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MEETING SUMMARY

ASSR 2002 Annual Symposium

The 5th Annual Symposium of the American Society of Spine Radiology, "State-of-the-Art Spine Imaging and Image Guided Interventions," was held at the Atlantis Resort at Paradise Island in Nassau, the Bahamas, from February 25–28, 2002. Nearly 200 attendees participated in the conference, which was chaired by ASSR President Dr John Mathis. The program featured focus sessions dedicated to advances in spine imaging techniques; the imaging evaluation of spine pathology, including trauma; neoplasms and degenerative disk disease; and pediatric spine imaging. Several other focus sessions were dedicated to image-guided spinal interventions such as endovascular spinal therapy, epidural steroid injections and epidurolysis, blood-patch therapy for the treatment of cerebrospinal fluid leaks, facet and sacroiliac joint injections, selective nerve root and ganglionic blocks, radiofrequency neurotomy, discography, spine biopsy, and vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty.

Drs Tim Eckel and Cosma Andreula presented innovative approaches to percutaneous disk therapy, including intradiscal electrotherapy and oxygen-ozone therapy, respectively. Drs John Mathis and Blake Johnson conducted specific sessions about avoiding complications in spinal interventions. Other highlighted sessions included a combined clinical and imaging management seminar dedicated to spinal trauma, which was presented by a neurosurgeon and a neuroradiologist, Drs Barth Green and Robert Quencer, from the University of Miami School of Medicine.

A spirited dialogue occurred during the focus session on vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty. The discussion addressed the effectiveness of kyphoplasty for height restoration; it seems meager at this point. Some are citing the potential of height restoration, in addition to pain relief, to lobby against the use of vertebroplasty. Also discussed was the prophylactic use of vertebroplasty, as in cases of tumor disease in

invaded but precollapsed vertebra. Different opinions were offered about when to initiate the procedure in these and other at-risk vertebra.

Course participants had the opportunity to observe established experts as they performed common spinal interventions on videotapes that were recorded at the previous ASSR annual hands-on spinal intervention course.

Scientific papers were also presented at the meeting and the awards committee selected "Correlation of Post-discography Computerized Tomography Findings with Pain Generation During Discography," by Drs Julie Sim and Chi-Shin Zee from the University of Southern California University Hospital, as the best paper. The first place prize for best poster was awarded to Dr Elizabeth Lustrin et al from the Long Island Jewish Hospital, New Hyde Park, NY, for "Normal Anatomy, Variants, and Trauma of the Pediatric Cervical Spine." The second-place poster prize was awarded to Dr Pete Young et al from the University Hospitals of Cleveland–Case Western Reserve University for "The Role of Combination Computed Tomography and Fluoroscopy in Percutaneous Vertebroplasty." Third prize was awarded to Dr Lily Belfi et al from Winthrop–University Hospital Mineola, NY, for "Atypical Vertebral Body Hemangiomas."

This academic activity was enhanced by the collegiality fostered by warm social gatherings, which included family and friends, under the pleasant palm trees of this tropical Caribbean island. On the basis of the comments of the attendees and the results of the course evaluation surveys, the symposium was successful in fulfilling its objectives.

Please refer to the ASSR website at www.assr.org for information about the upcoming location and topics for next year's symposium and about the upcoming hands-on course to be held at the University of Maryland.