

69th ICASM—An Excellent Event

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Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), was the site of the 69th International Congress of Aviation and Space Medicine (ICASM) held October 27–29, 2023, under the auspices of the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine (IAASM).



Convention center in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

There were over 300 registered attendees representing 50 nations. The Congress sought to “bring together leading experts in the field of aerospace medicine and related aviation technologies from around the world to share knowledge, discuss the latest research and developments, and explore new opportunities for collaboration.”



Attendees at the Congress.



Dr. David Gradwell, President of IAASM and a former AsMA President, and Dr. Sally Evans, IAASM Secretary General, provided great leadership in helping to create a wonderful Congress. Prof. Erik Hohmann (UAE) served as President of the Organizing Committee and did a stellar job in bringing the event to fruition. The UAE Scientific Planning Committee chaired by Dr. Reino Pieterse (UAE) and the IAASM Scientific Committee chaired by Dr. Robert Orford ensured an excellent range of presentations.

As AsMA President, I had the distinct privilege of being asked to present the keynote Andre Allard Lecture, a great honor indeed. My talk was entitled “Spaceflight & Operational Aerospace Medicine, Historic Past, Current Advancements, Future Challenges.” I sought to create a mosaic journey highlighting aeromedical considerations throughout the phases of space exploration that have been witnessed over the past 65 plus years, as well as providing perspective on what lies ahead.



Slide introducing Dr. Dervay as the Allard lecturer.

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Dr. Dervay gives the Allard Lecture.

The hospitality and professionalism of the ICASM 2023 team and UAE hosts were outstanding. There were many international speakers, including a significant number of current AsMA members. Truly a collegial and interactive Congress for sharing scientific knowledge with colleagues from around the globe.

As Dr. Gradwell noted, "...the holding of this Congress in Abu Dhabi was breaking new ground within the region and I hope leads not only to future events in that part of the world but also encourages those who were delegates to think more about joining the wider international aeromedical community, including supporting the scientific meetings of AsMA and other IAASM Congresses in the future."

Our AsMA Executive Director Jeff Sventek and wife Deb hosted the AsMA information table onsite at the Congress. They engaged attendees about the nature and scope of AsMA and secured double digit new AsMA memberships to our ranks. Several attendees expressed great interest in potentially attending our Annual Scientific Meeting in Chicago next May.



Jeff Sventek hosts the AsMA information table as Dr. Dervay takes a photo of them both.

Being the first such Congress held in the Middle East, the UAE enthusiasm to be hosting the event in Abu Dhabi was palpable. This was enhanced by the recent successful six-month long-duration International Space Station mission by UAE Astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi. Sultan was also the first Arab to complete a spacewalk, on April 28, 2023, of 7 hours and 1 minute along with U.S. Astronaut Stephen Bowen, captivating the UAE and region and inspiring youth regarding STEM and space exploration.

IAASM sponsors an international Congress on an annual basis, with the location rotating to various countries around the world that have the interest and willingness to be the host. The International Congress of Aviation and Space Medicine (ICASM) is typically held on odd-numbered years and is usually slated outside of Europe (as was done in the UAE). During alternate (even-numbered) years, IAASM collaborates with the European Society of Aerospace Medicine (ESAM), with AsMA, and with the local aerospace medical association at the Congress venue to hold the International Congress of Aerospace Medicine (ICAM). This was last held in Paris as the International Conference of Aerospace Medicine in 2022, or ICAM 2022.

The next International Congress of Aerospace Medicine, in Lisbon, Portugal, will be held from October 3-5, 2024. ICAM 2024 is a joint effort by IAASM, ESAM, AsMA, and the Portuguese Society of Aerospace Medicine. Perhaps your schedule will allow you to participate next year in Lisbon!

All the best.

Keep 'em Flying...and Full Steam Ahead.

You can watch an excellent video summary of the ICASM 2023 in Abu Dhabi at: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/i9kxu6a11ranu1ftomg1t/69th-international-Congress-Of-Aviation-and-Space-Medicine.mp4?rlkey=jj65v46eka11fow1i3pfq1lmy&dl=0>.