ASFA 2020 Virtual Meeting
Post-Conference Report

September 23-25, 2020
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Executive Summary

In March 2020, the American Society for Apheresis (ASFA) Board of Directors made the difficult decision not to proceed with the ASFA 2020 Annual Meeting, originally scheduled for May 6 – 9, 2020, at the Renaissance Austin Hotel. This decision was made after careful consideration and comprehensive evaluation of currently available information related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

In lieu of the ASFA 2020 in-person meeting, ASFA hosted a Virtual Apheresis Review Session on June 9 & 10, 2020 and Virtual Meeting from September 23-25, 2020. The Virtual Apheresis Review Session took place live over two days and is available on demand until June 2021. A number of expert speakers came together to provide an overview of the theory and applications of apheresis medicine to help apheresis professionals prepare for the Qualification in Apheresis (QIA) exam offered by the ASCP Board of Certification. With 125 participants and a series of informative lectures including live Q&A, the Virtual Review Session was a great success.

118 abstracts were submitted to the ASFA 2020 Annual Meeting. The abstracts were scored by the Abstracts Committee and accepted abstracts will be published in the Journal of Clinical Apheresis Volume 35, Issue 6: December 2020.

The following four abstract awards were included in the ASFA 2020 Virtual Meeting:

- Allied Health Abstract Award (Jody Chinn, BA)
- Best Abstract Award (Jay Raval, MD)
- Best Abstract Award (Eric Salazar, MD, PhD)
- Junior Investigator Abstract Award (Divya Setya, MBBS, DNB (Transfusion Medicine))

To honor outstanding individuals in the field of apheresis, the following ASFA society awards were presented at the ASFA Virtual Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, July 15, 2020:

- Francis S. Morrison Lecture Award (Zbigniew M. Szczepiorkowski, MD, PhD, FCAP)
- Lecturer Award (Don Siegel, MD, PHD)
- Presidential Award (Alicia Garcia, RN, HP (ASCP))
- SHS Award (Laura Collins, RN, BSN, HP (ASCP))

The ASFA 2020 Virtual Meeting received support from three sponsors, and six exhibitors. Overall, the first ASFA Virtual Apheresis Review Session and Virtual Meeting was a great success. We are excited to explore future virtual educational opportunities to advance apheresis medicine.
Introduction
The American Society for Apheresis (ASFA) officially formed in 1981 and has been the proud host of 41 highly successful scientific conferences. The annual meeting is the only one of its kind that offers a focus on apheresis medicine in both the donor and patient settings. It is a key educational and networking event for physicians, scientists and allied health professionals in the field of apheresis medicine.

Virtual Apheresis Review Session
The Apheresis Review Session took place June 9th and 10th, 2020. 125 registered delegates participated in this important virtual educational activity. The Review Session provided a basic overview of the theory and applications of apheresis medicine. The Review Session served as a preparatory course for the Qualification in Apheresis (QIA) Exam, offered by ASCP and also covered the steps necessary to apply, test, and become Qualified in Apheresis. Principles of Apheresis Technology 7th Edition Senior Editor, Dr. Rasheed A. Balogun, provided an overview of the new 7th edition which was published July 2020. Delegates could attend the Apheresis Review Session at no additional cost provided they take the QIA Exam after the Review Session.

Conference Program
Following the cancellation of the ASFA 2020 Annual Meeting, the 2020 Organizing Committee adjusted the in-person program to adapt to a virtual platform. The program included scientific and educational sessions, oral abstract presentations and e-posters. The scientific sessions were carefully selected around sickle cell disease, clinical trials, and cellular therapy.

Please review the ASFA 2020 Virtual Meeting Program for a complete summary of the presentations. All live and pre-recorded sessions will remain available through the virtual platform until March 31st, 2021.

Participation Statistics
The ASFA 2020 Annual Meeting attracted approximately 464 delegates from 21 countries. Approximately 93% of the attendees originated from North America while 7% traveled from another region. Please see Table 1 and Figure 1 for more detail.

Table 1 – Delegate Breakdown by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Attendees</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia/New Zealand</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ASFA 2020 Virtual Meeting delegates were made up of physicians/PhDs, allied health professionals and industry professionals who practice donor or therapeutic apheresis medicine. Please refer to Table 2 and Figure 2 for more detail.

