

Dear DRS Members, Colleagues, and Guests,

I am excited to personally welcome you to the beautiful city of San Diego, California for the 27th Annual Meeting and Pre-Conference Course of the Dysphagia Research Society. The Society has accomplished much in its yester years with swallowing disorders research and practices. However, we are increasingly co-dependent on inter-disciplinary research and practices to advance the science of safe deglutition while improving the overall well-being of the patient. Given the complexity of safe deglutition, this year we have embarked on a theme of ***Swallowing, Airway and Aero-Digestive Co-Dependence***. The Program Planning Committee has diligently worked to create a truly transdisciplinary program that engages all aspects of research advances and clinical practices across the age spectrum-from neonates to nonagenarians. We have made a conscientious effort to integrate researchers across the various disciplines involved with swallowing, airway and aero-digestive co-dependence. Not only that, we made attempts to strengthen the co-dependence between SLP researchers and physician researchers, as this combined knowledge and diverse perspectives will not only strengthen our interdisciplinary society, but will also lay foundations to provide a holistic yet, advanced care to our patients. The DRS-2019 program will reflect this vision, and I am hopeful, that the phase of transdisciplinary growth will only increase in future years of our DRS!

From discovery to mass translation, it takes several years, perhaps a generation in the life of a child. We need to shorten this interval while maximizing the returns in terms of outcomes-clinical, developmental, economic, quality and satisfaction. Of course, a good swallow is a 'contented, yet safe swallow'. To this effect, we have made a sincere effort to seek nationally and internationally renowned speakers across the disciplines-swallowing, physiology, nutrition, gastroenterology and motility, aero-digestive science, tele-health, ENT, health systems and quality of care. To realize the vision that we laid out, the ***Dodds-Donner lecture, Grand Rounds-1 & 2***, and the *newly developed interactive focused 'Lunch & Learn Sessions'* along with ***the themed sessions*** will offer tremendous amount of new knowledge we all can take back home and share with our colleagues to implement new ideas. Mentoring activities through the Early Investigator Session continues to offer guidance to the emerging research talent within the DRS.

There are some exciting things about the DRS-2019 meeting! So far, we have a record membership of over 450 this year, and still counting. We have 38 invited talks, 50 oral presentations, 106 poster presentations, and 24 awards in total! Not only have we devoted time to learning, we also dedicated time to make new friendships through social events.

Please join us for a historic reception on the San Diego Maritime Museum's Star of India! This vessel is the world's oldest sailing ship and originally sailed from the stocks at Ramsey Shipyard in the Isle of Man in 1863. The Star of India was one of the only ships to be made of steel at the time and was given the name 'Euterpe' after the Greek muse of music and poetry. The ship's life consisted of two near-disastrous trips to India suffering a collision and cyclone. After the vessel's rough beginning, the Star of India made four more voyages to India to transport cargo. To read more about the Star of India's vibrant history, visit the Maritime Museum's website: www.sdmaritime.org. We hope to see you aboard for the DRS reception!

We have planned a 'Social Walk' in support of DRS and Dysphagia patients. This walk is along the marina and seaport village. We will have T-shirts that will display our solidarity as we walk. On this note, I am pleased to report that the Mayor of San Diego has proclaimed it 'Swallowing Awareness Month in March' in celebration of the Annual Meeting of the Dysphagia Research Society in the city of San Diego, and the week of DRS-2019 is the designated 'Swallowing Week'. A number of local media activities are occurring!

A new program, 'Sponsor a Student Program' has been trialed this year to support more student researchers to attend the meeting. 10 video submissions were received and are available on the website. Our two successful student applicants will be presented the Awards Ceremony. This was only possible through donations! We will have onsite R & E donation site managed by BBMC. In my opinion, participation in the act of donation to DRS is of greater value that attests your commitment to the DRS! R & E donation ribbons may be collected!

Our popular 'Silent Auction' will return again, raising money for the DRS. The silent auction will occur all day Friday with the winners announced at the Awards Ceremony. This year we have incredible gifts from our sponsors including an IOPI Pro Kit, enrolment in MBSImP, as well as a range of fun-filled dysphagia-related items. Please enjoy!

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Officers of the Executive Committee of DRS, Program Planning Committee, Scientific Abstract committee, and Board of Directors, for all the support, guidance and approvals to make these events happen! The dedication and selfless work of these volunteers is highly appreciated. I would like to thank our donors, corporate sponsors and exhibitors, as well. Without their generous support, the Annual Meeting would not be possible. Please visit the sponsors, discuss your interests and thank them for their support.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank Badger Bay Management Company for helping us with this meeting together successfully, and this is their first time from the start to the end! Please join me in congratulating and thanking Eric Osterman, Karen Schneider, Allison Tilque, and Amy Schmidt for making this happen!

Finally, it is indeed an honor for me to have served as your President of this esteemed organization for the past year and to host the 27th Annual meeting. As the 1st pediatrician to serve the society in this capacity, I share this honor with children and parents of dysphagic children, and with all those who research into and improve children's swallowing! I hope you enjoy the conference and are, as always, inspired by the great work you are doing.

Best Wishes,

Sudarshan R. Jadcherla, MD, FRCP(Irel), DCH, AGAF
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