

## What a long strange trip it has been

Twenty-five years have elapsed since the first World Congress on Endometriosis (WCE) was held in Clermont-Ferrand in 1986.

Professor Maurice Bruhat, a visionary leader who left an indelible mark in gynaecology, developed one of his great ideas: ***bringing together the most authoritative experts in the field of endometriosis with the objective of sharing the best available scientific evidence on a disease that was not under the spotlight as much as today.***

At that time, the internet was yet to come and another ten years had to pass before PubMed became available. Those who now have grey hair, or no more hair at all, can remember

searching for hours through the heavy volumes of the yearly Index Medicus in order to find citations of interest for our research.

Professor Michel Canis shared this with us, at the opening ceremony of the 11<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Endometriosis (WCE2011), because his PhD thesis – with 325 citations – formed the basis for that very first world congress in 1986.

A lot of water has gone under the bridge since that congress!

However, if you were lucky enough to have access to the very first scientific programme, you would be surprised how ***several topics that were addressed in 1986 are still actual today:***

Classification and Diagnosis, Physiopathology of sterility, Peritoneal fluid, Surgical treatment, IVF, and palliative treatments.

***So, nothing new under the sun?***



A/Professor Paolo Vercellini  
WES President

Indeed, strenuous research efforts and an enormous amount of findings have now clarified several aspects of the pathogenesis of endometriosis and defined the effect of treatment options in different clinical conditions.

***The world congresses that followed always brought milestones in our understanding and management of the disease.***

To give you a few examples, the results of the two published randomised, controlled trials (RCTs) on laparoscopic surgery for infertility were presented at

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world congresses, as were the findings of another two RCTs on the effect of surgery for endometriosis-associated pelvic pain, as well as the results of several studies on new medications.

***These trials still constitute unequalled therapeutic references.***

WCEs have witnessed the advent of the “omics” era, and the seeds of novel genetic and molecular research has been disseminated meeting after meeting. But over and above all the data presented: ***WCEs have always been the best place to discuss, confront, develop ideas, pick-up suggestions, and learn more.***

Indeed, even after all these years, the interest in endometriosis seems to be still increasing, and at WCE2011 in Montpellier it turned into enthusiasm! Nearly 1,300 delegates from 73 countries attended the meeting: the highest number ever in the history of WCEs.

***Bernard Hedon, WCE2011 President and Hervè Dechaud WCE2011 Programme Director, as well as Hans Evers, our Past***

***President, and Lone Hummelshoj, our Secretary General, deserve most of the credit for having organised such an unsurpassed success.***

During some sessions the rooms were so full that people had to stand up because no more seats were available. This was exciting for presenters and moderators and puts a further responsibility on the organisers of future meetings.

Montpellier’s motto was “Towards Excellence”, and we know that you will not settle for anything less. Be assured that we will do our best to meet your expectations at our future congresses.

In January 2012 a list of potential topics for the 12<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Endometriosis (WCE2014) in São Paulo, Brazil, will be presented on the WES website ([www.endometriosis.ca](http://www.endometriosis.ca)). Members of the World Endometriosis Society will be invited to participate in an online vote to select the most interesting scientific topics, and your preferences will be taken into account when the scientific

programme is developed. This is an exciting “experiment” as well as an organisational challenge – but the congresses are a success only if we all contribute!

With the objective of maintaining a lot of contact between you and the WES, the Executive Board has decided to offer a 3-year membership at an exceptionally reduced fee of €50 for those who subscribe before 31 December 2011.

*If you are serious about endometriosis it is “an offer you can’t refuse”.* Among the other benefits, you now will have the possibility of tailoring the next meeting to your needs and interests.

We all enjoyed Montpellier: now let’s walk the road to São Paulo together. Keep in touch and become the WES people!

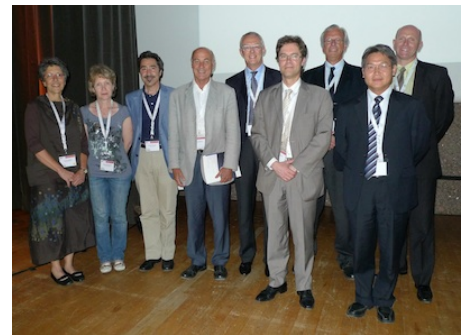
*Paolo Vercellini*  
WES President

Join the WES today and let’s all contribute to the field of endometriosis – and develop the next world congress together!

