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International Society for Adult Congenital Heart Disease

## ISACHD Newsletter

### In This Issue

[President's Message](#)

[Presentation of the ISACHD Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Jane Somerville](#)

[Website Development and ISACHD Member Portal](#)

[Semi-Annual Meeting – Anaheim 2017](#)

[ISACHD Research Awards 2017](#)

[Semi-Annual Meeting ACC March 18<sup>th</sup> Highlights](#)

### President's Message

by Erwin Oechslin, ISACHD President



Dear ISACHD Members,

All of us are very busy and have many commitments so that you haven't received a newsletter for quite some time, but this doesn't mean that the Board is hibernating. There are many activities going on behind the scene and there is also exciting news.

I sincerely thank all those who have contributed to this newsletter, and the many ISACHD members involved in the numerous activities and initiatives. Special thanks to Dr. Clare O'Donnell, responsible for Global Affairs/Communications, who coordinated the contributions.

### ***Presentation of the ISACHD Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Jane Somerville, the 'mother' of GUCH***

The *ISACHD Lifetime Achievement Award* recognizes sustained excellence in leadership and innovation through long-term dedication and contributions to, and achievements in, the care of adults with congenital heart disease: these attributes perfectly describe Dr. Somerville's great contributions to the field of ACHD with global impact. She has dedicated more than half of a century of her life to ACHD or GUCH, she has championed the ACHD or GUCH subspecialty amongst many other key activities which have changed the lives of many patients and the lives of the ACHD physicians. She has demonstrated vision, exceptional leadership, mentorship, dedication and advocacy with global impact. She was one of the founding organizers for World Congress in Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiovascular Surgery in the 1980s, of the ESC WG on Grown-Up Congenital Heart Disease in the early 1990s amongst others. We are particularly proud to present Dr. Jane Somerville this Award as she is one of the founding organizers of ISACHD in 1994.

Dr. Jane Somerville is one of the unique individuals who are masters in disruptive thinking to challenge the status quo, to stimulate discussion outside the box, to foster new ideas and concepts and to transform a generally accepted consensus or opinion. Her unconventional and provocative thinking helped to establish ACHD as a recognized subspecialty in cardiology.

The Award was presented to Dr. Somerville at the EuroGUCH Meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland on May 5, 2017. It was a historical moment when Dr. Carole Warnes honored Dr. Somerville's great achievement and contribution in a video message ([click here to download video](#))

Unfortunately, Dr. Jane Somerville could not to be present but Dr. John Deanfield accepted the plaque on behalf of Dr. Somerville and will hand it over to her in London.

### **Website Development and ISACHD Member Portal**

In 2016, we surveyed almost 150 members and non-members and held an ISACHD executive retreat to ensure that ISACHD priorities reflect needs of members as well as the broader ACHD community. One of the priorities and mandate for ISACHD are to become a "virtual community" of ACHD professionals. This will create a stronger commitment, engagement and involvement of our members. As such,

#### **President**

Erwin Oechslin, MD, FRCPC  
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Toronto, Ontario  
Canada

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MBChB  
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Starship Hospital,  
Auckland, New Zealand

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Knight Cardiovascular Institute  
Oregon Health & Science  
University  
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Adult Congenital Heart  
Disease Program  
University of Washington  
Seattle, WA

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Inst. Cardiologia Hospital  
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### Representative

Dr. Els Pieper  
University Hospital, Groningen,  
Netherlands

## Asia-Pacific

### Representative

Dr. Clare P O'Donnell  
Paediatric/Congenital  
Cardiology  
Starship Hospital,  
Auckland,  
New Zealand

ISACHD needs to improve its web presence and encourage cross-continental dialogue to provide a wealth of knowledge and resources to members, facilitating idea sharing and connections. Areas of focus include journal article reviews, education, research, and fellows-in-training.

