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XXXV Portuguese Congress of Cardiology: Taking the pulse of Portuguese cardiology

The Portuguese Congress of Cardiology is above all a showcase for the country's scientific activity, a place to meet researchers working in similar areas, and an opportunity to reflect on we can improve. We are fortunate in having an ever more active and productive community, as demonstrated by the growing number of works submitted for presentation at the Congress (598 abstracts and 150 case images this year, a new record).

We are pleased to note an increasing number of works by non-Portuguese authors, including some from Portuguese-speaking countries. Our Congress is thus playing host to Lusophone cardiology.

The Portuguese Society of Cardiology now has powerful online systems that make the process of submission and selection of works more efficient. However, there is always room for improvement, and to this end the Scientific Committee has made further improvements, including introducing new fields in the online forms and identifying others to be developed in the future.

To help ensure the quality and fairness of the selection process, we have brought new members onto the panel of experts who initially assess submissions. We have also employed statistical tools to ensure greater rigour and to reduce asymmetries in the selection process; after testing various methodologies, we opted for an acceptance rate of 65% of submissions, which gave the best agreement between the different methods while maintaining an appropriate balance between different subject areas.

All the works accepted received a classification of over 6.5 out of 10, which is a good indication of their overall quality. A total of 111 abstracts were selected for oral communications, 275 for electronic posters and 48 for image sessions. Most of the oral communications are scheduled between 8.30 and 10 am, to reduce clashes with other activities and to give the presenters and moderators the chance to enjoy the rest of the Congress programme and to ensure the maximum attendance at the sessions.

Electronic posters are increasingly replacing traditional paper posters, and the Congress is following this trend. The posters will be presented and discussed in a total of 55 moderated sessions that will take place in a large area equipped to provide the best possible acoustic and visual experience. As in previous years, there will be a prize for the best poster; the ten posters awarded the highest scores will be presented at two special sessions, from which the winner will be selected.

Prizes are a way to recognize merit, enhance curricula, and encourage scientific production. As well as the prize for best poster, as at previous Congresses there will be a prize for best oral communication, two prizes for young investigators (basic and clinical research), the Manuel Machado Macedo prize for the best work in the field of cardiothoracic surgery, and one for the best image.

We were unfortunately obliged to exclude some works that could have been candidates for these prizes because they did not comply with the regulations. We urge authors to read the regulations carefully before submitting their works, in order to prevent this happening again in the future.

Besides the usual media of paper, CD and the Web, the Congress's programme will for the first time be available as a smartphone app. We hope this will prove to be popular.

This special edition of the Portuguese Journal of Cardiology contains the works presented at the XXXV Portuguese Congress of Cardiology. This is the result of the joint efforts of the authors who submitted works and a large team of experts, administrative assistants, IT staff and the Scientific Committee.

I thank all involved and wish you a memorable Congress in April 2014.

To the science and the skill that underlies our work.

M. Graça Castro
President of the XXXV Portuguese Congress of Cardiology