€50

[www.endometriosis.ca/membership](http://www.endometriosis.ca/membership)

Join before 31 December 2011 to take advantage of this 3-year offer!



## Upcoming meetings

### **SGI 2012 59th Annual Scientific Meeting**

21 – 24 March 2012  
San Diego, USA

### **Third Annual Scientific-Surgical Endometriosis Symposium**

15 – 17 March 2012  
New York, USA

### **28th Annual Meeting of ESHRE**

1 – 4 July 2012  
Istanbul, Turkey

### **68th Annual Meeting of the ASRM**

20 – 24 October 2012  
San Diego, USA

### **Best Practices of ASRM and ESHRE**

1 – 3 March 2012  
Cortina d’Ampezzo, Italy

### **The 1st Biomarker Meeting in Reproductive Medicine: Emergence of a new field**

30 – 31 March 2012  
Valencia, Spain

### **XX FIGO World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics**

7 – 12 October 2012  
Rome, Italy

➤ **Full congress schedule**

## A word from the editor: Mission accomplished!

I confess that the eJournal had greatly whipped up the anticipation towards the World Congress of Endometriosis (WCE) 2011 over the past three years. And although the south of France in early September was always going to be a significant draw card, things can go pear-shaped very quickly for the local organisers:

WCE 2002 in San Diego was still reeling from the 9/11 attacks, now just over a decade ago. This year, the current economic uncertainty around the world, cyclones in New York and typhoons in Japan certainly would have made Bernard Hedon, the conference convener, a little nervous.

Nevertheless, ***it was a great success!*** The largest turn-out ever for the World Congress of Endometriosis! Bernard Hedon, Lone Hummelshoj and many others made sure the local team put up a flawless conference.

Bernard even managed to appease the weather gods, not just for the duration of the conference but also for the next five days so I could complete my Pyrenean cycling climbs in style (thanks Bernard).

***The programme was excellent thanks to the significant input from Hervé Dechaud,*** and the guided tour at the conference

dinner venue was absolutely fascinating!

***But above all, we should express our gratitude to you:***

Thanks for being there and making it the success it was!

Thanks for sharing your research with us!

Thanks for participating in question time and stirring the debate!

Without you, all of Bernard's efforts would have counted for naught. Ultimately, it is you who has made it a success. As Bernard concluded during the closing ceremony: "You are happy, so I am happy".

Because you ARE the society, ***Paolo Vercellini has announced three new exciting initiatives*** in his first contribution to the eJournal as President.

***The first one is to offer you a three-year subscription rate you can't refuse*** (see page 3).

We know you show up for the meetings, but we want to hear your heart beat in the lead up too.

We need to grow the society by having an active membership.

Given that you will easily recoup the membership fee through reduced registration fees for



A/Professor Luk Rombauts  
WES eJournal Editor

WCE2014 there is no excuse not to take up the offer, which expires at the end of the year.

For WCE 2014, Mauricio Abrao acknowledged he has big shoes to fill.

He has already assembled an excellent team in Sao Paolo and he obviously has the full support of the WES board.

***The second President's initiative will now allow active members to have real input in the next WCE programme.***

Further details will be announced in the next edition of the eJournal, but as a WES member you will be able to vote for your preferred topics.

Should there be telecast surgery? Perhaps more on imaging or genetics? You will be able to let us know.

***The third President's initiative is to give you more input in the eJournal itself.***

Montpellier was a wonderful forum for the unedited exchange of ideas and views.

We didn't always agree, but such is the nature of progress. This discussion should continue and there is no better place than the eJournal to have it.

*We would very much welcome opinion pieces, but also*

announcements of regional activities and relevant conference reports.

We will continue with our book reviews, so let us know if we have missed a freshly printed tome.

You may also use the eJournal as a bulletin board where you can freely look for or offer job

positions. *The eJournal is there for you.*

As the editor for another three years, I would like to paraphrase Bernard's words: "If you are happy, then I am happy".

