

INTERASMA Through the Years

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It was in 1954 that some of the pioneers of European allergology, including Hansen, Quarles Van Ufford, Sangiorgi, and Duchaine, decided to create the International Association of Asthmology after discussing the problems that bronchial asthma was raising in internal medicine, pediatrics, allergology, and respiratory medicine. Prof. Sangiorgi in particular devoted himself with considerable energy to this project. The Association was registered in Milan in 1954, and a year later, on May 25, 1955, the first official founding meeting took place in Utrecht, organized by Dr. Quarles van Ufford. Also present at this meeting were Professors Hansen, Sangiorgi, Duchaine and Wolfer-Bianchi, among others. Later, at the first Congress (held in Lübeck) and at subsequent meetings, the following were admitted as founding members: Sánchez-Cuenca (Spain), Varela Fuertes (Uruguay), Spoujitch (Yugoslavia), Holler (Austria), Vera Walker (United Kingdom), Capuani (Italy), Gronemeyer (Germany), Fuchs (Germany), and Damas Mora (Portugal). I joined INTERASMA in 1957, when the Association did not have more than 50 members.

From the beginning, as my mentors Hansen and Gronemeyer clearly stated, the idea in founding INTERASMA was not to compete with the International Association of Allergology, or with the then recently created European Academy of Allergology, although many thought this at the time. I still remember critical comments from some very close friends of mine, pointing out that INTERASMA was trying to compete with these societies. But nothing could be further from the truth, since asthma is a "multidisciplinary" illness, and the aim of the Association was (and still is) to unite the efforts of internists, pediatricians, allergologists, and

chest physicians, and so provide a better standard of care for asthmatic patients. By the late 1950s, the increase of bronchial asthma in health statistics was already beginning to worry us. It was a question of uniting diagnostic criteria and therapies in a way that would lead to effective means of treating and managing asthma, and of unifying methods of study and research so that the complex etiopathogenesis of this illness could be better understood. At no

stage did the Association try to reduce the importance of any other society.

The initially small group of members gradually grew, the Association being joined by exceedingly active members such as Zerbib (France), Erikson-Lihr (Finland), Businco (Italy), Werner (Germany), Sugihara (Japan), Dias da Costa (Brazil), Ado (Russia), Berg (USA), Findeisen and Sylla (GDR), Höchli (Switzerland), Liska (Prague), Farrerons (Spain), and many others. It is truly difficult for me to remember now all the eminent asthma investigators who were involved in the initial phases of INTERASMA.

It was in Helsinki, in 1972, that I was appointed Secretary General, and a more active period in INTERASMA's life began. This period lasted until 1981. During this time our statutes were renewed, and INTERASMA's Chapters began to be active. Two Chapters were established for Europe, three for Africa, two for Asia, three for America, and one

TABLE 1
INTERASMA WORLD CONGRESSES

1st Congress	1956, Lübeck/Bad Lippspringe President: Prof. Dr. K. Hansen
2nd Congress	1957, Lisbon President: Dr. M. Damas Mora
3rd Congress	1960, Bordighera-Grasses President: Prof. P. Sangiorgi
4th Congress	1963, Toulouse President: Dr. J. Duchaine
5th Congress	1966, Utrecht President: Dr. W.J. Quarles van Ufford
6th Congress	1970, Lisbon/Luanda-Madeira President: Dr. M. Damas-Mora
7th Congress	1972, Helsinki President: Prof. Dr. Z. Eriksson-Lihr
8th Congress	1975, Vlissingen President: W.J. Quarles van Ufford
9th Congress	1978, New Orleans President: Prof. D. Johnstone
10th Congress	1981, Paris President: Prof. D. Vialatte
11th Congress	1984, Mexico President: Prof. Dr. J.L. Cortés
12th Congress	1987, Barcelona President: Prof. Dr. A. Oehling
13th Congress	1990, Maebashi President: Prof. S. Kobayashi
14th Congress	1993, Jerusalem President: Dr. I. Glazer
15th Congress	1996, Montpellier President: Prof. P. Godard

