THE INTERNATIONAL VICENZA COURSE ON PERITONEAL DIALYSIS—30-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

From 1975 to 1982, many important developments and events occurred that had a significant impact on the growth and advancement of peritoneal dialysis (PD) as a renal replacement therapy. In 1975, Drs. Moncrief and Popovich placed their first patient on continuous ambulatory PD (CAPD). In 1977, the University of Missouri began a collaboration with Drs. Moncrief and Popovich to conduct clinical studies, funded by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), in patients on CAPD. That collaboration led to the NIH CAPD Registry, which operated from 1981 to 1988 before it was integrated with the US Renal Data System. In 1978, Dr. Trevino–Becerra organized and chaired the 1st International Symposium on Peritoneal Dialysis in Chapala, Mexico. At that meeting in Mexico, the decision to hold subsequent conferences in other areas of the world gave birth to the International Society for Peritoneal Dialysis (ISPD). The second symposium, organized by Drs. Kessel and Gahl, was held in Berlin in 1981. In 1981, to promote participation in the NIH CAPD Registry, the University of Missouri organized the first National Conference on Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis, which was held in Kansas City, Missouri. That meeting became a yearly event and grew into the International Conference on Peritoneal Dialysis and eventually the Annual Dialysis Conference (ADC). The 32nd ADC was held in San Antonio, Texas, in February of this year.

In 1982, the Department of Nephrology at San Bortolo Hospital in Vicenza, Italy, under the direction of Dr. LaGreca, organized the First International Vicenza Course on Peritoneal Dialysis (IVC). Dr. Ronco served as General Secretary of the IVC from 1982 until he became IVC Director in 2001 at the time of Dr. LaGreca's retirement. The IVC has been presented every 3 years, and this summer, the IVC celebrates its 30th anniversary.

Thus, the IVC now joins the family of the ADC and ISPD in having worked over three decades to promote education, research, and the best clinical practices in PD therapy. These meetings have exhibited marvelous collaboration during their 30 or more years. Meeting planners and speakers overlap extensively. Each meeting promotes the other two meetings. Many people have had the privilege of serving with or being recognized by several of the meetings. For example, the late Dr. Jack

Maher was the first president of the ISPD, recipient of the First International Vicenza Award at the fourth IVC in 1991, and winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award in PD at the ADC in 1993. I was honored to be the third president of the ISPD, have chaired the ADC for 32 years, and was awarded the second International Vicenza Award at the IVC in 1994. Dr. Claudio Ronco, current chair of the IVC, was awarded the ADC Lifetime Achievement Award in PD at the 32nd ADC this year.

Those who have been involved in all three meetings over so many years have been welcomed by Dr. Ronco at the IVC as "the family." That designation reflects the spirit of cooperation and comradeship among those who have had the common goal over many decades of making PD a better therapy and serves as a model for other specialty areas.

The topics and speakers at the IVC have a tradition of excellence. The publication of the IVC proceedings has often been accomplished ahead of the meeting dates and has been a valuable addition to the PD literature.

The IVC has also experienced remarkable success in exposing those of us who attend to Italian history and culture. Touring the amazing architectural accomplishments in the city of Vicenza, especially those of Palladio, are an extra benefit of attending the IVC. Dinners and receptions are hosted in charming villas. Italian hospitality is legendary.

Dr. Zbylut Twardowski (Columbia, Missouri) summarizes all of the above very well:

I participated twice at the International Course on Peritoneal Dialysis organized by St. Bortolo Hospital in Vicenza. The first time it was during the 5th Course, May 24 – 25, 1994, organized by Prof. Giuseppe LaGreca. The meeting was held in the Convention Hall of the Banco Ambrosiano Veneto. The second time I participated [was at] the 15th International Vicenza Course on Peritoneal Dialysis organized by Prof. Claudio Ronco from May 30 to June 1, 2006, in the Congress Center Ente Fiera in Vicenza. The courses were very well organized, with important presentations by the best PD experts. In the evening after the Course in 2006, we had an impressive gala dinner in Villa Imperiali Lampertico.

In addition to valuable presentations I could visit several places of interest designed by famous Andrea Palladio, including Villa Capra detta "la Rotonda," Basilica Palladiana, Teatro Olimpico, and other places such as Villa Trissino, where Palladio worked as a mason. It is worth mentioning that the main building of the University of Virginia was named The Rotunda by Thomas Jefferson in honor of Andrea Palladio.

Dr. Jack Moncrief (Austin, Texas) also shares his thoughts:

Thank you for the opportunity to write about the great conferences held in Vicenza. I attended the very first and many subsequent meetings and found them all educational, very well organized, and great fun for the participants. The conference was instrumental in helping initiate and demonstrate the value of the transformation of peritoneal dialysis due to the "long dwell" concept developed by Dr. Robert Popovich and myself here in Austin, Texas. Your conference was responsible for the early and rapid adoption of the CAPD technique by the Italian nephrology community. This interest and utilization has proved correct, as there is now a major shift taking place in many countries toward wider use of peritoneal dialysis as an alternative to "center" hemodialysis.

The nephrology community has recognized your contribution by both support of the conference and by the many awards you have received, including the recent "Lifetime Achievement in PD" award at the Annual Dialysis Conference in San Antonio, Texas. This early interest stimulated by the Vicenza conference was directly responsible for the reduction in episodes of peritonitis in PD by the "drain before fill" concept in which you participated. This concept has now become standard practice throughout the world.

Thanks for the opportunity to come to Vicenza and to Italy for so many good reasons.

Dr. Bengt Lindholm (Stockholm, Sweden) had the following to say:

I feel honored to be given this opportunity to express my appreciation of this important anniversary. Since the First International Course on Peritoneal Dialysis in Vicenza in 1982 (and still going strong for the 30 years thereafter), the Vicenza courses have provided a great educational opportunity for clinicians and researchers wanting to learn more about peritoneal dialysis. The courses which put Vicenza on the map of important nephrology centers in the world have also been an ideal platform for in-depth scientific and clinical updates and discussions among experts dedicated to peritoneal dialysis.

With Giuseppe LaGreca as president during the early years, and always with Claudio Ronco as the primus motor, the courses (and the proceedings) have been of great importance and truly conducive to the acceptance, dissemination, and development of the new therapy—not least during the sensitive infant period of CAPD. The personal, wonderful warm atmosphere of the conferences, and the excellent opportunities for discussions during the social programs, have contributed very much to its success.

The nephrology community is indebted to the organizers for their visions, endurance, and very hard work for the benefit of the patients. I salute, congratulate, and thank Claudio Ronco and his team for this achievement!

Congratulations to the Vicenza Nephrology Group for the important contributions of the IVC over the past 30 years.

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