The ISACHD internet platform should have privileged content available to only paying members. A members-only communication forum (ISACHD Member Portal) is critically important at this juncture to bring ISACHD and its members together. Success starts with building a network of engaged members!

ISACHD is very grateful to Medtronic which provided an unrestricted educational grant to support the development of the virtual community/ISACHD Member Portal.

Three weeks ago, ISACHD has engaged with HIGHER LOGIC ([www.higherlogic.com](http://www.higherlogic.com)), a company with rich experience creating online communities for health care organizations of various sizes. A contract was signed at the beginning of October 2017. The **new ISACHD website** will provide an **ISACHD Member Portal**, a discussion forum, which will be the home of a centralized location for ISACHD members to interact, communicate and/or discuss challenges clinical dilemmas in a private and secure platform. The discussions will flow seamlessly among email, mobile devices and the online community. The features of the forum will allow instant and active conversation and interaction in our community.

We just completed the Implementation Conference Call with HIGHER LOGIC and we hope, that the new Website with the ISACHD MEMBER PORTAL will be live in 4 months.

## ISACHD Research Awards 2017

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the recipients of our ISACHD Research Awards, which were presented at the 27<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Adult Congenital Heart Disease in the Adult in Cincinnati (OH), from September 14-16.

The ISACHD Young Investigator Award was presented to **Jim Vehmeijer, MD (Amsterdam, NL)** for his abstract entitled "*Resuscitation For Out-Of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest In Adults With Congenital Heart Disease*".



From left to right: Anitha S. John, MD PhD, Gruschen Veldtman, MD, Jim Vehmeijer, MB, Gretchen Jayawardena, RN, Erwin Oechslein, MD

The ISACHD Cardiac Care Associates Research Award was presented to **Gretchen Jayawardena (Vanderbilt Heart Adult Congenital Program, Nashville, TN)** for her abstract entitled "*Formal Transition Program May Increase Transition Readiness, Independence And Self-Confidence In Young Adults Living With Congenital Heart Disease: A Prospective Cohort*".

## ISACHD Research Award

## ISACHD at International Meetings

For the first time, there was an ACHD track during the entire meeting at the *World Congress of Pediatric Cardiology and Cardiovascular Surgery held in Barcelona in June 2017* (<http://www.wcpccs2017.org>). This was the first time that ACHD as a subspecialty was visible during the entire meeting. ISACHD is very grateful to Dr. Cicek Sertac, Chair of the Organizing Committee, for his leadership to make ACHD

## Canada

### Representative

Ariane Marelli, MD  
Royal Victoria Hospital  
Montreal, Quebec,  
Canada

### Journal Watch Editor

Gruschen Veldtman, FRCP,  
MBChB

Heart Institute

Cincinnati Children's Hospital,  
USA

### Fellow-in-Training Representative

Jouke P. Bokma  
Academic Medical Center  
Meibergdreef 9  
1105 AZ Amsterdam,  
Netherlands

### Executive Director

Peter Kralka  
FPMR  
Raleigh, NC, USA

### Past Presidents

Gary Webb, MD  
1994-1996

Carol Warnes, MD  
1996-1998

Richard Liberthson, MD  
1998-2000

Daniel Murphy, Jr., MD  
2000-2002

Thomas P. Graham, Jr., MD  
2002-2004

Michael A. Gatzoulis, MD,  
PhD, FACC  
2004-2006

Jack M. Colman, MD  
2006-2008

Michael J. Landzberg, MD  
2008-2010

as one of the highlights during the meeting. I am also very thankful to the organizer for the outstanding meeting and spirit of integration and collaboration in Barcelona.

At the **Annual Scientific Meeting of the European Society of Cardiology** in August 2017, ESC-GUCH and ISACHD arranged a Joint Session entitled “*Answers to tough questions in ACHD*”. The Faculty (2 speakers from Europe and 2 speakers from North America) bridged the knowledge gap in the treatment of the failing subaortic RV, Fontan Associated Liver Disease, pulmonary vasodilator therapy and CRT in ACHD. The session was very well attended and received. We have just submitted the proposal for a Joint ESC-GUCH/ISACHD Session for the Scientific ESC Meeting 2018.

