution from the US-based Society of Airway Management (SAM) and another one from the UK-based Difficult Airway Society (DAS), underlining a cooperation program moving on since few years with inclusion of a lecture from each Society in the core program of the annual meeting of the other societies. The last session focused on the most important airway publications in the last year, from the

INTUBE study [7] to the recent systematic review for use of ultrasound in airway assessment [8], and on the EAMS most educational program represented by the teach the airway teacher, with a lecture dedicated to teaching in airway management.

Education in airway management remains one of the utmost importance aims of EAMS, which includes the “TAT” - a somehow « strange » acronym to identify an equally « original » course. Teaching the Airway Teacher is an ambitious goal and the EAMS is currently the only institution that has “taken up the challenge” [9,10]. Airway management courses are definitely spreading among different settings but, to date, the level of training of the involved teachers is neither somehow validated nor subject to specific educational projects [11]. Do we really need a course to teach teachers ... to teach? Teaching airway management is becoming ever more challenging. Lot of residents are to be trained, increased airway management skills need to be mastered, new devices and techniques are introduced into clinical practice annually, less time is given to education due to busy clinics. That means that often the technical skills of airway management are learned during daily clinical practice [12], sometimes in dedicated workshops, ever more rarely in didactic lectures. The same limitations can be found for the training of non-technical skills, now considered crucial during airway management [13]. Therefore the “ideal” airway management teacher should be able to keep the learners' attention high being aware of the needs of adult learners, and be able to overcome the reticence of the already trained clinicians struggling to question their certainties. With these premises, airway management teaching should no longer be improvised.

TAT course aims to ensure high quality and standardized level of airway management teaching. Since the first edition in 2013, 26 courses have been run all over the world, involving over 200 clinicians. The 27th EAMS TAT course was organized in conjunction with the 2022 EAMS Congress in Antalya and the large number of 54 registered participants from different countries all over Europe, Asia and Africa was a sign of the clinicians' “hunger” and enthusiasm for airway management teaching 8 (Figs. 1–4). The TAT-faculty was composed by TAT-senior educators, TAT-educators and candidate TAT-educators from different countries. Preparation, team working and friendship (yes, friendship!) between faculty members are the key elements for the success of the TAT-course. This TAT was a hybrid-blended course with flipped classroom concept [14]. Participants acquired before the course needed knowledge via the TAT e-learning and provided reading. The on-site TAT was dedicated to practice on how to organize an airway management course, how to give a lecture and to teach in clinical practice, and most important how to give and receive feedback. Participation and interaction during the working sessions were

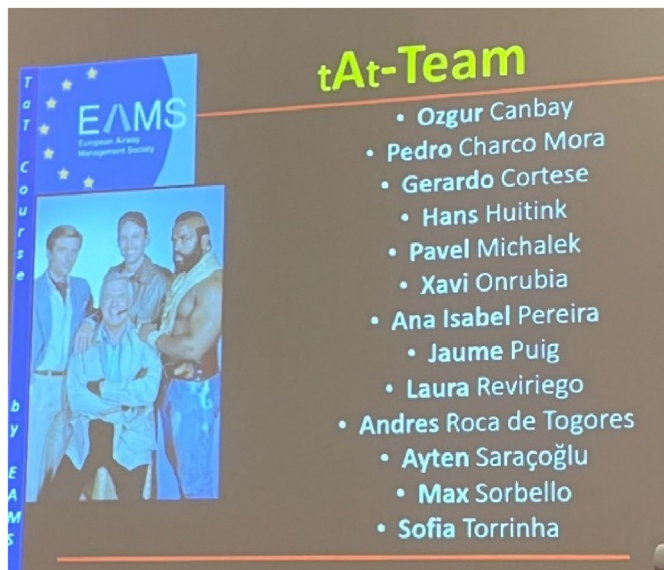


Image 1. The whole TAT Faculty



Image 2. Part of the Faculty ... from a different point of view!.



Image 3. Participants fully entered in the role playing during the feedback session.



