



Nations united by innovation

2022 EAO congress celebrates comeback in new hybrid format

A review report by Janine Conzato, Germany

For the last two years, the annual scientific meeting of the European Association for Osseointegration (EAO) could only take place virtually owing to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. From 29 September to 1 October, the 29th EAO congress took place this year as a hybrid format for the first time in its history, consisting of a face-to-face event held at Palexpo exhibition and congress centre in Geneva and a virtual evening programme—much like the EAO Digital Days in the last two years. A rich programme with numerous educational and networking opportunities awaited over 2,200 participants.

“This digital part is mostly for those who do not want to or cannot travel to Geneva. It features congress teasers and summaries of the respective day, such as short summaries of the plenary sessions or live recorded parts of the discussions. Al-

though it isn’t a replacement of the congress, the evening programme is informative and entertaining,” explained Prof. Irena Sailer, chair of the 2022 EAO congress, ahead of the event. The digital congress programme will be available on the EAO online platform until the end of October, including for those who attended the event in person. In addition, Prof. Sailer explained that access is free of charge to dentists from Ukraine this year, giving them the opportunity to learn about the latest innovations in the dental world even from the war zone.

This year’s programme featured an international faculty of 90 renowned speakers who shared their knowledge on the use of digital technologies in all areas of implantology and dentistry. In the sessions, current digital techniques were compared with conventional techniques, and clini-

cally relevant recommendations for practice were given. In addition to interesting lectures, there was broad participation by the industry in the exhibition and the supporting programme, offering practical education via forums and hands-on sessions.

Focus on digital technologies

Under the theme “Uniting nations through innovations”, the 2022 EAO congress focused on the role and potential of digital technologies for communication, work, and learning and training opportunities. A goal of this year’s congress was to critically examine investments in new technologies and their actual benefits for clinicians and patients. Prof. Sailer commented: “It is, indeed, our aim to critically evaluate all the new developments that are offered to clinicians today. All these

new tools that promise to improve quality of care while reducing treatment costs for patients do sound tempting, but we will ask whether all of this can be achieved just by investing in technology and changing the practice structure from a conventional one to a digital one. Many dental professionals are asking what evidence there is behind these rapidly appearing developments and whether the evidence is sufficient to abandon well-established paths.”

After the ceremonial opening and the presentation of the silver medals for dedicated services to the EAO by President Dr Luca Cordaro to the scientific committee, consisting of Prof. Sailer, Dr Sven Mühlemann (co-chair of the 2022 EAO congress and president of the Swiss Society for Implantology), Dr Christoph Ramseier, Prof. Sebastian Kühl and Dr Fidel Ruggia, the dense programme, which was grouped around three plenary sessions, began. The first session focused on the virtual patient, including the growth of this field as well as the potential role of digital human technology. Might it eventually be possible to create a 3D patient without ever seeing the patient in the office?

No less than senior staff research scientist at Google Thabo Beeler and chief scientist at DisneyResearch|Studios Prof. Markus Gross took the audience on a journey into digital human technology and explained how dentistry can learn from Hollywood. Also, Prof. Florian Beuer, Prof. Dennis Rottke, Dr Andrea Ricci and Prof. Rubens Spin-Neto discussed the

virtual patient and went into greater detail on innovations such as computer-designed smiles and 3D radiography.

One highlight followed the next

The congress was held in collaboration with the Swiss societies of implantology, of oral surgery and stomatology, of periodontics and of reconstructive dentistry, and one highlight of the congress was the Swiss Day, an interactive congress programme presented by these associations on the first day. The EAO Junior Committee also presented a hands-on workshop titled My first implant that day.

The daily online sessions were a wonderful feature. These repeated a selection of sessions each evening for participants at home on their screens and offered innovative formats such as the Prime Time Debate, Battle and #isittrue?

Does the digital approach improve treatment efficiency?

The sessions on Friday were dedicated to this question. The icing on the cake for the already knowledge-packed programme presented by award-winning dentists was an ambitious surgical double session on Friday afternoon: the procedures of Dr Istvan Urban from Hungary and Dr Mario Rocuzzo from Italy were livestreamed at the congress. The strengths and challenges of digital and conventional approaches to 3D bone regeneration were explored. Ten participants competed in

the clinical video competition, presenting their 7-minute videos on different topics in digital dentistry. The winner, Dr Carmen Pomares Puig from Spain, received the European Prize for Clinical Video on Implant Dentistry and €1,000 at the ceremony on Saturday. During the meeting the association awarded further prestigious scientific prizes:

- European Prize for Basic Research in Implant Dentistry Awarded to: Jan Kwan (Canada)
- European Prize for Clinical Research—Surgery Awarded to: Algirdas Puisys (Lithuania)
- European Prize for Clinical Research—Prosthetics Awarded to: Chahak Seth (Denmark)
- European Prize for Clinical Research—Peri-implant Biology Awarded to: Miha Pirc (Switzerland)
- European Prize for Clinical Innovations in Implant Dentistry Awarded to: Grazia Tommasato (Italy)

At the closing ceremony, eight dentists received the EAO Certificate in Implant-based Therapy, while 28 others were awarded the EAO Master Diploma in Implant Dentistry, having completed the six-module programme.



Prof. Irena Sailer, Chair of the 29th EAO Congress in Geneva, with delegates.



Saturday also addressed perhaps the most important question of all for the digital future of dentistry: does investing in new technologies improve the lives of patients and clinicians? This session focused on how to improve communication between clinicians and patients and how to better manage expectations to avoid disappointment.

Successful family reunion!

According to Prof. Sailer, the EAO congresses have always felt like a family reunion. She therefore expressed in advance: "We hope to rekindle this feeling again this year, as we have missed it in the past years." An entertaining social programme, such as the get-together and the subsequent congress dinner, as well as the party on Thursday evening and happy hour at rooftop⁴² on Friday evening offered participants the opportunity to meet like-minded people and exchange experiences of their clinical work—so it seems that this wish was fulfilled.

At the EAO and Swiss associations members and faculty dinner on Thursday evening, Prof. Georg Watzek was awarded honorary EAO membership in recognition of his outstanding achievements in the field of osseointegration and his commitment to the EAO since joining the association in 1990. Prof. Watzek was EAO president in 2003–2004 and was involved in the development of several educational projects, including the EAO certification



Panel discussion on 3D radiology as a mandatory part of treatment planning with Prof. Markus Hürzeler, Prof. Rubens Spin-Neto, Prof. Dennis Rottke, Dr Florian Probst and Dr Andrew Dawood (from right).

examination for implant-based therapy. So far, only seven people have received this award, among them Profs Niklaus P. Lang and Christoph Hämmerle. The congress also saw Prof. Ronald Jung take over as EAO President, replacing Dr Luca Cordaro. A long-standing EAO member and an accomplished clinician, Prof. Jung co-chaired this year's live surgery session and is the Chairman and Clinic Director of the Clinic of Reconstructive Dentistry, at the Center of Dental Medicine, University of Zurich, Switzerland.

International exchange is a must!

Geneva is a truly international city and is the headquarters of numerous interna-

tional organisations, including the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the World Trade Organisation and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The EAO, founded in 1992, reflected this international character at the congress, where more than 80 countries were represented and clinicians from all over the world attended. Every participant left the congress with valuable knowledge and insights and had the opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones.

Save the date for next year's EAO congress in the German capital of Berlin from 28 to 30 September. You will not be disappointed!



On the second day, the plenary session featured live surgery broadcast simultaneously from Budapest and Turin. Dr Isabella Rocchietta, Prof. Daniel Buser and Prof. Ronald Jung co-chaired this year's live surgery session.