Behind the scenes at Madrid 2017

Interview with Alberto Sicilia, chair of the joint meeting in Madrid

$n$spyred recently caught up with Alberto Sicilia, president of the EAO and chair of the forthcoming annual scientific meeting in Madrid in October. We asked him about how the meeting is being organised and what he’s most looking forward to about the joint meeting.

How will this year’s annual meeting differ from previous years?

This is a very exciting year. Madrid 2017 will be the EAO’s 26th annual scientific meeting, which is quite a milestone in itself, and we’re celebrating 25 years of EAO congresses. It will also be a joint meeting between the EAO and the Sociedad Española de Prótesis Estomatológica y Estética (SEPES). We have combined our annual scientific meeting with SEPES’ annual congress to create one joint conference. It will be a truly unique event.

This is something we’ve never done before – joining forces with one of the biggest national prostodontics and aesthetics associations in Europe. It’s going to be one of the world’s biggest events in the calendar for implant dentistry. What’s more, we are also working with the Spanish Society of Periodontology (SEPA) to organise the EAO-SEPA European Symposium.

We’re expecting record numbers of delegates to turn out for the event. The meeting will be held in the IFEMA convention centre. It’s one of the biggest centres of its kind in Spain and Europe, so it will be perfectly equipped to host the international audience we are anticipating.

This collaboration has also allowed us to introduce a number of new features to our scientific programme. We have been able to include additional session formats, like interactive surgical video sessions and diagnosis sessions. These will provide a variety of different presentation styles and cater to a broad and diverse range of topics within the field.

EOA, SEPES and SEPA – that’s a lot of organisations to be collaborating with. Has it been difficult working with so many different committees?

When you organise an event on this scale it’s never easy – there are so many factors to consider and logistics to work out. But there has been this fantastic camaraderie and support which has been present throughout the whole process and which has made it a hugely enjoyable experience.

I couldn’t have done it without my fellow EAO co-chairs, Jaime A. Gil and Mariano Sanz, as well as our counterparts, Nacho Rodriguez and Jaume Llena on the SEPES scientific committee and Adrián Guerrero who is chair of the EAO-SEPA symposium. And of course, there have been countless others doing really admirable work behind the scenes and they have made it all possible. This has very much been the product of true collaboration, and it has been an absolute joy to work with everybody involved.

The theme of the 2017 congress is ‘Twenty-five years of Implant Dentistry. What have we learned?’ Do you have any personal opinions about this?

There’s no question of how far we have come over the past 25 years. One thing that has struck me is how much the scientific programmes have changed. If you look at the programmes from early years, you can tell that osseointegration was a relatively new concept. People were still figuring out how to place implants and learning about the different areas and applications within the field. But now, you look at the programme for Madrid, and there are so many more sessions which focus on developing technologies and techniques. It’s clear that as a whole we have a much greater understanding of implant dentistry, and we’re refining our techniques. We’re not discovering it for the first time, but honing our skills. Now we’re able to delve deeper into the science behind everything than ever before.

Of course there are still discoveries being made; there is always research being done and studies being conducted – you can never stop learning. But the EAO is constantly evolving with the research and re-adapting to meet current requirements. That’s something you can also see in the scientific programmes year-to-year. What I’m really excited about is seeing how the programme will have changed in the next 25 years!
Which five topics do you think participants will enjoy the most?

1. Main session 1: From standard to advanced protocols of implant placement. This session represents the heart and soul of the scientific programme for Madrid 2017, I think, so it’s only fitting that it will kick off the whole conference. It tackles the congress theme straight away, and explores what we have learned about implant dentistry. The speakers will consider the different treatment protocols that are available now, and explore the evolution of each approach. It will be a very interesting session, and will end with a debate about when we should follow each approach. I can think of no better way to open the scientific programme.

2. Battle of concepts session: The restorative treatment of the partially edentulous periodontitis patient. This session will be set up as a debate between the speakers. It will be extremely thought-provoking, and each speaker will present and defend their case. I’m also looking forward to it because my speciality is in periodontology, so I will personally find this session very interesting.

3. 3D interactive surgical video session 3: The biological and clinical keys for periodontal, bone and peri-implant regeneration. I think delegates will really enjoy this new format: speakers will screen videos of surgical cases and comment on them in real-time. It will be a really excellent way to present findings, and will throw into relief how far we have come in terms of surgical techniques and technologies used in implant dentistry.

4. Main session 3: Diagnosis and treatment planning in implant dentistry in light of the prevalence of peri-implant diseases. This is one of the dedicated EAO-SEPES symposium sessions, and delegates who are interested in implant dentistry and periodontology will find it especially interesting. The prevalence of peri-implant disease is a growing concern in the field, so speakers will cover how to detect the disease at its early stages and how to control the infection. This will be a very topical session, and will be extremely relevant for a lot of delegates.

5. Master Clinician session: Get a taste of the future EAO Master Clinician Course topics. This session will also be very enjoyable. Speakers from upcoming Master Clinician Courses will give attendees a taster session from their forthcoming courses. The EAO specifically introduced the MCCs as an opportunity for experts who had presented at the annual conference to give participants hands-on tuition in a variety of topics. Since they were established, the MCCs have really taken off in terms of popularity. The future course topics which will be covered in this session are fascinating: formulating treatment plans and ridge augmentation. Delegates will enjoy this session as it will open their eyes to the other events that the EAO runs throughout the year, besides the annual scientific meeting.

What are you most excited about?

I am hugely excited for the whole thing to get started. The scientific committee has put together a really interesting and diverse programme, and we have an excellent faculty of invited speakers from the EAO, SEPES and SEPA lined up.
I should also say that I’m really looking forward to the Members’ Dinner. It will be held at the Casino de Madrid, which is a beautiful historic building in the heart of Madrid. It houses an exquisite collection of artworks, and the building itself is absolutely breath-taking. Every year, the Members’ Dinner is an excuse to meet up with old friends and enjoy a terrific evening of fine dining in a beautiful location – this year will be no exception, and I can’t wait to be showing off Madrid to the rest of the EAO.

Where is your favourite place to visit in Madrid?

Madrid is really worth a visit. It’s a fantastic city where the possibilities are endless for history, art, gastronomy, shopping and entertainment and can cover any interests. If you have time, I would recommend that you visit the Museo del Prado or the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza – both are located on the Paseo del Prado so you can hop between them. It would also be a great idea to spend some time visiting the classic Barrio de Salamanca to do some shopping.

If you would like to sample the local cuisine then you should visit Calle Cava Baja – it’s a street lined with tapas bars and lovely places to eat and relax, and it’s filled with the history and kind of ambience which embodies the city. Viejo Madrid is one of my favourite restaurants on that street – you really must pay them a visit there.

One of the great advantages of partnering with a local association like SEPES is that they are real connoisseurs of the city. Their staff at the SEPES booth will be more than happy to give delegates advice on where to go in town, so be sure to ask them for their recommendations too!