Please read the special report about the **27<sup>th</sup> International Symposium, Cincinnati, in September 2017**.

### Dr. Gary Webb – Recipient of the 2017 Eugene Braunwald Academic Mentorship Award

It is a great privilege and honor to inform you that **Dr. Gary Webb is the recipient of the prestigious 2017 Eugene Braunwald Academic Mentorship Award**, which will be presented to him at the Scientific Meeting of the AHA in Anaheim, CA, in November 2017.

This award recognizes and acknowledges Dr. Gary Webb’s national and international leadership and reputation in Adult Congenital Heart Disease (ACHD) and his great contributions as a clinician, educator, and mentor for physicians, fellows, residents, and nurse practitioners.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Webb on this incredible achievement and on his continued success!

Presentation of the Award: Sunday, November 12, 2017, 1-3 pm in the main hall of the Anaheim Convention Center.

### Semi-Annual Meeting – Anaheim 2017

We planned to have our semi-annual meeting on Sunday, November 12, 2017, from 5-7 pm. However, AHA doesn’t allow to have meetings before 7 pm to avoid any conflicts with the AH Scientific Sessions.

It is my strong opinion to organize our annual or semi-annual meetings outside the scientific meeting of the ACC and the AHA. We need to bring the ISACHD meetings to the places where the ACHD community meets. The International Symposium on ACHD (rotating from Cincinnati, Skamania Lodge, Portland, OR, and Toronto) would be the ideal home for our annual meeting and would increase the visibility of ISACHD to the ACHD community.

Our next **semi-annual meeting** will be on:

- Date: Sunday, November 12, 2017
- Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm
- Address: Double Tree Suites by Hilton Anaheim Resort Convention Center  
2085 South Harbor Boulevard  
Anaheim, CA 92802
- Room: Room Tuscany DE

I hope that you will join us for an evening of fruitful discussion for the future of ISACHD. I am looking forward to seeing you in Anaheim

With warm wishes to all,

Erwin Oechslin, MD, President, ISACHD

## Exciting Upcoming Website Development!

Barbara Mulder, MD  
2010-2012

As reported in our Presidents message, with generous support from Medtronic and ISACHD leadership from Erwin Oechslin and Adrienne Kovacs, a partnership agreement has recently been signed with Higher Logic to redevelop our web platform into a new evolved interactive portal.

Curt J. Daniels, MD  
2012-2014

ISACHD recognises that our web presence presents our organisation to our global community. The mini retreat, summarised below, reassessed our vision and future ambitions and highlighted the priority given that global perspective.

Paul Khairy, MD, PhD  
2014-2016

The agreement reached covers both redevelopment of the website and a member portal. We look forward to greatly enhanced interaction with and between our members and the benefits this can bring to our ACHD community. Watch this space!

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## Semi-Annual Meeting ACC March 18<sup>th</sup>

### Highlights

#### *The CHiP network/ISACHD Journal Watch collaboration*

**Lead By Dr Gruschen Veldtman with his most able international panel of collaborators - Drs Mehul Patel, Tabitha Moe, Maan Jokhadar, Aaron Kay, MC Leong, Blanche Cupido and Gary Webb.** In collaboration with the ChiP network this is an exciting initiative to retrieve and grade ACHD articles and then select the highest scoring 3-5 articles for scholarly review. A must read for all ISACHD members – available directly from your ISACHD website.

### Mini Retreat

The major focus of the gathering was the Miniretreat designed to reassess the vision and future directions for ISACHD.

Dr Adrienne Kovacs presented a review of ISACHD membership with currently 184 members (76% physician/surgeon with 60% US based, 10% Canadian and 30% from Europe/UK/Australia/New Zealand or other locations). A financial update was also presented demonstrating the current modest financial position.