Image 4. All Faculty and participants together.

help us to tailor and improve the next courses. This successful 27th TAT in Antalya boosted our belief that optimizing airway management teaching is challenging but worth to do and pushed us to proceed with enthusiasm in the further development of the TAT-course, keeping in mind that higher quality of airway management courses means higher safety for patients (see Fig. 5).

Theory is nothing without practice. This old adagio sounds more than actual, and this is why the EAC 2022 in Antalya was fully developed around a large hands-on workshop run by the conference faculty, with a worldwide representation of airway teachers. The Hands-on workshop was co-chaired by X. Onrubia (Spain), P. Charco (Spain) and Ö. Canbay (Turkey).

As a result, the 3.5-h Hands-on Workshop has played an important role in the activities developed during the 6th EAMS congress. Attendants spent this time learning and improving their technical airway skills together with worldwide known airway experts in an exciting atmosphere by sharing expertise and experience. This Hands-on Workshop had 6 stations covering the essential needed technical airway management competences for everyday clinical practice [15–25]:

Workstation 1 was devoted to flexible optical intubation (FOI) for nasal and oral intubation in adult and children. A well-received FOI simulator attracted the passion of gambling of the conference participants. Experts as facilitators were: S. Myatra (India), H. Bilgin (Turkey), P. Michalek (Czech Republic), P. Charco (Spain), D. Gordojoja (Romania), G. Casso (Italy), Ö. Özen (Turkey).

Workstation 2 provided essential tips on the use of video-laryngoscopes with channeled and non-channeled blades as well as standard Macintosh style and hyperangulated blades, and needed adjuvants to the attendants. Experts were: T. Cook (Great Britain), K. Tolker (Turkey), X. Onrubia (Spain), O. Sezen (Turkey), A. Saraçoğlu (Turkey).

extremely active and, as usual, mixing clinical and teaching experiences from such different countries was definitely enriching. The TAT-faculty already received from participants lot of positive post-course feedbacks as well as, constructive comments that



Fig. 5. Exhibition Hall.

Workstation 3: Ultrasound in airway management is more and more used and 4 human models exposed their neck and thorax to learn the essentials of ultrasound in airway management. The experts at this station were: M. Kristensen (Denmark), A.I. Pereira (Portugal), L. Reviriego (Spain), F. Sancaoglu (Turkey) and Y. Gürkan (Turkey).

Workstation 4 taught the important steps of different emergency accesses to the trachea during a CICO scenario in a practical way to locate the cricothyroid membrane and perform the technique on a sheep trachea model. The experts teaching were: R. Hofmeyr (South Africa), A. Roca de Togores (Spain), Ö. Canbay (Turkey), H. Ulusoy (Turkey), F. Gül (Turkey) and M. Izgi (Turkey) taught manual location of the cricothyroid membrane and different FONA techniques on a sheep trachea model.

Workstation 5 covered the role of peri-oxygenation during the airway management. Experts were: D. Enk (Germany), A. Patel (Great Britain), M. Sorbello (Italy), H Huitnik (Netherlands) and J. Puig (Spain).

Workstation 6 focused on supraglottic devices like laryngeal masks and laryngeal tube. The experts were: A. López (Spain), A. Timmermann (Germany), T. Gaszynski (Poland), G. Cortese (Italy) and Y. Ünal (Turkey).

Despite some difficulties with shipment of material and fighting

against time to prepare the workstations a successful hands-on workshop could be delivered and participants as well as facilitators were engaged all over. The very constructive feedback from the participants compensated the efforts of the entire team of teaching experts, and those companies which collaborated in sponsoring the EAC 2022. Their great effort in supplying the needed material and mannequin enabled this great success. A special thanks to all who helped with the endeavor to get enough sheep necks for the front of the neck access station as it requires a continuous replacement of materials.

For those who love to see numbers we would like to underline that there were 96 attendants who participated successful in the Hands-on workshop, which did run in turns with changing groups all 35 minutes. The 33 airway experts taking part as facilitators made this exciting event possible. The unique feature of the conference workshop was its attendant/facilitator ratio of 3 to 1, which is exceptional for such an event. A total of 18 airway manikins (two pediatrics) were distributed to the flexible optical intubation, videolaryngoscopy and supraglottic device workstations. Four young volunteers acted as human models in the ultrasound station, and about 100 fresh sheep tracheas that were carefully mounted on a white cork platform were used in the front of the neck access station. Most challenging in that station was to keep the assembly clean and well prepared to teach the different needle or scalpel based cricothyrotomy techniques.

