

Symposium on Innovation in Surgery 2024

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This year Romania was yet again put on the global map of the advancement in surgery as it hosted the 2024 Symposium on Innovation in Surgery (SIS2024) at Radisson Blu Bucharest during 22-24th of February. The event was organized by the European Association for Endoscopic Surgery (E.A.E.S) and, Cătălin Copăescu was the local host on behalf of the Romanian Association for Endoscopic Surgery (RAES). The event had an outstanding scientific program and held three hands-on courses, a total of 7.5 scientific hours, and a multitude of social events.

The Congress was dedicated to artificial intelligence (A.I.) and robotic surgery, and their use for education, research and impact in multiple medical fields such as gastro-intestinal surgery, abdominal wall repair, urology, gynaecology, and thoracic surgery.

The first day started with a fully booked hands-on course “Preventing complications in colorectal minim invasive surgery (MIS)” held in the Surgical Training Institute (S.T.I.) of Ponderas Academic Hospital. Kenneth Campbell (UK LapCo Faculty) was the course Director, and it focused on lower gastrointestinal (GI) laparoscopic approach. The participants could practice rectal dissection, circular stapled anastomosis, and the more experienced participants had the chance to also try side-to-side stapled intracorporeal anastomosis. The course was even more attractive, as participants also used fluorescence angiography using Indocyanine Green (ICG) as one of their tasks. The course had a very experienced Faculty, the team headed by Kenneth Cambell (UK) - the course director, included Victor Tomulescu (Bucharest, Romania) - General Secretary of the RAES and LapCo Romania Coordinator, Predag Andrejevic (Malta), Vasile Bințișan (Romania), Michel Adamina (Switzerland), Wanda Petz (Italy), Umberto Bracale

(Italy), Dorin Ziyaie (UK), Nicoló De Manzini (Italy), Nathan Curtis (UK), Ludovica Baldari (Italy).

The 2024 SIS Opening ceremony was organised later in the evening, in Radisson Blu Hotel at 19.30. Cătălin Copăescu, welcomed E.A.E.S for the 2nd time in Romania (first being in 2015 for the 23rd International Congress of the EAES), being honoured that Romania is part of innovation in surgery. He also introduced the speaker for the opening lecture, Christoph Promberger (Executive Director – Carpathia Foundation) who presented The Făgăraş Mountains – the European Yellowstone and a Carpathian treasure. For 30 minutes, he succeeded to show the beauty of Romania, the host country, and the need to fight for the conservation and protection of its natural beauty. The first day ended with a welcome reception with dinner buffet at the hotel, where participants from all over the world got together, and celebrated the successful start of this 3-day event.

The second day, started at 08.30, Main Hall, with a Welcome and Introduction lecture held by Prof. George Hanna (UK) - E.A.E.S President 2023-2025, Cătălin Copăescu (Romania) – SIS2024 Local Host, and Yoav Mintz (Israel) – E.A.E.S Chair Technology Committee, followed by a short coffee break, to get the participants ready for the four well-constructed scientific sessions, which garnered a lot of interest.

Session 1, titled “New technologies for surgical education”, chaired by Manish Chand (UK) and Vasile Bințișan (Romania), started off with an assortment of impressive lectures - Robotic simulators by Juan Sánchez-Margallo (Spain), Surgical education – Marius Distler (Germany), Hands-on courses – Ken Campbell (UK), Coaching and mentorship – Alice Tsai (UK), Performance assessment – Pietro Mascagni (Italy), all followed by interesting questions from the eager and knowledge driven participants, and the expert chair panel. The full lecture hall then dived into a discussion on the session at the end, focusing on the need for innovation in the education of future generations of young surgeons, which

continued into the hall over the coffee break.

This was followed up with a session chaired by Yoav Mintz (Israel) and Victor Tomulescu (Romania) and showed off the advancement in surgery by demonstrating a relive surgery session, in which a Robotic esophagectomy was performed with Hinotori Robot, and a robotic colorectal resection was performed with DaVinci Robot. At the console of the Davinci Robot was Alberto Arezzo from Italy while all the way from Japan Noriyuki Inaki showed the participants the procedure using the Hinotori Robot. The 2-hour long session showed the advantages of both systems, while also bringing the curious and eager participants into the mind of the operating surgeons, which bombarded the hall with interesting questions and debates.

After a social lunch with the top surgeons from all over the world, session 2 “Optimising ergonomics in MIS”, chaired by Salvador Morales Conde (Spain) and Wanda Petz (Italy), got underway starting with Do surgical ergonomics matter? – Francisco Sánchez-Margallo (Spain), followed by Is robotic surgery more ergonomic? – Dolores Müller (Germany), Ergonomics for flexible endoscopy – Luigi Manfredi (UK), Open or immersive console. What’s best? – Rosa Jiménez-Rodríguez (Spain). Tools for ergonomic assessments – Juan Sánchez-Margallo (Spain), and lastly, One size fits all hands? – Ludovica Baldari (Italy). The discussions after the session raised a lot of interesting points from the hand size to instrument ratio in laparoscopy, to the chair used in robotic surgery and the correct ergonomic way of sitting to avoid long term injuries.