This lead into the focused Mini Retreat lead by Dr Oechslin on ISACHD Future Directions

The ISACHD Priorities were highlighted:

- Increase awareness of ISACHD's values as **GLOBAL** organisation for cardiovascular team members
- Invite active participation of all CV team members across the globe in ISACHD activities
- Promote **global** collaboration and operationalize stakeholder involvement in ISACHD activities
  - Education
  - Research
  - Health

### Scientific and Business Meetings

- Move from North American to global presence
- Expand joint scientific/educational sessions at national and international congresses
- ISACHD “networking” meetings beyond North American events (Europe, South America, Asia and beyond)
- Expanded role of regional representatives

### Research

- Stimulate, promote and facilitate collaborative research across the globe
- Implement a process of ensuring high quality research with global aspect
- Improve communication to ensure that ISACHD members are aware and have the opportunity to participate

## **Education and Communication**

The Joint Journal Watch – collaboration with CHiP was noted with its international panel of reviewers and potential for expansion

Newsletters – 2 per year with intermittent ‘newsflash’

Position statements - focused on topics with clear global perspective and relevance

## **The ISACHD website**

Exciting potentials for development including expansion to public and members only sections with potentials for education, information and collaboration (eg case discussion). Possibilities for an open Portal were discussed with more detailed review of a potential online community solution from Higher Logic.

It was clearly noted however that development of ISACHD and its infrastructure including web presence will require the Engagement and Commitment of members **and** additional funds. Modest fee increases possible but also search planned to explore fundraising/corporate sponsorship.

## **All Ideas and Contributions welcome**

### **Watch the website for updates!**

### **Other news from the Semi-Annual Meeting:**

#### ***Cardiac Care Associates (Sue Fernandes)***

New position statement from the Cardiac Care Associate group “ Adult Congenital heart disease nurse coordination: Essential skills and role in optimizing team- based care. A position statement from the International Society for Adult Congenital Heart Disease (ISACHD)” Christina Sillman, Joanne Morin, Corina Thomet, Deena Barber, Yoshiko Mizuno, Hsiao-Ling Yang, Theresa Malpas, Serena Francesca Flocco, Clare Finlay, Chi-Wen Chen, Yvonne Balon, Susan M Fernandes. International Journal of Cardiology 229 (2017) 125-131

#### ***Global Health Group (Disty Pearson)***

Presentations at the WCPPCS Barcelona (see also ichls.org)

Building a robust registry of international providers - please send contact details

#### ***ACHD Learning Centre (Gary Webb)***

Ongoing achievements and utility of ACHD Learning Centre with increasing global reach and impact (ACHDLearningCenter.org)

#### ***Global research Group (Jamil Aboulhosn)***

Highlighted endorsed projects including Approach IS, NOTE registry, Health related Quality of Life in Congenital Heart Disease Patients following Cardiac Surgery in Pakistan, the Influence of Thrombosis and Anticoagulation Strategies on Pregnancy Outcomes in Women with a Fontan Circulation

The group is looking for additional multi-national studies to review and potentially endorse. Contact Jamil Aboulhosn, MD ([jaboulhosn@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:jaboulhosn@mednet.ucla.edu)), if you would like to propose a multi-national research protocol or get further information

#### ***Fellows in Training (Jouke Bokma)***

Upcoming ACHD Fellows/residents/research Fellows Survey – **please participate**

For additional information - contact [j.p.bokma@amc.uva.nl](mailto:j.p.bokma@amc.uva.nl)

### ***Regional Update highlights***

**Canada:** developments in Training Guidelines and [ending Clinical Practice Guideline updates)

Pending research including BAV study, Correlate, CHF risk prediction, ‘Child-Bright’

**Asia Pacific:** ACHD meetings in Japan, Korea and New Zealand

**US:** ACHA program accreditation ongoing, new guidelines pending, next Board exam Fall 2017, 7 Accredited ACGME Fellowships with more pending

