

The Regensburg Course in Facial Plastic Surgery (29 April - 2 May 2009)

Report: by A D'Souza

The First Regensburg Course in Facial Plastic Surgery was held at Regensburg University ORL Hospital, Germany. This was an international, truly multidisciplinary event with representation from both the East and West bringing over 100 experienced and trainee surgeons in ENT, maxillofacial surgery, plastic surgery, oculoplastic surgery, and dermatology together in quest of furthering the knowledge in facial plastic surgery. The event proved to be an extraordinary learning experience and a major step forward for both cosmetic and reconstructive arms of European Facial Plastic Surgery. Thanks to Course Director Holger Gassner and Thomas Kühnel and their organising committee of the University of Regensburg who provided an exceptional programme in collaboration with Mayo Clinic and under the auspices of EAFPS. The organisers paid detailed attention to all aspects of the course, including travel and boarding both for delegates and faculty, social programme, and above all course content.

The course was delivered in three distinct segments - didactic lectures, live-surgery and live demonstration of botulinum toxin and filler injections and laboratory based fresh frozen cadaveric dissections, which also included a dedicated auricular reconstruction workshop.

Department chairman Jürgen Strutz delivered the welcome note, followed by a brief overview of the vision of EAFPS by Pietro Palma as well as its fellowship programme by Julian Rowe-Jones. The subsequent didactic session focussed on basic and finesse facial reconstruction with excellent, practically oriented lectures from David Sherris and Kris Moe from the USA. This was followed by advanced lectures on anatomy, assessment, indications, techniques and nuances of otoplasty, blepharoplasty, as well as face lift surgery. Of note was Wayne Larrabee's superb account of 'SMAS and deep plane face lift - lessons from 5000 cases' laying out some pearls of wisdom regarding face lift surgery. The focus then turned to maxillofacial surgery encompassing chin augmentation with mentoplasty and sliding genioplasty and other aspects of facial surgery. The day ended with an in depth discussion of the management of chronic facial paralysis a topic that lives on the back burner many a times.

Live surgery marked the early start to the second and third days. Among the eight procedures demonstrated were rhinoplasties, demonstrating both endonasal and open structure techniques, blepharoplasty, endoscopic brow lift and mid face lift, as well as deep plain face lift. Use of endotine devices was also demonstrated. Impeccable audiovisual transmission across to the operating surgeons and audience allowed for stimulating interactive and interesting sessions during which nuances and pearls of wisdom were explored in addition to focussing on basic surgical principles. Management of facial trauma did not go uncovered, along with a scintillating overview of the application of transorbital neuroendoscopic surgery (TONES) by Kris Moe highlighting the versatile nature of endoscopic surgery.

The nonsurgical facial rejuvenation with laser, neuromodulators as well as facial fillers was addressed in detail. Jonathan Sykes' live demonstration of botulinum toxin and filler injections was well received by the attendees, triggering off intricate discussion on various aspects of non-surgical rejuvenation. He also highlighted techniques and value of local anaesthetics in facial surgery and non-surgical rejuvenation.

Final day was spent in the anatomy laboratory working on fresh frozen cadaveric heads with the luxury of endoscopes and high quality surgical instruments courtesy of Karl Storz. The delegates had ample opportunity to get to grips with the surgical anatomy and perform various procedures including face lift, blepharoplasty as well as endoscopic facial rejuvenation techniques such as mid face lift. Some used this opportunity to familiarise with other aspects of facial surgery such transorbital techniques. The auricular reconstruction workshop headed by Ralph Magritz ran parallel and provided hands on experience of auricular sculpturing techniques. My sympathies are with those who could not capitalise on this experience because of limited availability of places - "Book early next time!"

No course is complete without the social programme, the icing on the cake. The gala dinner encompassing a blend of perfect food, drink and on-stage act where local maestros inspired the delegates to take to stage unleashing their hidden talent suitably complemented this global learning experience.

In summary the course offers an unparalleled learning experience and excellent value for money. I think this is a must course to all surgeons interested in facial plastic surgery and I am sure it will augment the knowledge and clinical practice in Facial Plastic Surgery to the highest level. I would strongly urge you to mark your diaries for the next course, which will be held June 10 - 13th, 2010.