

## The 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Baltic Association of Dermatovenerologists, Riga, Latvia, September 22–24, 2022: celebrating advances in dermatology and dermatologic therapy

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On September 22–24, 2022, the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Baltic Association of Dermatovenerologists (BADV) convened at the University of Latvia, in the Great Hall, in which dermatology professors from around the world as well as medical students and residents participated. This international Congress was held in a hybrid format such that participants could attend it either in person or remotely.



**Figure 1.** BADV President Prof. Andris Rubins, Head of the Department of Dermatovenerology at the University of Latvia; Prof. Indrikis Muižnieks, Rector of University of Latvia; Prof. Ivars Kalvins, President of the Latvian Academy of Sciences and Chairman of the University of Latvia Council (left to right)

The Congress President Professor Andris Rubins, who is the Head of the Dermatovenerology Department of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Latvia, assembled a wide range of lecturers, a total of 38 distinguished speakers from 15 different countries, specifically the USA, Germany, Taiwan, Italy, the Netherlands, Finland, Poland, Denmark, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Norway, Austria, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. The congress program consisted of more than 60 lectures, where the main topics presented included psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, cosmetic dermatology and bacterial infections. In total, during the Congress, 376 participants gathered, of whom 218 participated remotely utilizing the Zoom platform, and 158 in person.

Many innovative concepts were delineated. The Congress President Andris Rubins and Silvestrs Rubins (Latvia) reviewed practical dermatology, emphasizing successful diagnosis and treatment. The advantages of using nano-pulse stimulation<sup>TM</sup> technology, a new therapeutic approach on the cellular level, were elucidated by Klaus Fritz and Berenike Lampert (Germany). This new form of radiofrequency therapy delivered by microneedles does not heat the treated site, but rather creates a modulation on the cellular



**Figure 2.** Attendees celebrate successful 18<sup>th</sup> BADV Congress

level resulting in a non-thermal disappearance of treated lesions while sparing the surrounding tissue. The value of treating scars and keloids with superficial radiation therapy in the office was advocated by Michael H. Gold (USA) with newer technologies allowing for superficial radiation safely and effectively for optimizing results. Preventing and managing bleeding emergencies in dermatological surgery was highlighted by Daniel Mark Siegel (USA). The rare photodermatitis actinic lichen planus was comprehensively evaluated by Špela Šuler Baglama (Slovenia), Farnam Barati Sadeh (Denmark), Gregor Jemec (Denmark), and associates. Chao-Chun Yang (Formosa) discussed the pathogenesis of scarring and non-scarring alopecia. Torello M. Lotti (Italy) focused on new concepts and treatment for vitiligo. Steven-Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis were discussed by Robert A. Schwartz (USA), who stressed that acute ocular findings are seen in 50–88% of these patients and should be assessed expeditiously to avoid ocular scarring. Imaging technologies for diagnostics of primary melanoma were stressed by Skaidra Valiukeviciene (Lithuania) and colleagues, with teledermatology having potential to facilitate this process along with artificial intelligence. Anita Remitz, MD, PhD (Finland) evaluated topical corticosteroids versus tacrolimus in more than 150 randomized young children with moderate to severe atopic dermatitis, comparing 1% hydrocortisone (if needed hydrocortisone-17-butyrate) or 0.03% tacrolimus ointment (if needed 1% ointment) and following them up for 3 years to evaluate both treatments as effective and safe. Stefano Veraldi (Italy) emphasized rare cutaneous infections. Contact dermatitis was elucidated by Marcis Septe and Kristofers Septe (Latvia), noting that about 80% of all contact dermatitis is irritant contact dermatitis and that aluminum hydroxide was selected by the American Contact Dermatitis Society as the Allergen of the Year for 2022. Sporadic Darier disease successfully treated with acitretin was considered by Ieva Lingyte (Lithuania), Harald Gollnick (Germany), Skaidra Valiukeviciene (Lithuania) *et al.* in treating this autosomal dominant disease caused by mutations in the ATP2A2 gene, noting that in 12–40% of patients no mutations in ATP2A2 are evident and that systemic retinoids are the drug of choice for treating severe Darier disease. Non-surgical treatment options for skin cancer were adroitly handled by Igor Bartenjev and Mark Sergej Bartenjev (Slove-



**Figure 3.** Beautiful Riga: The House of the Blackheads in the old town of Riga

nia), highlighting topical fluorouracil 5% cream usage as monotherapy, or combined with 10% salicylic acid. Long-term disease management in psoriasis was discussed by Ilona Hartmane (Latvia), including treatment persistence, safety, and tolerability. Silvestrs Rubins (Latvia) delineated dermatoses in pregnancy, including treatment options. Chemical peeling techniques were described by Evelina Buinauskaite, MD, PhD (Norway), while Erbium:Yag and ablative laser usage was stressed by Klaus Fritz (Germany).

At the conclusion of this event, five young resident physicians received certificates for the best presentations at the Congress and were awarded a special prize. The BADV awarded honorary membership status to Prof. Robert A. Schwartz (USA), Dr. Michael Gold (USA), Prof. Klaus Fritz (Germany), Prof. Torello Lotti (Italy), Prof. Axel zur Hausen (The Netherlands), Prof. Igor Bartenjev (Slovenia), Prof. Chao Chun Yang (Taiwan), Prof. Stefano Veraldi (Italy), Prof. Diamant Thaci (Germany) and Prof. Klaus Eisendle (Austria). Honorees thanked the Congress and Latvian University leadership (fig. 1) and attendees (fig. 2) as well looked forward to its upcoming 19<sup>th</sup> BADV Congress, to be held on September 14–16, 2023 in beautiful Riga, Latvia (fig. 3).

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