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### **EuroGUCH 2017**

This highly successful meeting was held 5-6 May at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland. Congratulations to the organisers, Drs Greutmann, Schwerzmann, Tobler, and Bouchardy, who assembled a stellar faculty and an engaging program in a wonderful venue bringing together more than 300 participants from 47 countries. Hot topics included heart failure management, new drug therapies in ACHD, anticoagulation in ACHD, and Fontan follow up including pregnancy and the role of biopsy in liver disease. We were encouraged to think broadly in a lifestyle session where speakers ably addressed, in informative, compelling and at times highly entertaining ways, topics ranging from depression to tattoos and piercings, sex and erectile dysfunction.

Sadly Professor Jane Somerville was unable to be present but Professor John Deanfield referenced the venue in his warm tribute entitled “The Olympic Spirit in GUCH” in recognition of Professor Somerville being awarded the ISACHD Lifetime Achievement Award.

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### **Cincinnati 2017**



### **The 27th International Symposium on Adult Congenital Heart Disease: A Fellow’s Perspective**

*By Alexandra van Dissel (Academic Medical Center, Amsterdam, the Netherlands)*

Nearly 300 pediatric and adult CHD health professionals convened in downtown Cincinnati for this year’s International Symposium on Adult Congenital Heart Disease. Bringing together experts from across the world, this symposium was an incredible opportunity for fellows to learn about the latest findings of cutting-edge research as well as connect with leaders and other fellows in the field to learn firsthand about the projects that they are working on.

The symposium kicked off with a warm word of welcome by the planning committee, led by Gruschen Veldtman, followed by a patient’s perspective from one of his patients who inspired the crowd with anecdotes and struggles from her personal life. The main topics of the following three days were heart failure, management of Fontan patients, neurodevelopmental issues and pregnancy. With almost 70 talks, highlights included exciting keynote lectures by Mark Rodefeld (Fontan and Advanced

Mechanical Support), Ariane Marelli (Neurocognitive Function across the lifespan) and Carole Warnes (Getting Your Pregnancy Program from Good to Great), as well as novel well-received sessions like the MED talks by Susan Fernandes, Adrienne Kovacs and Philip Moons, and the fellow's summit. During the breaks, the high-quality (moderated) poster abstract presentations also offered the fellows a great opportunity to present one's work and receive constructive feedback from colleagues at various career levels.

Not only is this symposium an important venue for fellows providing in-depth education and professional development, it also provided a less formal environment to mingle with others outside one's academic home during the various networking opportunities such as the opening reception, a—very competitive—jeopardy event, and fellow's dinner hosted by Medtronic. Also, given its history of German immigrants, the city of Cincinnati provided the prime backdrop to experience the largest Oktoberfest celebration in North America—conveniently located just 2 blocks away from the convention center. These evenings flew by with laughter and allowed for a relaxed atmosphere where fellows and their seniors could meet and chat.

Overall, the symposium offered fellows an engaging and hands-on approach to ACHD research and clinical dilemmas. And, in the words of ISACHD President Erwin Oechslin, "ISACHD is the global umbrella organization of national/regional societies in ACHD", this symposium successfully connected fellows with passionate colleagues from around the world who have similar goals and aspirations to improve the lives of the adults with congenital heart disease. Thanks to the intimate setting and approachable nature of all participants, this symposium is unlike any other conference and definitely something you do not want to miss. The upcoming 28th Annual Symposium to be held in Toronto, Canada from June 6-9, 2018 will be equally inspirational; an experience to look forward to.

