Post-event report
March 23–26, 2011
Barcelona, Spain
Catalonia Palace of Congresses
A truly global meeting

Building on the success of the 2009 Global Spine Congress held in San Francisco, more than 700 spine care professionals from 72 different countries participated in the 2011 Global Spine Congress in the Catalonia Palace of Congresses in Barcelona.

With the aim to educate, stimulate debate, and to advance knowledge about the latest developments in spine care, clinicians and researchers from around the world exchanged experience and showcased innovations in scientific sessions, symposia, and at networking events where friendships were forged or extended.

The success of the event was due to the scientific quality of the presentations and the enthusiastic spirit of exchanging ideas with like-minded professionals from around the world.

“I was very happy with the quality of the research presentations. There’s tremendously high-quality research being carried out worldwide that is not publicized. It could be that good research work in Asia only gets presented in that region and does not spread internationally, which means that I or other surgeons are not hearing about it. The aim of this meeting was to bring together all this information.”

Jeffrey Wang
Global Spine Congress Chairperson

“With this Congress, AOSpine has established itself as a globally renowned and prestigious organization in the academic field.”

Salvador Fuster
Global Spine Congress Local Host
The Global Spine Congress was truly a multi-disciplinary event with global representation.

**Discipline representation**

- Orthopedic surgeon: 30%
- Neurosurgeon: 27%
- Spine surgeon: 27%
- Research: 11%
- Resident: 7%
- Other: 3%

**Regional representation**

- Europe: 45%
- Latin America: 21%
- Asia Pacific: 15%
- North America: 11%
- Middle East: 7%
- Africa: 1%
An exceptional scientific program

The scientific program for the Global Spine Congress provided an interdisciplinary meeting point for researchers, orthopedic surgeons and neurosurgeons to share knowledge acquired through research and clinical practice.

More than 450 submitted abstracts were put through an assessment process, peer- and blind-reviewed by 90 renowned spine care professionals resulting in:

**Scientific sessions:** peer-reviewed abstracts were presented by more than 160 oral abstract submitters, followed by interactive audience discussions. The topics were based on:

- Basic science
- Biomechanics
- Spinal imaging
- Nonoperative clinical treatments
- Surgery—cervical
- Surgery—lumbar degenerative
- Surgery—deformity
- New technologies
- Spinal trauma

**Symposia:** where faculty members gave lectures and answered questions from the audience on:

- Spinal surgery complications
- Advanced management of adult deformity
- Lumbar arthroplasty
- Cervical arthroplasty
- Spinal disorders
- Advanced/junctional trauma
- New lumbar technologies
- Tumors

10 Symposia

197 Oral presentations

40 Scientific sessions

237 ePosters
Special guests: NASS and EuroSpine invited to host symposia at the GSC

It was an honor to have two major spine societies in the world participate at the Global Spine Congress. AOSpine welcomed NASS (North America Spine Society) and EuroSpine (Spine Society of Europe) in the best possible way: sharing knowledge. Each society was in charge of their own symposium. NASS addressed “The changing landscape of spine care in North America” and EuroSpine opted for a technical approach, discussing “Sagittal balance.” According to local host Salvador Fuster, “inviting such important organizations was very relevant for the development of the Global Spine Congress.”

“It’s a privilege to be here. We’d like to thank AOSpine for inviting us. We see there are many common areas of interest, like education and research, and that the GSC had very enthusiastic people. The symposia topics and key speakers were excellent and many well-known surgeons and researchers took part. Perhaps we can start a new collaboration in the future.”

Haluk Berk
EuroSpine Secretary

“It was lovely that NASS was allocated specific, dedicated time on the program. I think that both societies will see how attendance from the “other side of the ocean” grows, and this can only be a good thing. It can be systematically encouraged now that a good dialog has been established, and that it is clear we both want the same thing, which is increased cooperation, attendance, and knowledge sharing.”