*Let's make this eJournal better together.*

Luk Rombauts  
WES eJournal Editor

## Highlights from the 11<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Endometriosis

WCE2011 was the largest world congress on endometriosis ever. Just short of 1,300 delegates – 1,294 to be precise! – from 73 countries gathered in Montpellier in early September. Of 517 submitted abstracts, 102 were accepted for oral presentations and 374 for posters. It was three busy days!



Highlights can be found on our website:

- [WES honours 11 pioneers in endometriosis at the opening ceremony](#)
- [Rodolphe Maheux Award presented to Sawsan As-Sanie](#)
- [Highlights of WCE2011 as presented at the closing ceremony](#)

However, in addition to those summaries, we have asked the four winners of the Rodolphe Maheux Travel Grant to give us *their* perspective on the highlights from WCE2011:



Dr Alison Hey-Cunningham  
University of Sydney, Australia

Thank you WES for making it possible for me to attend WCE2011! It really was an amazing week and I am still

### Don't lose sight of the reasons for research

processing the information. Narrowing it down to three highlights has been a challenge but here goes:

Participating in the brilliant pre-congress international consensus workshop to determine research priorities for endometriosis organised by Professor Peter Rogers and Lone Hummelshoj. While the opportunity to attend along with

the most highly respected endometriosis researchers was in itself exciting, being able to formally contribute to the programme by speaking about angiogenesis and lymphangiogenesis in endometriosis at the invitation of Professor Felice Petraglia was a real honour.

My boss, Professor Ian Fraser being honoured as one of the

eleven WCE pioneers in the field of endometriosis research “for his work in supervising a credible attack on the holy grail of the non-invasive diagnosis of endometriosis through work on nerve fibres and pain” at WCE2008 in Melbourne. What a thrill to see his and the group's hard work recognised in that way!

A real patient focus in terms of patient experience, care, and education.

There were a number of talks I particularly enjoyed for this reason but to mention just a few: Dr Krina Zondervan speaking about the impact of endometriosis; Dr Aisha de Graaff about key epidemiological issues; Ms Deborah Bush about early intervention; and Ms Melissa Parker about comprehensive screening in a dedicated centre.

Sometimes I think we scientists can be guilty of losing sight of

the reason for, and end goal of, our research – the patients, and this patient focus, can only be a good thing for our research community!

I am excited to continue with the fascinating challenge of endometriosis research, hope to make some interesting contributions and look forward to WCE2014.

*Alison Hey-Cunningham*  
*University of Sydney*



Dr Mutinda Kayama  
Institute of Primate Research, Kenya

My interest to attend the 11th World Congress on Endometriosis (WCE2011) in Montpellier, France stems from a deep philosophical commitment to be part of a global team with a unique vision and a common goal of reducing the morbidity, suffering and disability caused by endometriosis among women of reproductive age.

WCE2011 was the ideal place to find out the hot topics in the field, listen to gurus in the field of endometriosis as they debate and discuss on the best way to

## Translational research must move forward

manage endometriosis, meet peers in the field, make new contacts for the future collaboration, and in general, interact with leading professionals doing research in the field.

I listened to excellent lectures throughout the meeting but I appreciated the following three lectures:

- 1) Is endometriosis a pre-neoplastic condition? by Sun-Wei Guo;
- 2) Micro-RNA regulated pathways in endometriosis by Maria Ohlsson-Teague;
- 3) Impact and predictability of endometriosis by Krina Zondervan.

My overall take-home message from the meeting was that the goal of translational research in endometriosis is to take biomarkers discovered at the bench to bedside application.

However, the clinical utility of these biomarkers will depend on well-designed discovery and validation studies. New breakthrough will need innovative technology and a multidisciplinary approach. Also the renewed interest in the vitality and use of classification systems of endometriosis may lead to novel classification systems that will be clinically useful, especially for pelvic pain associated with endometriosis.

As a result of attending WCE2011, my focus still is to study the aetio-pathogenesis of endometriosis, especially the search for new biomarkers for early diagnosis or novel therapeutic targets and also to participate in an awareness campaign of endometriosis in Kenya.

*Mutinda Kayama*  
*Institute of Primate Research*



Dr Katie May  
University of Oxford, United Kingdom

This was the first WCE that I have attended, and it was exciting to be part of a congress where so many people shared an interest in this complex and debilitating disorder.

It was very motivating to see just how many groups are making progress in such varied aspects of endometriosis research.

