

Report from Buenos Aires

by Joseph Lex, MD FAAEM

Buenos Aires, Argentina was the site of the 1st Inter-American Congress of Emergency Medicine from April 19 - 21, co-sponsored by Sociedad Argentina de Emergencias, the American Academy of Emergency Medicine and the American College of Emergency Physicians. Nearly 3,000 emergency practitioners from around the world, but mainly from South America, met at the Sheraton Hotel-Buenos Aires for an outstanding educational experience and more than 20 hours of *AMA PRA Category I CMETM*.

More than 40 American speakers and 100 other American attendees made this a true international experience. Argentina leads the way in establishing EM as a specialty in South America, led by such pioneers as Hugo Peralta, Silvio Aguilera, Daniel Gonzalez and Liliana Caceres.

Several things made me realize the importance of this meeting. For one, ACEP was represented by three past presidents (Robert Schafermeyer, George Molzen and Robert Suter), plus current president, Frederick Blum. For another, many pioneers of the specialty as an academic body of knowledge attended - all of them AAEM members. Peter Rosen, Judith Tintinalli, Lewis Goldfrank, John Marx and Kenneth Iserson all attended and gave talks. (No AAEM dues dollars were used to support this conference, by the way. Most participants were more than happy to not only self-fund, but to pay a registration fee in order to support the meeting.)

Considering the conference was on "foreign soil," the quality of talks given was at an extremely high level. Phillip Levy's thorough, yet very useful overview on the diagnosis and treatment of congestive heart failure, Daniel McDermott's updates on the San Francisco Syncope Rules, with as yet unpublished data, Mark Langdorf's easy mnemonics to remember Sgarbossa criteria, and, of course, Billy Mallon's total dismantling of the rationale behind the most recent ATLS guidelines, were just some of the high points.

English-language tracks were translated into Spanish. In the Spanish language tracks you could hear local perspectives on mountain medicine (from Argentina), cold-related injury (from Peru), COPD updates (from Chile), mental status change in children (from Uruguay), non-invasive ventilation (from Venezuela), post-resuscitation care (from Brazil), medical intelligence (from the Dominican Republic), hazardous materials (from Mexico) and treatment of shock (from Cuba), as well as speakers from Belgium and Australia.

Aaron Hexdall, MD FAAEM, served as organizer for AAEM and dedicated hundreds of hours to assure its success. From AAEM's home office, there was extremely strong support from Tom Derenne in meeting all of the ACCME requirements for attendees.

On a personal note, it was fun catching up with friends I met last year when I spoke at the SAE meeting and was made an honorary member of their society. Since I got into town a day early, I had a chance to explore the Plaza de Mayo, including the National Cathedral and crypt of Argentinean republic founder José Francisco de San Martín, leader in the War of Independence. The Arts Museum has a very complete collection of South American art through several centuries, and the MALBA (Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires) had two exhibits by contemporary artists. My favorite was a small museum on Laprida Avenue dedicated solely to the works of Argentinean fantasist / surrealist Xul Solar, confidant to Jorge Luis Borges, and virtually unrecognized in his lifetime.

There are tentative plans for a 2nd Inter-American conference in 2008, possibly in Buenos Aires, but another country is not out of the question. I'll let you know as plans come together. Don't miss another opportunity like this – AAEM-quality CME in an exotic location. 