Michael Heggeness
NASS President Elect
**ePosters:** More than 160 ePosters of abstract submitters could be consulted electronically in an easy-to-access digital environment

“The excellence of the scientific program and the great work made by Jeff Wang in putting everything together for this event generated a very positive response from attendees.”

_Germán Ochoa_
AOSpine Education Commission Chairperson and GSC 2013 Chairperson

“We were able to attract people from so many fields in spine care. It’s been very exciting.”

_Teija Lund_
AOSpine Europe Chairperson

A common feeling throughout the sessions and as observed in informal talks among participants was that this educational program was exceptional.

“The credit of this great meeting goes to Jeff Wang for the educational program. I can see the chapters expanding, I can see even stronger presentation content and I can see this is a venue for people to come together and share ideas.”

_Zayed Al-Zayed_
AOSpine Middle East Chairperson

“One of my big passions in medicine is to try to help people with paralysis related to neurological problems. This is why I became a spine surgeon: to be able to link the clinic and the lab. The Global Spine Congress is an amazing event; it’s a wonderful opportunity to exchange ideas and knowledge, something which is really unprecedented. It is also interdisciplinary as it brings together neurosurgeons, orthopaedic surgeons, professionals from other specialized areas, basic scientists, and allows them to discuss and learn about spinal disorders.”

_Michael Fehlings_
Professor of Neurosurgery and Chairman of Neuroscience, University of Toronto (Canada)
Networking with peers from around the globe

The relaxed atmosphere outside the meeting center was a sign that the GSC had a big impact: it fostered professional collaboration through a feeling of fellowship. As Osmar Moraes, AOSpine Latin America Chairperson stated, “This event managed to stimulate friendship but in an objective way and in a fantastic environment. We’re all looking for the same thing. It’s a team work, really.”

Besides the morning and afternoon coffee breaks, participants enjoyed a lively "welcome reception" at the Exhibition Hall. These together served as opportunities to meet old friends and make new ones. Attendees were warmly greeted by Luiz Vialle (AOSpine Chairperson) and Jeffrey Wang (GSC Chairperson), who aimed at making the event a memorable one for the international spine community.

On Friday evening, another social event certainly left some good memories: the Congress Dinner at the “Mare Nostrum” ballroom in the Rey Juan Carlos I Hotel. This dinner turned out to be the perfect occasion to network and enjoy a superb flamenco concert!

Donation to Red Cross Japan

Due to the tragedy in Japan prior to the Global Spine Congress, the GSC committee agreed to donate all of the proceeds from the AOSpine merchandise sales to the Red Cross Japan. This gesture of solidarity delivered great results as CHF 7’000 were raised. A warm “thank you” to all the Global Spine Congress participants who contributed to this cause.
Knowledge Forum:
working expert
groups to generate
state-of-the-art
knowledge
Key leaders from the most renowned centers in the world are joining forces to advance research and materials in each specific spine pathology. This pioneering initiative has already undergone a pilot phase in AOSpine and was discussed during the Global Spine Congress.

In the words of Luiz Vialle, AOSpine Chairman, “The Knowledge Forum is an organization that is going to create content and knowledge for AOSpine and the AO Foundation”. He describes this initiative in more detail:

**Current status?**
At present, the Knowledge Forum Tumor group is already working and we are confident about launching the Deformity and Spinal Cord Injury group by mid 2011.

**Who will lead the groups?**
Up to 10 of the most renowned experts in the world in each area. They might not be members of AOSpine yet, but we will bring them into our society. After having identified the current need for new knowledge, these experts may invite other researchers to perform the appropriate clinical project. We want to focus on very important issues relating to spine care that haven’t yet been studied.

**An example?**
Here’s one: we are not sure yet if it’s better to treat a patient with radiology one, two or three weeks after the surgery. Every professional does as they think best but there’s no clinical trial to confirm what’s best. We want to carry out high-level studies to prove what the best option for the patient is.

