

World Congress on Contact Lens Education 2000 Waterloo

The second World Congress on Contact Lens Education was held co-jointly by IACLE and AOCLE and hosted by The School of Optometry, University of Waterloo (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada) from May 31 to June 4, 2000. Dr. Des Fonn was the Congress chairperson for the meeting.

To get a glimpse of some of the activities yourself, log on to the World Congress Web site at optnt1.uwaterloo.ca/worldcongress/

This year's theme concentrated on Advances in Technology for Clinical and Didactic Education. The program included

- A Symposia on clinical education and electronic didactic teaching including evidence-based and problem-based learning and tele-learning
- Electronic Courseware (Web-based and traditional)
- Technical Workshops (in addition to clinical tools, emphasizing Internet technology, particularly the World Wide Web)
- New Technology in Instrumentation (with emphasis on digital technology) especially digital still and digital video imaging

IACLE members began their conference a few days earlier filled with lectures and workshops. The workshops included topics such as using IACLE modules to prepare a lecture, soft toric lens fitting workshop, and hands-on Internet basics. Opening remarks and presentations from Debbie Sweeney (IACLE President) and Julie Schornack (AOCLE Chair) kicked off the welcoming reception. Dr. Sweeney presented a lecture entitled "The latest in Contact Lenses" and Dr. Schornack presented "Trends in Contact Lens Education."

The rest of the program included 123 IACLE and 37 AOCLE (all 19 schools were represented) delegates for a total of 160 representing 31 countries. The program was jammed packed with information and hands-on workshops. To get a jump on the day, breakfast was served directly at the school and lectures or workshops began shortly afterwards. The next time the delegates saw their hotel room was at night to retire. Talk about long intensive days!

One of the unique technological advances of this meeting was the World Congress Web site that was active during the meeting itself. Photographs from the lectures, workshops, and social events were posted on the Web site daily,

allowing for those that could not attend (and family members) an updated view of the meeting. Several computers were available during the Congress for the attendees to keep in touch with their e-mails and send a few messages back home to their families and colleagues.

Some 30 speakers were in attendance for this unique event, with topics ranging from Internet basics to tools for searching literature and managing references. Hands-on workshops complemented the conferences to offer CL educators over 26 hours of continuing education and information to enhance the teaching of contact lenses in their respective environments.

The other unique factor of this meeting was the location. University of Waterloo has long been recognized for its leadership in Information Technology. A recent addition to its campus has been a huge Information Systems and Technology laboratory in the Engineering Building.

The Information Systems laboratory was an essential tool for the hands-on experience required during the Web page design, the Internet and PowerPoint Workshops. The presenter was able to control all the computers simultaneously during the demonstration period and subsequently release control to the individual user during the training session. Assistants were also on-hand for added support and consultation. This set-up allowed for each individual to benefit from hands experience and only two laboratory sessions were needed to accommodate the entire group.

A dedicated time was devoted to industry presentations to inform CL educators of new programs and projects. Some representatives were from North America, while others represented European and other international divisions, reflecting the global gathering of this World Congress. The supporting industry members sponsoring the second World Congress included Alcon Laboratories, Allergan, Bausch & Lomb, CIBA Vision, Coopervision, Johnson & Johnson Vision Care Inc., Menicon Europe, Ocular Sciences, Specialty Ultravision, and Wesley-Jessen. All the representatives expressed their continued dedication towards contact lens education and in turn the organizers along with the attendees applauded the continued support of these devoted companies.

The industry representatives also reminded CL educators that most companies budget a year or so in advance, hence if you have a specific project for your school (workshop, speaker, special event, etc) approach a company well in advance so that they can submit your proposal in adequate time.

Part of the program included a tour of the School of Optometry with special attention to the Contact Lens Research Unit (CLRU). The school offers the full spectrum of primary care optometry services (primary care, binocular vision, contact lenses, dispensary, ocular health, low vision, pediatrics, electrodiagnostic, etc). An impressive and active research program is also an integral part of the school's success and spans a myriad of topics including optics, anatomy, and physiology.