XVIth World Congress of Asthmology
Poster

for Australia. In this way the various Annual Meetings appeared, in order to increase interest in INTERASMA in the various regions. Surprisingly, these meetings were extremely successful in terms of the participation of pediatricians, internists, chest physicians, and allergologists. The first meeting took place in Havana (Cuba) in 1974. In honor of the occasion, the prestigious Cuban painter Portocarrero, a man of international renown, presented our Association with the logotype that we are still using today (see page 192). It represents on the one hand the profile of a dyspneic situation on both sides, and on the other hand a bronchoconstriction in front view. I think that this Congress will stay in the minds of all of us who participated as a very pleasant memory.

These meetings have continued taking place subsequently, and the number of participants has increased steadily from one to the next. The INTERASMA World Congresses and Chapter meetings held to date are listed in Tables 1 and 2.

As the Association grew, the conclusion was reached that creating national societies of asthmology was not as important as creating INTERASMA Chapters, that in their different regions could interact and promote joint efforts among all the various specialties interested in asthma. This form of organization has also resulted in the annual regional meetings and Chapter meetings, held independently of the World Congress (which takes place every three years), thus giving strength to the philosophy of INTERASMA in the different regions of the world.

Finally, I would also like to highlight the excellent work that Prof. Godard has done as Secretary General during the past six years. His wonderful efforts have culminated in the creation of Asmanet[®], the international network based on the modern information superhighway that is helping to develop the asthma knowledge base through person-to-person communication.

TABLE 2
INTERASMA CHAPTER MEETINGS

November 1974	Havana (Cuba)	Central American Chapter Meeting President: Prof. Gómez Echevarría
June 1977	Torremolinos (Spain)	South European Chapter Meeting President: Dr. Farrerons-Co
May 1980	Oberhof (Germany)	East European Chapter Meeting President: Prof. L. Jäger
April 1982	Salsomaggiore (Italy)	South European Chapter Meeting President: Prof. Dr. L. Businco
September 1985	Warsaw (Poland)	East European Chapter Meeting President: Prof. K. May
June 1986	Angers (France)	South European Chapter Meeting President: Dr. A. Sabbah
May 1989	Prague (Czechoslovakia)	East European Chapter Meeting President: Prof. V. Spicák
November 1989	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	South American Chapter Meeting President: Dr. J.E. Fabiani
May 1991	Funchal-Madeira (Portugal)	South European Chapter Meeting President: Prof. A. Palma-Carlos
September 1991	Acapulco (Mexico)	Central American Chapter Meeting President: Prof. J.G. Huerta López
October 1994	Iguazu (Brazil)	South American Chapter Meeting President: Prof. J. Croce
August 1995	Poznan (Poland)	East European Chapter Meeting President: Dr. K.L. May
October 1995	Guadalajara (Mexico)	Central American Chapter Meeting President: Prof. Dr. J. Huerta López
December 1995	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	South American Chapter Meeting President: Dr. Hugo Neffen

INTERASMA 97 Annual Meeting, Western European Chapter December 3–5, 1997: Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

The aims of this congress are to unite the best researchers and specialists who deal with asthma, to provide a forum for free discussion of clinical aspects, and to bring everyone concerned up to date on the future of asthmology. The preliminary main topics are:

- Update on the etiopathogenic mechanisms of bronchial asthma
- The problem of bronchial asthma at different ages and its prognostic repercussions
- Occupational asthma
- Local problems of asthma in Western Europe
- Present status of etiological diagnostic methods and exploration of respiratory function
- Etiological treatment
- Pathogenic and symptomatic treatment
- Environmental control measures

The official languages of the meeting are English and Spanish. The main theme symposia will be translated into Spanish / English.

For further information, please contact:

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