

MESSAGE FROM WAS SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE, LOCAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE, THE WAS AND CONGRESS PRESIDENTS

The 22nd Congress of the World Association for Sexual Health (WAS), held in Singapore from 25th to 28th July 2015 is a time to celebrate and share the diversity and richness of the science and practice of sexual health/sexual rights. Indeed, diversity *per se* is probably the most significant feature of our field and definitely one of its strongest qualities. The range of multifarious contributions in the scientific areas including but not limited to, historical and social sciences, behavioural sciences, clinical and medical sciences, and educational sciences towards the understanding of sexuality is testament to the diverse nature of a holistic sexual health. This can be said to be a manifestation of what one of our pioneers Iwan Bloch (1906) had envisioned when he coined the term, 'Sexology' to encompass the multidisciplinary sciences of sexuality.

Another key distinctive feature of WAS is the marriage between sexual health and sexual rights. One of the most important missions of WAS is to "promote sexual health throughout one's lifespan and throughout the world by developing, promoting and supporting sexology and sexual rights for all" (WAS strategic plan of action, 2007). The advancement of scientifically-based sexuality research is a key premise in order to accomplish these goals. Thus, the promotion of sexual health through the world and the advocacy of sexual rights should be strongly supported by evidence-based knowledge. Therefore, the mission of the WAS Scientific Committee is to provide and disseminate evidence-based knowledge in the different areas that contribute to the promotion of Sexual Health/Sexual Rights. The WAS World Congress is certainly the most important platform to share the state-of-the-art knowledge in sexual sciences and its implications for Sexual Health/Sexual Rights with researchers and practitioners from all around the world. With the privilege of having enthusiastic participants from every nook and cranny of various countries within the five major continents, the WAS Congress is an excellent time to share the cultural multiplicity of the Homo sapiens.

On this noble mission during the last one year, the WAS Scientific Committee, jointly with Local Scientific Committee led by Srilatha, and the WAS and Congress Presidents, Kevan Wylie and Ganesan Adaikan have strived together in the meticulous planning of a scientific programme of exceptional quality for the WAS2015 Congress in Singapore.

Also in this initiative, the WAS scientific committee, chaired by Pedro Nobre was organised into the following seven specialised tracks, with relevant expertise from around the world to lead each of these mighty areas.

Chair: Pedro Nobre (Portugal)

Vice-Chair: Maryanne Doherty (Canada)

Track Leaders

Basic Sciences: Erick Janssen (United States)

Behavioral & Social Sciences: Osmo Kontula (Finland)

Clinical Sciences: Marita MacCabe (Australia)

Educational Sciences: Aleksandar Stulhofer (Croatia)

Medical Sciences: Andrea Salonia (Italy)

Public Health: Maryanne Doherty (Canada)

Sexual Rights: Yuko Higashi (Japan)

The WAS Scientific Committee together with the Local Scientific Committee was responsible for the overall selection of speakers using these criteria: 1) being a world expert in one of the main areas of sexual health/sexual rights, 2) was not part of the invited faculty in the last WAS Congress, 3) is not currently a member of the WAS Advisory or Statutory Committees, and to ensure a 4) balanced representation of the main areas within sexology, 5) balanced regional participation, and

6) balanced gender representation. Based on this conscientious selection, the range of invited speakers is composed of 16 world experts in sexology, covering the main areas of sexual health (Basic Sciences, Behavioural & Social Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Educational Sciences, Medical Sciences, Public Health, and Sexual Rights). The final list of invited speakers also covers all the regions of the world with experts from North America, South America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East.

Aside from the track leaders, the International Scientific Committee formed of over 70 renowned international experts, has played a key role in performing blind, peer reviews of abstracts before making its final recommendations of acceptance (or rejection) of the innumerable submissions.

On yet another important note, the inclusion of a Spanish/Portuguese scientific committee within the WAS Congress further highlights the diverseness of WAS. The Spanish/Portuguese scientific committee has been responsible for the selection of abstracts that are to be presented in Spanish or Portuguese at the Congress. The members of this eminent scientific committee (chaired by WAS past president, Eusebio Rubio-Aurioles) are all recognised leaders in the sexual health arena, hailing from several countries in the Latin America and Europe.

Chair: Eusebio Rubio-Aurioles (Mexico)

Members:

Aminta Parra (Venezuela)

António Palha (Portugal)

Carmita Abdo (Brazil)

Cristina Fridman (Argentina)

Esther Corona (Mexico)

Felipe Hurtado (Espanha)

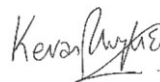
Gabriela Moita (Portugal)

Jaqueline Brender (Brazil)

Luis Perelman (Mexico)

Rubén Hernández (Venezuela)

In summary, the WAS Congress is a great opportunity to assimilate inputs on sexuality from many different societies across the globe. The organizing committee has invited various WAS affiliated societies from around the world to present and discuss the current challenges central to the field of sex research, sexual health, and sexual rights. As a result, a total of 22 symposia have been planned to cover the contributions from the various affiliate societies. All in all, it is our unique pride to present this biennial event studded with State-of-the-Art Plenary, Symposia lectures, Round-Tables of discussions and scholarly sharing of cutting-edge research and clinical findings, over the 4-day scientific galore in Singapore.



Prof Kevan Wylie
WAS President



Prof P Ganesan Adaikan
Congress President, WAS2015



Prof Pedro Nobre
WAS Scientific Chair



Dr B Srilatha
Local Scientific Chair