

## Editorial

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As Founder and Editor-in-Chief of *The Heart Surgery Forum*, it is my pleasure to update the readership on events salient to our mission and our members. First the proceedings of the HSF #2 Scientific Congress in Split, Croatia this past May 14-17, 2014.

For the second time in four years, congratulations to Dr. Igor Rudez, for organizing the highly successful HSF #2 meeting. This Congress presented new surgical techniques and scientific accomplishments from the members of our Forum as well as regional and international surgeons. What made this meeting unique was the collegiality and camaraderie of our Forum members who each brought something unique to the Congress. Also, the combination of the magnificent Raddison Blu resort on the Adriatic Sea plus the scenic and historic city of Split made this venue truly memorable. *The Heart Surgery Forum* has been a medium for sharing ideas across the Internet for the past 16 years. Now we can be proud of two successful scientific congresses which have enlarged the scope of our knowledge and brought our members closer together as persons and surgeons.

It is impossible in a short editorial to summarize the highlights of the program. There was no one centerpiece presentation which stood out more than the others. We all enjoyed hearing the detailed explanation of the creative "Butterfly" mitral repair by Dr. Toru Asai from Shiga, Japan. This elegant repair expands the surgeon's creativity when dealing with degenerative mitral regurgitation associated with excess or tall posterior leaflet tissue. Undoubtedly the Butterfly repair is simpler and easier than traditional sliding plasty. Just as exciting was the presentation from Dr. Bojan Biocina, University Hospital Center Rebro, Zagreb, Croatia, who reported initial results with his novel and simple "Cross Chordopexy" technique for repair of mitral regurgitation. Dr. Igor Medved from the University Hospital Center, Rijeka, Croatia presented an outstanding report on the use of the CoreMatrix acellular biologic scaffold for creating artificial neo-chordae. It was my personal privilege to review drawings and videos illustrating my concept of "Microsizing" as a simple technique for precision adjustment of mitral ring annuloplasties, previously published in *The Heart Surgery Forum* journal. [Levinson 2012]

The aortic valve sessions were spearheaded by Dr. Zeljko Sultic, University Hospital Dubrava, Zagreb, Croatia who gave a thorough analysis of the role of stentless aortic valves and the excellent results obtained with the Sorin Freedom pericardial stentless bioprosthesis with only a 5% late reoperation rate. There were several lectures on the management of complex endocarditis and the role of TAVI in the hybrid suite. Dr. Ben Bidstrup, Holy Spirit Northside Hospital,

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Queensland, Australia provided a birds-eye view of the evidence surrounding Aprotinin and how the prior unfavorable reports were flawed by bias and inadequate methodology. Dr. David Harris, Kuils River Hospital, Capetown, South Africa presented several resounding lectures, including thoracotomy for redo-CABG (complete with thorough illustrations and photographs) and hybrid TEVAR procedures for treatment of complex aortic arch aneurysms. Dr. Lucas Ramirez from Universidad de Antioquia, Medellin, Columbia presented two outstanding lectures, one on the management of complications from percutaneous closure devices used for congenital heart defects, and one on the technique of resection for intracaval extension of abdominal tumors, specifically uterine leiomyoma.

Probably the most dedicated effort to educate us came from our own Dr. Michael Firstenberg, Akron City Hospital, who presented four outstanding talks on various subjects, including a comprehensive assessment adult of ECMO, cardiac trauma, and process improvement using team building and hard-wired solutions for creating a safe and effective CV Surgery team.

Possibly the most surprising and fascinating new development presented at the HSF # 2 meeting was the use of a reversible pulmonary artery band for the treatment of dilated cardiomyopathy in children. Dr. Drazen Belina, congenital surgeon from the University Hospital in Zagreb, presented the summary of 12 children treated at the Pediatric Heart Center in Giessen, Germany, one of which was originally from his program in Croatia. All 12 children with end stage dilated (left sided) cardiomyopathy whose only option was transplantation were successfully treated with this new concept of reversible PA banding. Cardiac MRI and Echocardiographic data confirmed that PA banding shifted the ventricular septum from right to left, reduced LVEDD, and increased ejection fraction from a mean of 14% to 47% at one year. After left ventricular recovery, the bands were sequentially dilated in the catheterization laboratory with standard balloon techniques. Despite the very high operative risk, none of the 12 patients died from the banding procedure, indicating that a beneficial effect was surely evident immediately. This exciting new development may have implications beyond the pediatric population but at least there is now something new to treat these very sick babies with failing left ventricles.