Table 2 – Delegate Breakdown by Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Number of Delegates</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allied Health</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Professional</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 – Delegate Breakdown by Region

Figure 2 – Delegate Breakdown by Profession
Abstract Submission

A total of 118 abstracts were submitted for presentation at the ASFA 2020 Annual Meeting. Some abstracts were withdrawn following the cancellation of the in-person meeting. Of the 118 abstracts, 40% were submitted by physicians/PhDs and 60% by allied health professionals (refer to Figure 3). 20 oral abstracts and 61 e-posters were presented during the Virtual Meeting. The submitted abstracts were based on all aspects of apheresis medicine, including but not limited to research, clinical, educational, and administrative topics and projects. All of the accepted abstracts were published in the Journal of Clinical Apheresis.

Figure 3 – Abstract Submission by Profession

Abstract Awards

ASFA is pleased to offer four best abstract awards. The Abstracts Committee was responsible for grading all of the submitted abstracts and determining the recipients. All

The Allied Health Abstract Award is given to the primary author of an outstanding abstract submitted by an allied health professional who is a member of ASFA. This year’s recipient was Jody Chinn, BA for the abstract titled “Navigating an Apheresis Unit Through the New World of Immune Effector Cellular Collections”.

The Best Abstract Awards are given to the primary authors of two outstanding abstracts. This year’s recipients were Jay Raval, MD for the abstract titled ‘Risk of Bleeding Following Therapeutic Plasma Exchange when Using Plasma as Part of Replacement Fluid 1 Day after Versus 2 Days after Percutaneous Kidney Biopsy: Analysis of 100 Consecutive Patients’ and Eric Salazar, MD, PhD for the abstract titled ‘Validated Ultrasound-Based Criteria for Adequate Peripheral Venous Access in Therapeutic Apheresis Procedures’.

The Junior Investigator Abstract Award is given to the primary author of an outstanding abstract submitted by a junior investigator who is a member of ASFA. This year’s recipient
was Divya Setya, MBBS, DNB (Transfusion Medicine) for the abstract titled ‘Advancing in Abo-Incompatible Renal and Liver Transplantation with Apheresis’.

**Society Awards**

ASFA presented four individuals with society awards for outstanding work in both apheresis medicine and within the society at the ASFA 2020 Annual General Meeting on July 15, 2020.

The Francis S. Morrison, MD Memorial Lecture Award is presented to an individual that has made a lasting difference in apheresis on a national level. This award was first created to keep alive and honor the memory of Francis S. Morrison, MD, a leading apheresis professional. This year it was presented to Zbigniew M. Szczepiorkowski, MD, PhD, FCAP.

The Lecturer Award is bestowed upon a member of the Society who has consistently contributed to the Society as a speaker, teacher, or mentor. This year the award was presented to Don Siegel, MD, PHD.

The Presidential Award is bestowed upon a member of the Society who has consistently made major contributions to, and performed outstanding service for the Society over a number of years. This year it was presented to Alicia Garcia, RN, HP (ASCP).

The SHS Award commemorates the pioneering efforts of the Society for Hemapheresis Specialists which have culminated in the high standards and sophistication which characterize the field of American apheresis. Its recipient is a hemapheresis specialist who has demonstrated sincere commitment to apheresis and who has emerged as a leader and role model in the field. This year the award was presented to Laura Collins, RN, BSN, HP (ASCP).

**Supporters and Exhibitors**
The ASFA 2020 Annual Meeting supporters, symposia supporters and exhibitors are listed below.

**Conference Support**

*Gold Level Supporters*

[Image of Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals]

*Silver Level Supporters*

[Image of Terumo Blood and Cell Technologies] [Image of Fresenius Kabi]
Symposia Supporter

Exhibitors
The following organizations exhibited at the ASFA 2020 Virtual Meeting

Overall Conference Evaluation
A total of 119 attendees completed the online conference evaluation. Taking into account all aspects of the meeting, approximately 84% of the attendees rated the overall educational activity as “Excellent” or “Very Good”. 97% of delegates felt the program met its stated objectives with approximately 99% of delegates stating that the content was relevant to their educational needs. 89% of delegates would recommend a virtual ASFA meeting to a colleague.
ASFA 2021 Annual Meeting
The 42nd ASFA Annual Meeting will take place May 12-15, 2021. More information will be made available on the [www.apheresis.org](http://www.apheresis.org) throughout fall 2020.

**Conclusion**
During these unprecedented times when an in-person conference is not feasible, ASFA adapted quickly and provided delegates with an engaging digital experience and networking opportunities with fellow apheresis professionals. Overall, the ASFA 2020 Virtual Meeting was a great success.