### **The ACHD Fellows summit**

From Base to Summit: ACHD Experts Help Trainees Find Their Path

*Melissa L. Morello, MD (ACHD Fellow, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA)*

This year's International Symposium of ACHD in Cincinnati, Ohio hosted the inaugural ACHD Fellow's Summit. The brainchild of Gruschen Veldtman, MBCHB, FRCP (Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Cincinnati, OH) and fellows-in-training (FITs) Georges Ephrem, MD, MSc (Emory University, Atlanta, GA) and Jouke Bokma MD (Academic Medical Center, Amsterdam, Netherlands), the summit brought together a total of 27 students, residents and fellows for one-on-one mentoring with 17 expert subspecialists in the field of ACHD. Using principles reminiscent of speed-dating, mentors were situated at tables organized by subspecialty (EP/Interventional, Academic/Research, Heart Failure/Pulmonary Hypertension, Clinical/Imaging) while FIT moderators (Jouke Bokma MD, Georges Ephrem MD, MSc/Melissa Morello MD, Madhukar Kollengode, MD and David Briston, MD) facilitated roundtable discussion between trainees and the experts in three 15-minute sessions. Sage advice tempered with eruptions of laughter emanated from each table, reminding us that the humanity which brought each of us to the field of ACHD spans time zones, nations and decades of expertise.

Highlights from the EP/Interventional Table (moderated by Drs. Ephrem and Morello):

*Question:* "How do you suggest a fellow decide the order of ACHD and Interventional/EP training?"

*Dr. Harsimran Singh, MD (ACHD Interventional and Adult Structural, Weill Cornell Medicine, NY):* "Do ACHD first so you speak the 'language' and understand the anatomy before your interventional fellowship."

*Question:* "The years of training required to become ACHD EP or ACHD Interventional can definitely add up. What are some strategies for a fellow to potentially consolidate ACHD and interventional/EP training years?"

*Dr. Aimee Armstrong, MD (Pediatric/ACHD Interventional, Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus, OH):* "If you're coming from the background of pediatric cardiology, you likely don't need the extra ACHD training to learn the anatomy and physiology. However, it may help a person coming from a pure pediatrics background to feel more comfortable caring for adults. Also, as long as you have

adult interventional cardiology support at your institution, additional training in adult interventional is likely also unnecessary.”

*Dr. Wilson Lam, MD (Pediatric/Adult/ACHD EP, Texas Children’s Hospital, Houston, TX):* “The ABP and the ABIM may be willing to work with you. See if you can negotiate for 6-12 months as non-ACGME fellowship to spend time learning the skills you did not get from either your pediatric or adult EP/interventional fellowship. As a new attending, you may be able to ask for funding to learn new skills for 6-12 months if those skills will benefit the new institution. You can also use your research time to spend time in the lab and do EP interventions.”

*Question:* “Can you name two or three things you wish you would have known during your transition from FIT to attending?”

*Dr. Armstrong:* “Do what makes you happy and the job will come. However, if you like something else equally well and there’s more jobs in that field, then you should maybe do that! Also, find a good mentor in your field.”

*Dr. Singh:* “I would add that you shouldn’t just find one mentor—find multiple mentors for different facets of your career. For instance, I have different mentors that I turn to for help with interventions or academics.”

*Dr. Zachary Steinberg, MD (ACHD Interventional, UW Medical Center, Seattle, WA):* “Know how to bill yourself [for instance, ACHD interventional versus coronary], but if want to keep up certain skills, need to find a way to do that. Ask for STEMI call or more coronary volume, but be prepared that they might say ‘no.’ If that happens, you may need to be prepared to drop things.”

*Question:* “What do you feel are emerging needs or gaps within the field of ACHD/interventional that need to be addressed/filled by incoming trainees?”

*Dr. Wilson Lam:* “If you know where you want to end up, figure out what that particular institution needs in order to best hone your skills. As an electrophysiologist, be ready to also do your own diagnostic caths and coronary angiograms in case it becomes necessary during the case.”

*Dr. Singh:* “Be flexible within the system. As your career goes on, your interests may shift or become more focused. Don’t feel like you need to do everything you were trained to do forever.”

--Funding for the Fellows Summit was generously provided by ZOLL Medical Corporation.

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