**Where will the research take place?**
We want to enhance collaboration among centers through regional branches. We want a global network of hospitals to be reputed for their credibility and experience.

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**Sessions held during the Congress**
The Knowledge Forum on Tumor carried out a two-hour session, entitled “Current concepts for assessment and management” with Dr Luiz Vialle and Knowledge Forum members Dr Michael Fehlings, Dr Charles Fisher, Dr Ziya Gokaslan, Dr Laurence Rhines, and Dr Peter Varga. In addition to this, Dr Luiz Vialle and Dr Michael Fehlings moderated the one-hour session “Burning issues in the treatment of spinal cord injuries: how can AOSpine contribute to improve patients’ lives?” for the Knowledge Forum on Spinal Cord Injury. Around 300 people attended these sessions.
The awards

On the last day of the GSC (March, 26th), four different awards were presented at the awards ceremony: the Hansjörg Wyss Research Grant Awards (for 6 studies), the Global Spine Congress Awards, the AOSpine East Asia Research Grant Award and the AOSpine Europe Young Research Award.

The Hansjörg Wyss Research Grant Awards

72 proposals, 49 for start-ups and 23 for focus studies, were submitted for the Hansjörg Wyss Research Grant Award given by Synthes, Inc. After a strict selection process, one focus study was selected and awarded the generous sum of CHF 360,000 to be paid over a period of three years. Five start-ups will receive CHF 30,000 each for one year.

Presenter: Keita Ito, Research Commission Chairperson

Focus grant:

- **John Antoniou**, McGill University, Montreal, “Biological repair of intervertebral disc degeneration.”

Start-up grants:

- **Mark Erwin**, University of Toronto, “Intervertebral disc-derived multipotent stem cell rescue of the injured spinal cord.”

- **Benjamin Gantenbein-Ritter**, University of Bern, “Biological response of mesenchymal stem cells seeded in thermo-reversible HA-hydrogel implanted in intervertebral disc organ culture under twisting motion.”

- **Esther Potier**, Eindhoven University of Technology, “Mimicking developmental biology to regenerate the intervertebral disc.”

- **Dino Samartzis**, University of Hong Kong, “Metabonomics of lumbar intervertebral disc degeneration.”

- **Constantin Sorin Craciunas**, Bagdasar-Arseni Hospital (Bucharest), “Does brain metabolic reorganization predict the functional recovery following decompressive surgery in patients with cervical spondylotic myelopathy?”

It’s a great opportunity to meet other clinicians and scientists from all over the world and exchange ideas. AOSpine is really a transversal organization, with so many things going on. They actually listen to members when taking a direction and learn from the surgeons and scientists.”

Mark Erwin
Hansjörg Wyss Research Grant Award
GSC Awards

Presenters:
Jeffrey Wang, Global Spine Congress Chairperson
Germán Ochoa, AOSpine Education Commission Chairperson

Best clinical paper
Michael Fehlings, University of Toronto (Canada)

The award was accepted by Mark Dekutoski (pictured).

Best ePoster
Ahmet Alanay, Istanbul Spine Center (Turkey)
“Effect of mechanical aspiration of the vertebral body on pulmonary arterial pressure before cement injection in vertebroplasty procedure.”

“AOSpine East Asia Research Grant Awards

Presenter: Dino Samartzis, AOSpine East Asia Research Council Officer

• Vivian Tam, University of Hong Kong, “Determination of the importance of the source of iPSCs for differentiation in the IVD niche.”

• Jafri Malin Abdullah, Hospital University Sains (Malaysia), “Generation of stem Cell-derived intervertebral disc specific lineages by co-culturing neural crest stem cells and mesenchyme stem cells.”

