

Highlights of the 27th Great Wall International Congress of Cardiology

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The 27th Great Wall International Congress of Cardiology (GW-ICC, October 13–16, 2016, Beijing, China) was a resounding success. This meeting is the largest and most influential annual cardiovascular event in the Asia-Pacific region. This year, >18 000 delegates from 48 countries participated. Comprehensive education in >550 sessions covered prevention and rehabilitation, coronary artery disease, arrhythmia, structural heart disease, heart failure, critical care, imaging and diagnosis, and interdisciplinary medicine. Twenty-two joint sessions were cohosted by cardiac societies worldwide, and >230 international opinion leaders lent an international perspective to the meeting. Topics spanning the full spectrum from basic research to clinical practice, from training of community healthcare providers to specific cutting-edge developments in cardiovascular science, were discussed. Fifty-six live procedures, including transcatheter aortic heart valve, percutaneous coronary intervention, atrial fibrillation ablation, and left atrial appendage transcatheter occlusion, were broadcast to the congress from 15 hospitals all around China and abroad. Participant feedback included, “This congress is splendid, an unprecedented grand occasion” and “It is wonderful that the congress hosts so many people and the science is of such high caliber” (oral communication, 2016).

China is facing health challenges shared with both developed and developing nations. Cardiovascular disease has emerged as the leading cause of death in China because of the aging of the population, deteriorating environment, and altered lifestyles; yet emergence of an efficient healthcare system has not kept pace. Addressing this issue is a major emphasis in China and a major focus of the GW-ICC. Currently, patients squeeze into tertiary hospitals because community health service is relatively weak. At this year’s GW-ICC, >1000 community healthcare providers and another 1000 physicians from county hospitals were invited. This approach is in line with the nation’s overall healthcare strategy: boosting medical capacity at the grassroots level and devoting more health resources to rural and impoverished regions. Also, at this year’s GW-ICC, a major initiative was announced: to organize thousands of online and offline training programs in the coming year, and to train 1 million primary care physicians, nurses, and technicians, half of whom work in rural areas, community health centers, and small county hospitals.

During the 4-day congress, the audience enthusiasm and hunger for knowledge was impressive. Young cardiologists sitting on the ground in front of the first row and standing behind the last row fostered a spirit of high energy. In China, the average age of cardiologists is ≈40 years, and the majority of those performing complicated procedures are <45 years of age. These professionals are energetic and eager to learn, positioned to be major forces in the development of cardiovascular medicine in the future. Welcoming world-renowned participants, coupled with continued emphases on innovation and cutting-edge science, we can expect the GW-ICC to grow

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into a leading power in promoting state-of-the-art cardiovascular research around the world.

DISCLOSURES

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AFFILIATIONS

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FOOTNOTES

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