

Thirteenth World Congress on Menopause, Rome, 8 – 11 June, 2011

Madam,

The theme of the thirteenth world congress on Menopause, 'Menopause Renaissance in the Eternal City: Preventive and Therapeutic strategies for healthy aging' was very apt, considering the location of the meeting, that is, Rome. The fall of the Roman Empire was followed by the dark Medieval Ages, and Renaissance brought a new hope and light to the society.

In the recent past Climacteric medicine went through a turbulent phase, raising a lot of questions. Emerging new data and re-evaluation of the old data has brought clearer concepts in this field of medicine. In this context the World Congress covered many topics including, basic clinical climacteric endocrinology, premenopausal contraception, gynecological oncology, surgery, and breast malignancy and diagnostic techniques in the climacteric. Women's health and aging, an important aspect was deliberated at length; lifestyle modifications and alternative medicine found their place too. The aging male was not neglected and was part of the conference discussions. The scientific program was spread over Plenary Lectures, Debates, and Symposia, and Meet-the-expert sessions.

Over 3400 registered participants from more than 97 countries filled the auditoria and meeting rooms at the excellent conference center. The Scientific Program provided 36 Plenary sessions, 10 Plenary Lectures, 10 Debates, 16 Symposia, 4 teaching courses, as well as free communications. Over 300 posters and 15 satellite

symposia were organized by the industry. A total of 15 scientific sessions were presented by national and regional Menopause Societies.

Professor Genazzani and his team provided an excellent Social program. The Opening Ceremony was held in the Congress Center; after the official speeches, Dr David Sturdee, President of the International Menopause Society, gave 'the Pieter van Keep Memorial Lecture,' concentrating on the science of the hot flush entitled 'The enigma of menopause'. This was followed by a very interesting and enlightening presentation by the President of FIGO, Gamal Serour, on 'Menopause in Islamic culture'. After cocktails and refreshments, there was a wonderful opera of Carmina Burana by the Chorus of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. On Thursday evening, the guests were invited to a reception for the Cancun Congress, in 2014, at the Mexican Embassy, a beautiful and historical building in the center of Rome, where we were entertained by Mexican music, flowing Margueritas, and unlimited hors de ouvres. The Presidential Dinner on the final evening was held at the famous Castel Sant'Angelo – a beautiful, fascinating, and ancient venue, on the banks of the River Tiber, which provided a wonderful finale to a most memorable congress.

There were four pre-congress workshops. The topics were the Cardiovascular system and metabolic disorder after menopause; Menopause and Breast Cancer; Menopause, Hormone Therapy, and Central Nervous System; Menopausal Transition.

Prof. Gamal Serour's lecture was the highlight of the conference. He started with the definition of Menopause, and culture. He then described how menopause was perceived in the Islamic culture, where older women were well taken care of within the culture structure of the extended family. He quoted the Quran revealing that importance that the Prophet gave to a Mother. Prof. Gamal spoke about how procreation improved the dignity and social status of women. He then talked about post menopause in the Holy Quran. Although Muslim Culture prohibits legal adoption, it encourages bringing up of orphans. Infertility management is encouraged, although gamete donation is discouraged, in order not to mix up the family genetic lineage. Keeping in mind the problems of pregnancy at an advanced age, pregnancy after menopause is discouraged. He concluded his talk mentioning that, "The issue of women's health in menopause in Muslim culture is a complex one and it is important that healthcare professionals be non-judgmental and respectful of the traditions of other cultures."

A Plenary session on the 'Impact of Culture and Ethnicity on Menopause' highlighting the effect of culture on various aspects of menopause, especially in the Asian countries was held at the congress. In this session Dr. Duru Shah spoke on "Metabolic disorders during Menopause — does Indian ethnicity matter?". She concluded that prevalence of metabolic disorders is high in Indian women which get aggravated in women following menopause. She also mentioned that prophylactic oophorectomy at hysterectomy was responsible for higher prevalence of metabolic disorders leading to cardiac deaths. Dr. Duru Shah has been elected as the Board member of the International Menopause Society.

Indian Menopause Society India had an hour's session at the conference, and was conducted as a panel discussion on 'Menopause in India — Dilemmas and Challenges' moderated by Dr. Meeta. The panelists were Dr. Sunila Khandelwal, Dr. Maninder Ahuja, Dr. Preeti Galvankar, Dr. Pushpa Sethi, and Dr. Vandana Narula. The deliberation centered around the relevance of early age of menopause and its impact on the health of the Indian women. Cancer of the cervix remains the leading cause of cancer in Indian women, unlike in other parts of the world. There is a dominance of non-vasomotor symptoms and osteoarthritis of the knee is emerging as an important morbidity in the elderly women. The panelists, based on evidence, came up with interesting observations on

the dilemma and challenges of practicing menopause in India.

Dr. V. K. Chellamma presented a poster on 'Prospective study of 100 cases of Postmenopausal Ovarian masses' and presented an article on the 'Effect of premenopausal hysterectomy on ovarian function'. Two other poster presentations were by Dr. Meeta and Dr. N Sanyal. Dr. Meeta, as a part of the research activity of the Indian Menopause Society, in association with Jagsonpal, presented an article titled, 'High fruit and vegetable intake is positively correlated with the Blood Lycopene level and biochemical markers for osteoporosis in postmenopausal women: A multicentric study'. Dr. N Sanyal presented an article on 'Pregnancy beyond forties is it a boon or a bane?'

The proceedings of the entire congress were handed to the registered delegates as a hard copy. The congress also published and put up for sale a book, 'Menopause – State of the Art', which contained the proceedings and articles of those who submitted the full text. The full text of the articles by Dr. Meeta, Dr. N Sanyal, and Dr. V.K.Chellamma were published in this book. It was indeed inspiring and interesting to find a number of posters and oral presentations on different aspects of the climacteric. To accommodate so many sessions, eight parallel halls were present, running throughout the entire conference.

The fifteen-member delegates from the Indian Menopause Society had a rewarding time in terms of scientific and social exchange. Rome, its history, and culture were an additional treat.

Meeta Singh, Duru Shah¹

Indian Menopause Society, Tanvir Hospital, Phase I,
Plot No. 100, Phase-I, Kamalapur Colony, Hyderabad,
¹Board member of the International Menopause Society, Past
President, Indian Menopause Society, Gynecworld,
Kwality House, Kemp's Corner, Mumbai, India

Address for correspondence: Dr. Meeta Singh,
Tanvir Hospital, Phase I, Plot No. 100, Phase-I,
Kamalapur Colony, Hyderabad- 500 073, India.
E-mail: drmeeta919@gmail.com

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