One of the biggest highlights for me was the discussion around improving awareness of the condition, and management of the disease with a more patient centred approach.

It was superb to hear from Hanne Vedsted Hansen about her ideas of a focussed clinic

## Early awareness and an integrated approach is key

with diverse healthcare professionals working with endometriosis sufferers to facilitate better management. It was particularly encouraging to hear from people around the world that this type of clinic is starting to become a reality.

Hopefully these clinics will start to become the 'norm' for managing endometriosis everywhere.

To hear from Deborah Bush about the ME programme, where school children are being taught about endometriosis, was especially interesting. The lack of awareness of endometriosis in the wider community makes it hard for people to understand how common and significant the disorder is.

If school programmes were more widely implemented hopefully women would have rapid access to the highest quality care, as well as greater understanding of the condition.

As well as this progress in endometriosis management, many groups have made good progress in understanding the altered endometrial environment in endometriosis.

This will help us to understand both the process of disease development, and the potential impact of endometriosis on fertility.

However, for me, perhaps the best part of the congress was the integration between so many people approaching the challenges of endometriosis from different perspectives.

It was great to see the interactions between clinicians and basic scientists that facilitate fantastic research, along with women from patient groups to highlight the real problems faced by endometriosis sufferers.

*Katie May*  
*University of Oxford*



Dr Qing Xue  
First Hospital of Peking University, China

## Exchange of experience is everything

Thank you to WES for supporting me in getting to this beautiful meeting.

The debates on recurrence, the right time of surgery (and which techniques for DIE and/or endometriomas), and whether surgery or IVF is the best way

for the infertile woman with endometriosis or not, still leaves many unanswered questions – but we must continue this exchange and dialogue in an international setting.

*Qinq Xue*  
*Peking University*

## In Memoriam: Carl Wood

Carl Wood has died at the age of 82. Internationally Carl was best known for his work of developing and commercialising techniques of IVF. In Australia in the 70s he was a leader of the movement towards better management of women's health issues and in particular birth control. He achieved international acclaim for his pioneering work in foetal physiology, foetal monitoring, birth control, and IVF.

For these achievements he was awarded the Axel Munthe Award in Reproductive Science in 1988. He was honoured by Her Majesty the Queen with the award of Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 1982.

Carl was educated at Wesley College Melbourne, graduating in medicine with first class honours at Melbourne University in 1952. He obtained membership to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in London in 1958. He was a research assistant at the Rockefeller Institute in New York before becoming a senior lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Queen Charlotte's in Chelsea Hospital in London.

Carl was appointed as a foundation professor and chairman of the Department of

Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Queen Victoria Hospital in Melbourne in 1964. This hospital later transferred to the Monash Medical Centre at Monash University. He delivered the Blair Bell Lecture at the RCOG in the same year.

Although all who knew him were quick to recognise his humility and unassuming nature, many were unaware of his finest achievements. These included the first clinical IVF pregnancy in 1973, the first IVF baby from a frozen embryo in 1983, the first IVF baby from donor egg in 1983, the first baby from sperm retrieval from failed vasectomy reversal in 1986, and the first micro-injection intra-fallopian transfer (MIFT) baby in 1992.

He and his team from Monash IVF have been instrumental in the use of pharmaceutical hormone stimulation of ovaries, which transformed IVF from an experimental technique to a successful clinical and commercial treatment.

His ever-inquiring mind was again stimulated by advances in endoscopic gynaecological surgery in the late 80s.

He visited with his friend, the late Professor Kurt Semm, and together with members of the Melbourne Gynoscopy Group co-pioneered many laparoscopic



Professor Carl Wood  
1929 - 2011

surgical procedures in the early 90s in Australia. He took a keen interest in women with endometriosis and co-founded the Endometriosis Care Centre of Australia in 1997.

He was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia in 1995 for his services to women's health and a pioneer in IVF. He was a life member of the ISGE (also president 1999-2000), the AAGL, the AFS, and the Australian Society of Reproductive Biology. Monash University Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology have established the Carl Wood Chair.

He was an internationally invited speaker on more than 90 occasions, wrote 23 books, 59 book chapters, and over 400 papers. He is considered one of the great medical doctors of modern times in Australia.

Vale Carl!

*Peter Maher*  
Monash University