Most satisfying for us as workshop organizers was the encouraging feedback we received from participants as well as from the airway experts. The friendly atmosphere enabled an instructive experience with mutual exchange of ideas and experiences. The relative strict time control of the spent time at each workstation allowed all participants to enjoy the learning at each rotation.

Abstract presentation, including selection of the best abstract awards, was an important piece of the EAC 2022. The number of abstracts submitted for the 6th European Airway Management Congress was surprisingly high. In total, more than 100 abstracts were submitted for oral presentation and all of them were reviewed by two members of the Scientific Congress Committee. Finally, the 72 accepted abstracts from four continents and 16 countries were presented during 12 abstract sessions. All accepted abstracts are to be published on a dedicated issue of Trends in Anaesthesia and Critical Care. Two sessions were designated for the best six case reports or case series presentation, and one for the presentation of the best abstracts.

The best abstracts entered in the oral presentation competition and consisted of the presentation of two randomized controlled trials, one large retrospective development and validation study, one clinical feasibility trial, one descriptive cross-sectional study, one audit, one international survey, and one meta-analysis of published trials. Three presenters were from Turkey, one from the United Kingdom, Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy, and Pakistan, respectively.

The first prize in this session was awarded to Martin Petzoldt et al. (Hamburg, Germany) and their presentation, entitled: "Transnasal videoendoscopy for preoperative airway risk stratification - development and validation of a multivariable risk prediction model". The second prize belonged to Jan Bruthans and his team from Prague in the Czech Republic. He presented the paper entitled: "A randomized comparison of videolaryngoscope GlideScope Titanium with videolaryngoscope KingVision (non-channeled blade) for nasotracheal intubation in patients with predicted difficult airway scheduled for maxillofacial procedure". The third prize went to Melis Sumak Hazir (Turkey) with the presentation: "Airway ultrasound assessment of the pre-epiglottic distance to epiglottis-

vocal cords distance ratio for the prediction of difficult laryngoscopy: a diagnostic test accuracy meta-analysis”.

The best case report award was given to Murat M. Sayin (Turkey) and his presentation: “Superimposed high-frequency jet ventilation (HFJV) with mechanical ventilation for Mounier-Kuhn syndrome: a case report”.

During the closing ceremony of the conference per tradition, a special moment was represented by the nomination of Honorary members and Fellow of the EAMS. These special membership status is recognized by the EAMS, upon proposal by the Board of Directors, basing on the contribution to the EAMS activities and initiatives and for the contribution in the field of Airway Management.

Honorary members of the EAMS are honored for their exceptional and remarkable achievements in and their life-long commitment to Airway Management. During EAC 2022, EAMS awarded the 2022 lifetime *Honorary member* status to

Prof. Timothy Mark Cook, Royal United Hospital, Bath August, UK



Prof. Sheila Nainan Myatra, Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, India



Fellow of the EAMS (FEAMS) have demonstrated evidence of exceptional leadership and contributions to airway management through practice, research, education or care of patients. The Fellowship of the EAMS is an internationally well recognized and respected position, for EAMS members with a deep knowledge and commitment to all fields of airway management. These Fellows build the core group and the “beating heart” and of the European Airway Management Society.

Fellow of the EAMS status was granted in 2022 to

Dr. Gerardo Cortese, A.O.U. Città della salute e della scienza, Molinette, Turin, Italy



Assoc. Prof. Ross Hofmeyr, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa



Prof. Mary Carmel Mushambi, University Hospitals of Leicester, Leicester, UK



Dr. Ana Isabel Pereira, Centro Hospitalar de Vila Nova de Gaia/Espinho, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal



Prof. Ricardo M. Urtubia, Clinica Vespuccio, Santiago, Chile



Definitely it was possible during the 6th EAC Conference to breathe again and finally meet face to face airway enthusiasts from around the world, reinforcing friendship and networking. The comfortable and warm atmosphere allowed participants to share experiences, discuss ideas and develop new projects. The industry exhibition located just outside the main hall allowed participants to contact with the latest airway management devices available on the market.