“AOSpine Europe Young Research Award

Presenter: Giuseppe Barbagallo, AOSpine Europe Board Research Officer

Jani Takatalo, University of Oulu (Finland) “Does lumbar disc degeneration on MRI associate with low back symptom severity in young Finnish adults?”
Sponsors and exhibitors demonstrate the latest state-of-the-art technology

The second edition of the Global Spine Congress was supported by six major sponsors and another 15 reputable firms. They had a whole exhibition hall to show their products. Siemens was the diamond sponsor, followed by Synthes as the platinum. Baxter, Lanx, Leica Microsystems and Globus Medical completed the gallery as silver sponsors.

The exhibition area was quite busy with a constant flow of avid visitors, looking for the latest developments in terms of products. A win-win situation on both sides.

Instructional course lectures (ICLs): Sponsors of the Global Spine Congress had the opportunity to present their technology and products in a casual and intimate atmosphere during one-hour lunch sessions.

Siemens lectured on the “Clinical benefits of 3D intraoperative imaging in the guidance of spine surgeries” and “Advantages of 3D C-arm based imaging as a post-operative quality assurance instrument in spine surgeries.”

Synthes proposed discussions on “Derotation maneuvers with URS— the alternative to the AO deformity correction technique?” and “Interspinous spacers—marketing or real clinical need?”
Exhibitors

- Baxter
- Leica Microsystems
- Globus Medical
- Amedica
- Braun
- Cerapedics
- Eurospine
- Icobet
- Joimax
- Misonix
- Nutech Medical
- Paradigm Spine
- Pioneer Surgical
- Ranier
- Replication Medical, Inc
- Sawbones
- Storz
- Wisepress
The event in words:

“People had sent top quality research studies to past meetings so it was important to set high standards here, too. We had an assessment process involving peer and blinded review. We graded them using a very objective scale and we took only the highest rated posters or presentations.”

Jeffrey Wang
Global Spine Congress 2011 Chairperson

“The variety of events that have been taking place for a while, but the Global Spine Congress is different. This is truly global; this is something where spine specialists can exchange ideas and showcase their new research, and discuss controversial topics in depth.”

Karsten Wiechert
AOSpine Community Development Chairperson

“We’re increasingly recognized as a specialty with significant representation in terms of a political agenda items and we’re pretty well known for knowledge creation as well.”

Jens Chapman
AOSpine North America Chairperson

“We’re growing a lot faster than expected. Our challenges now are to foster participation in AOSpine and we’d like to see that happen also at research presentation level.”

Abdulrazzaq Alobaid
AOSpine Community Development Officer Middle East

“The knowledge forum was a great idea, maybe one of the best. It provides structure for research and has a very positive impact on education.”

Peter Varga
National Center for Spinal Disorders, Hungary

“The first event of AOSpine I attended was the World Forum for Spine Research last year in Montreal, It was a very successful meeting. The quality of science was fantastic; it was unparalleled. It got me in contact with this community and when I heard about this Congress I decided to come.”

Nadeen Chahine
Feinstein Institute for Medical Research, USA

“It was a very interesting global event that dealt with a number of subjects and the latest techniques.”

Maria Otero
Complexo Hospitalario Universitario de Santiago, Spain

“One of the most educational meetings I have ever attended and I attend lots of meetings all over the world.”

Shahrookh Vatchha
Masina Hospital, India

“The idea of interacting with lots of people from all over the world was exciting, and the symposia were excellent.”

Salman Sharif
Liaquat National Hospital, Pakistan
The Global Spine Congress heads for Asia

Following the tremendous success of the GSC 2009 in San Francisco and the GSC 2011 in Barcelona, Hong Kong hosts the GSC 2013.

This 3rd GSC represents a unique academic platform that is open to all surgeons, spine practitioners, and researchers. We offer you a packed program presenting the very cutting-edge of spine care.

Join the GSC in Hong Kong and profit from opportunities to acquaint yourself with the latest technological developments and to connect with your peers from around the world.

For more information visit: www.globalspinecongress.org
AOSpine—the leading global academic community for innovative education and research in spine care, inspiring lifelong learning and improving patients’ lives.