From this experience in Split, there is no doubt that congregating in person carries different rewards and memories than exchanging emails on the OpenHeart-L. Nothing can replace the rapture of a guided tour of the ancient Croatian city of Trogir (circa 1400-1500 A.D.) or the ruins of the Roman Emperor Diocletian's Palace (circa 300-400 A.D.) with friends and colleagues who previously have only visited with each other in the blandness of email. And then there are the majestic waterfalls of KRKA National Park and the serene Samostan Visovac island monastery. If each person measures the value of their own life by the archives of their personal memories, the memory of HSF #2

will always stand out for the forum participants who traveled to Split for this unique gathering.

The credit for the idea and creation of the HSF # 1 and #2 meetings belongs principally to Dr. Igor Rudez, of Zagreb, Croatia. Through his persistence, dedication, and outright strength of will, these memorable conclaves came to fruition despite vast odds. Of special note is his assistant Andrea Grospić at MeetMe.org, who once again contributed her special gifts in organizing the fine details from hotels to transportation to tourist venues. To them, we all owe our thanks and best wishes.

Can this happen again? Magical moments never truly happen again. However, other different and unique magical moments are possible in the future. For those who missed HSF #2, keep your eyes open for news of our next Congress in a place yet to be announced but surely as interesting and memorable as before.

The second purpose of this Editorial is to update the readership on changes in makeup of the journal's Editorial Board. It is time to express our combined thanks to the members of our Editorial Board for their unselfish service reviewing manuscripts and raising the expertise of our profession through quality peer review. This is no easy task, and at times can consume considerable energy and dedication of our volunteer Board members. The HSF introduced double-blinded peer review via email/web in 1997, to be followed later by many other major publications. We are proud of the fairness and equanimity of our review process, where majority vote determines acceptance or rejection. *The Heart Surgery Forum* articles typically receive multiple reviews, which reduces bias and improves fair assessment of new developments in our field.



Group photo showing just part of the HSF # 2 participants. Standing from top left: Bojan Biocina (Croatia), Hrvoje Gasparovic (Croatia), Mate Petricevic (Croatia), Giuseppe Rescigno (Italy), Michael Markin (Bosnia & Herzegovina), Mark Levinson (USA), Josip Varvodic (Croatia); Middle row: Ben Bidstrup (Australia), Goran Djuzel (Bosnia & Herzegovina), Jose Lucas Ramirez Gil (Columbia), Igor Rudez (Croatia), Daniel Unic (Croatia); Bottom row: Alen Karic (Bosnia & Herzegovina), Mehdi Hadziselimovic (Bosnia & Herzegovina), David Harris (South Africa), Mislav Planinc (Croatia), Tohru Asai (Japan), Davor Baric (Croatia), Tea Acuff (USA)

After nearly a decade and a half, some of our original reviewers have moved on to other projects. It is my privilege to invite new faces to the role of reviewer and to extend a deep debt of gratitude for those Board members who will be moving on. No one can be more appreciative than myself, who programmed the HSF web site and journal from humble beginnings. It is time to memorialize the contributions of our past Board members, and to introduce the new generation of *The Heart Surgery Forum* Editorial Board. Without the unselfishness of these fine people, the HSF could neither exist nor achieve so much. To our Editorial Board, past and future, the utmost of congratulations and thanks.

The following reviewers will be retiring from the Editorial Board in 2014:

Borut Gersak, Slovenia	Erik Fosse, Norway
Belhan Akpınar, Turkey	Lorenzo Gonzalez-Lavin, USA
Michael Argenziano, USA	Guo-Wei He, China
Jacob Bergsland, Bosnia	Jerrold Levy, USA
Johannes Bonnati, UAE	Luiz Leo, Brazil
W. Douglas Boyd, USA	Patrick Nataf, France
Mercedes Dullum, USA	Mehmet Oz, USA
James Edgerton, USA	Paulo Pego-Fernandes, Brazil
John Eleftheriades, USA	Jorge Salazar, USA
Greg Fontana, USA	Tomas Salerno, USA

It is also my pleasure to introduce the newest members of *The Heart Surgery Forum* Editorial Board starting in 2014.

- Leora Yarboro (University of Virginia, USA)
- Philip Hess (University of Florida, USA)
- Matthew A. Romano (University of Michigan, USA)
- Michael Firstenberg (Summa Akron City Hospital, USA)
- Hossein Shayan (San Antonio Community Hospital, USA)
- Lucas Ramirez-Gil (Universidad de Antioquia, Medellin, Columbia)
- Reddy Dandolu (University of Nevada School of Medicine, USA)

The future is bright and innovative with these leaders amongst us. Again, my thanks to everyone for bringing their special talents to *The Heart Surgery Forum* journal, meeting and discussion list. See you in the future.

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**REFERENCES**

Levinson MM, Miller J. Microsizing using inside suture placement. A simple and versatile technique for precision adjustment of ring annuloplasties. *Heart Surg Forum* #2012-1068; 15(5):241-249, 2012.