The attendees were rotated through the different parts of the CLRU where students and researchers were on-hand sharing their different research interests. The latest research instruments such as digital video and photographic capturing devices, software for capturing and archiving anterior segment images, and equipment for measuring CL -related anomalies were demonstrated and described for ongoing research projects. The CLRU is housed in a new wing of the optometry building and is separate from the CL clinic.

The program also included social activities to allow the delegates to exchange ideas and establish or continue existing friendships. The activities included a dinner cruise of the Toronto Harbor one evening and a tour of Niagara Falls and surrounding areas the next.

An elegant gala was planned for the final evening. Delegates enjoyed an elegant dinner along with presentations from Dr. Des Fonn (program chair), AOCLE and IACLE representatives. Several people were acknowledged for their tireless efforts in planning and organizing every part of this unique event. Dancing followed where delegates let loose from Salsa to the Macarena!

To add a little ambiance to the event, the room was decorated with balloons, aliens, and signs (saying "Students of the Future, Are you Ready?"). Fluorescent necklaces and bracelets were handed out to complement the futuristic theme (which apparently found other uses such as spectacles and contact lenses!).

During the Congress, AOCLE delegates were informed about IACLE resources and activities through a poster board and an information desk. A pamphlet was made available to all delegates explaining the activities and resources that IACLE offers including information on how to become a Fellow of IACLE (FIACLE) and its examination process. Similarly, IACLE delegates also had the opportunity to gain information on AOCLE through a poster describing Goals, Educational Tools

developed over the years and a list of annual workshop themes. These poster boards were on-hand during the entire Congress.

An interesting session on evidence-based learning highlighted the final part of the program. Two topics were chosen; "Dryness with Soft Contact Wear Can be Solved by Preventing Dehydration" and "Orthokeratology." Two presenters for each topic were chosen, one against and the other for the statement. Each had to find "evidence" supporting and justifying their position on the chosen topic. The presenters used the Internet to search databases for supporting documentation and discussed the steps needed to do just that with the attendees. This differing approach followed lectures on Evidence-based Medicine and literature searches. Noteworthy to CL educators, was the notion that you can miss up to 50% of relevant articles in a conventional literature search. One way to improve your searching skills is to make friends with your librarian! They have the tools and knowledge to provide you with a more effective literature searches. For example, tools are available (such as "medical subject headings" in MESH Browser in PubMed) which have a controlled vocabulary in a subject tree which breaks down the subject for you to refine your search. Knowing when to use "and" & "or" in searches may also affect your outcome.

Of particular interest to those that reference articles for publication or course note purposes, it is very cumbersome and tedious to insert an additional citation and renumber all the references. Well those days are over! Procite Reference Manager and EndNote are software that reference articles. When an additional citation has to be inserted it recalculates and renumbers your references automatically ! (What a timesaving tool!!) For publishing purposes, these software packages include most of the referencing styles and formats of most journals available on MEDLINE or you can customize, hence with a click of the button, you can change the format without retyping a thing!

EndNote and is available from ISI ResearchSoft. You can get a free trial version from their Web site (www.endnote.com) and the cost is approximately \$230. It is available as MAC or PC and there is a student option available for about \$100.

As with the first World Congress on Contact Lens Education, a special meeting synopsis is in the works for the Second World Congress. Furthermore a CD-ROM version of all the presentations from the World Congress is also being prepared. Both the meeting synopsis and the CD-ROM will be ready for distribution this fall.

The AOCLE would like to thank Des Fonn (Congress Chairperson), members of the Congress Committee, members of the CLRU, members of IACLE and our host, The School of Optometry at the University of Waterloo for the dedication towards this immense undertaking. The devotion towards this Second World Congress on Contact Lens Education has been exemplary, as described by the testimonials found herein. None of this would be possible if it weren't for the support of our industry sponsors to which we owe a debt of gratitude. Congratulations for a job well done!

Reported by E. Bitton (AOCLE Newsletter #16, November 2000)