The last session of the day, session 3, entitled Clinical Impact of Robotic Technology on Surgery, chaired by Gadi Marom (Israel) and Cătălin Copăescu (Romania), started with a long-debated subject - Is robotic surgery, laparoscopic surgery? by Yoav Mintz (Israel) followed by Why is robotic assisted AWR preferred? – Victor Radu. The session then continued by bringing the opinions of three different surgical specialties into the debate of the use of robotics; Urology with “How robotic

assisted surgery pushed the MIS limits in urology” – Andrei Nadu (Romania), Gynecology with “Does the robot make it better? The impact of almost 2 decades of robotic surgery in gynaecological oncology” – Paul Stanciu (Romania), and last but not least, Thoracic Surgery with “The future of thoracic surgery is robotic.” - Felix Dobrițoiu (Romania). This was concluded with the final discussion of the day, with the different specialties weighing in their point of view.

After all the debates and discussions, the participants gathered for farewell drinks at an event sponsored by the Romanian National Bank, at their headquarters, where the bank offered a highly-interesting, guided tour of the bank and its Treasure Museum (full of coins and gold from different eras). The attendees were entertained by a high-end live classical music.

On the 24th, the final day of the Symposium on Innovation in Surgery, 2 hands-on courses were held, at Surgical Training Institute, a hands-on laparoscopy course: Foregut MIS and fluorescence guided surgery, and a Hands-on Intraoperative Ultrasound course. Those who did not take part in the fully booked courses, had the opportunity to visit The “Țiriac Collection” Auto gallery. Țiriac Collection represents a unique concept in Romania, being the first private collection which includes impressive vehicles and motorcycles models, manufactured from 1899 until now. In the gallery there are exhibited over 150 cars out of a total of approximately 300 units owned by Mr. Ion Țiriac and each one of them has a special story. Behind the models displayed, visitors discovered during the guided tour the fascinating stories or famous former owners of said cars. Here, they saw the only collection in the world that gathers all 6 Rolls Royce Phantom classic series’, produced until 1972.

The “Hands on laparoscopy course: Foregut MIS and fluorescence guided surgery”, had a great Faculty, too: Milos Bjelovic (Serbia) Course director, Dan Ulmeanu (Romania) - President of R.A.E.S., Miljan Zindovic (Montenegro), Gadi Marom (Israel), György

Lázár (Hungary), Beat Müller (Switzerland), Franck Billmann (Germany), Aung Myint Oo (Singapore), Dragan Gunjić (Serbia), and Ludovica Baldari (Italy); The Course focused on Upper GI and facilitated and introduction to laparoscopic techniques applied in oesophageal and gastric surgery. The participants learned the correct way to perform laparoscopic anti-reflux surgery and gastric resection (hand-sewn and stapled anastomosis) on a live tissue model. The participants got to also see and use ICG in the upper GI procedures.

The 2nd course of the day, “Hands on Intraoperative Ultrasound course” was a very attractive educational event as the live tissue proved to be an excellent training model. Directed by Călin Tiu (Romania) and Andreas Melzer (Germany), the course taught participants the different uses of intraoperative ultrasound. They learned the intraoperative anatomy of the liver, pancreas, biliary ways, liver segmentation and the assessment of liver lesions. The participants also learned to execute different procedures such as the correct exposure of the liver, pancreas, and biliary ways for intraoperative ultrasound, how to conduct an intraoperative ultrasound of those organs, and how to insert intraoperatively an ultrasound guided needle into the liver and pancreas.

All hands-on courses took place in a state-of-the art surgical skills centre, S.T.I., fully equipped with the latest fluorescence capable laparoscopic stacks and access to flexible endoscopy. The highly experienced local faculty were joined by international expert faculty from E.A.E.S. to create a uniquely high ratio of faculty to delegates to provide a high value educational experience. Participants worked in teams with a dedicated faculty member alongside.

As usual, R.A.E.S. pursued one of its most important goals, to support young surgeons and its members on the path of education, offering 53 grants for the event attendance, also achieving reduced fees for Romanian members of the R.A.E.S.

We are honoured and delighted to have

hosted such an impressive event in Romania, and hope this marks a stepping stone of many events to come. This shows that Romania proves to be a hub where experts meet, share, and bring Innovation in Surgery.

Looking forward to meeting again the members of the great EAES Family for the

next SIS in Gent, Belgium (January, 2025) and the next EAES Annual Congresses.

We are also delighted to announce and invite all the surgeons interested in MIS to the next RAES event dedicated to Robotic Assisted Surgery, organized in Bucharest in November, 14th 2024.