The Conference is characterized by the plentiful entertaining programs and moments, and this year was no exception! The willingness to engage in these activities after a 2-year hiatus due to COVID was clear from the start. Participants got together during the tasty coffee breaks with Turkish delights, toasted during the



Fig. 6. – String trio.



Fig. 7. EAMS party.

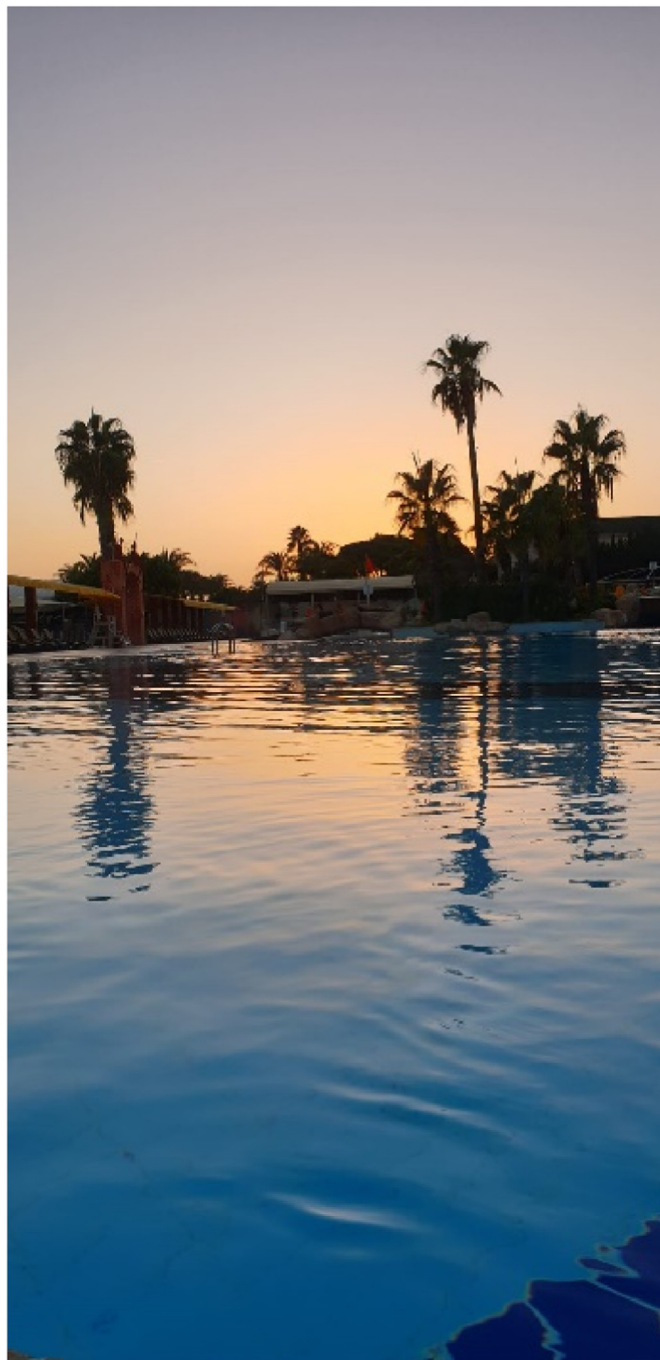


Fig. 8. Antalya sunset.

Welcome Reception to the sound of a classical string trio and ultimately danced at the highly anticipated EAMS Party (Figs. 6-9).

As the sun set in Antalya, we said goodbye to EAC 2022 and we

already started planning the EAC 2023 in Baveno, Italy at the Lago Maggiore in early October 2023 with enthusiasm and motivation since it will be the EAMS 20th Anniversary.

Mark your calendar, then you cannot miss it!

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Fig. 9. Participants at the closing ceremony.

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