

EFSUMB Newsletter meets Spain.

Facts:

- Population: 45 million
- Capital and largest city: Madrid (3.2 million)
- Area: 504.030 km²
- EFSUMB members: 180

Spain was one of the thirteen founding members of EFSUMB in 1972. The current interview between the president and delegate of the Spanish Ultrasound Society SEECO (SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA DE ECOGRAFIA) Dr Eugenio Cerezo and Editor of the EFSUMB Newsletter, Professor Michael Bachmann Nielsen, took place in April 2008.

Eugenio Cerezo is now running a private clinic in Madrid. He has been the delegate of the Spanish Society for a number of years now. "I'm a specialist in internal medicine and gastroenterology", Eugenio Cerezo says, "and I started doing ultrasound in the seventies. Nowadays I only do ultrasound examinations".

"Spain is only listed as having 177 members; this seems small compared to the size of the country". "It is", Eugenio Cerezo says, "it should be closer to six thousand. The reason is that ultrasound is performed by doctors within many different societies: radiology, internal medicine, vascular medicine, gynaecology and obstetrics, rheumatology, gastroenterology, general



practitioners to mention a few. This means that the Spanish Ultrasound Society, SEECO, is not a huge but multi disciplinary society that integrates different specialists that practice ultrasound exams, even veterinarians, and also there are a number of other societies which integrates exclusively some special ultrasound doctors, as for example UROLOGY SOCIETY integrates only UROLOGIST, GYNAECOLOGY SOCIETY (SEGO) only GYNECOLOGY AND OBSTRECTICS DOCTORS, not as an independent society but as section groups".

In Spain there are three independent ultrasound societies, one "SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA DE ULTRASONOGRAFIA" formed exclusively by radiologists, other "ASOCIACION DE ECOGRAFIA DIGESTIVA" integrated by gastroenterologists and finally SEECO "SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA DE ECOGRAFIA" multidisciplinary and integrated for different types of specialities, the latter being associated with EFSUMB. For someone outside Spain one wonders why these societies do not join in one large federation. "The problem is complex", Cerezo says, "of the societies listed above the Gastroenterological one and SEECO, as truly independent societies, are trying to integrate in a federation, the problem is not the will to form the federation rather it is a legal problem because in Spain we need three societies to form a federation, and the other groups which want integrate, the gynaecologist, very numerous, are



Training during Doppler course dedicated to the carotids



SEECO officers
Dr Eugenio Cerezo, President

Dr Antonio Diaz, Vicepresident

Dr Christina Martinez, Honorary Treasurer
Dr Conception Millana, Honorary Secretary

not a truly independent society. Radiologist do not can afford the fee for the federation and that is the reason they give for not integrate. We are currently working on a way to get around that issue and also to attract more doctors and hopefully it will succeed, it takes time and patience."

SEECO has a newsletter every second month; the information goes on the Internet. Their new website was launched recently, www.seeco.es and is entirely in Spanish.

"Being a delegate in EFSUMB I am sure you have considered joining the Ultraschall in der Medizin - family", says Michael Bachmann Nielsen. "The journal is certainly a very attractive journal and if we succeed in making one united ultrasound society in Spain I hope we can consider this for our official journal. We are currently wor-

king to launch a web based journal, hopefully at the end of the year; it will be a bi-language journal." Spanish is one of the major languages of the world, it is estimated that it is the first language of more than 400 million people. "When we study at the university all our books are in Spanish", Cerezo says, "and I would guess that between 60 and 70 % of common doctors in Spain do not read easily English. This is also one of the reasons why it is difficult to join an English language journal. But this is changing, in young doctors".

Because of the mix of societies involved in ultrasound in Spain there are also a large numbers of courses. "I am involved in courses in vascular Doppler, musculoskeletal ultrasound courses etc., even we do a special abdomen ultrasound course" Cerezo says, "which is a combination of lectures, clinical practice and finally an exam

corresponding to EFSUMB level 1 which we are going to extend to other ultrasound applications".

"What are your hopes for ultrasound and EFSUMB in the future?" "Ultrasound in Spain is actually doing well, diversity is good, and a large number of doctors are now performing ultrasound in almost every medical speciality", Eugenio Cerezo says. "My hope is that EFSUMB will be the one who will organize a common European test corresponding to the levels they have described. There should be tests involving abdominal US, vascular US, musculoskeletal, gynaecology and obstetric ultrasound etc. and it would be an excellent thing to insure that we have the same standard throughout Europe".

A letter to ECMUS

Ultrasound safety - the dotty old aunt is at it again !

There are two ways to evacuate a crowded lecture hall at an ultrasound conference in a very short time:

- ▶ 1. shout "fire"
- ▶ 2. put a slide on the screen with the message "the scheduled lecture on 3D imaging of fetal genitalia has been cancelled and is replaced by a lecture on ultrasound safety"

However, ultrasound safety, particularly safety of ultrasound performed during pregnancy has received a boost in recent months. Not, as one might think, because of an increasing awareness that the ever more widespread use of pulsed-wave and color Doppler in the first trimester of pregnancy might potentially harm embryos and fetuses who have to undergo this sound energy impact for screening purposes.

The sudden resurgence of interest in ultrasound safety particularly in the US is entirely the consequence of a new turf

war: Commercial 3-D ultrasound studios promising cute golden 3-D images of cuddly fetuses are springing up in shopping malls all over North America and, increasingly, in Europe. Tom Cruise got unexpected additional fame when he acquired a top of the range 3-D ultrasound machine to look at the development of his wife's pregnancy, and to visualize his unborn baby at home.

A lot of people, representatives of the medical profession and lawmakers have spoken up and declared they are worried about the potential harm these non-medical uses might cause.

But let's face it - in which situation is more sound energy being delivered onto the fetus: during a 28 week "facing" scan with 3 D ultrasound or an 11 week scan where Doppler of the fetal ductus venosus and the tricuspidal valve has to be performed in order to screen the fetus for its potential to have trisomy 21?

Parents love the reassuring thump-thump-thump and the complex waveform patterns we produce at these cardiac Doppler examinations in the first trimester and we reassure them that ultrasound is harmless in our hands.

However, most first-trimester ultrasound operators have no idea what MI and TI mean, concern for ultrasound safety is considered thoroughly un-cool as is attendance at sessions dedicated to this boring subject.

Ultrasound safety is treated like a slightly deranged dotty old aunt who is confined to her crammed garret and only once in a while is dressed up, taken out, told to bash the babyview-studios with her rolled-up umbrella and then taken up to her garret and locked up again.

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