



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY NEWS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Echo Around the World

James D. Thomas, MD, FASE



ASE Global: Focus on India group visits the Taj Mahal. Left to right: Minnie Thykattil, RDCS and Georgeanne Lammertin, MBA, RDCS, RCS, FASE, University of Chicago Medical Center, Chicago, IL; Partho Sengupta, MBBS, MD, DM, FASE and Ingrid Altamar, BS, Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York, NY; Sue Maisey, MBA, RDCS, RCS, FASE, St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, Houston, TX; Barry Canaday, MS, RN, RDCS, RCS, FASE, Oregon Institute of Technology, Klamath Falls, OR; Bharat Patel, RDCS, RVS, RDMS, FASE, Hoboken University Medical Center, Hoboken, NJ; Laurie and Mark Smith Studycast by Core Sound Imaging, Inc., Raleigh, NC; Rhonda Price, American Society of Echocardiography, Morrisville, NC; Robert Young, RDCS, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN; Madhavi Kadiyala, MD, Saint Francis Hospital, Roslyn, NY; David Adams, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, NC; Tom Van Houten, RDCS, FASE, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.

How is it possible for me to read an echo from sonographer David Adams before he even scans it? Hint: it does not involve violation of the time-space continuum, but rather the incredible cooperation of dozens of sonographers, physicians, engineers, and other volunteers. What I'm talking about is ASE Global: Focus on India, which took place in late January, the most successful outreach program in ASE's history. This was the brainchild of Partho Sengupta, the Indian representative on ASE's International Relations Task Force, who for several years has attended a huge (multimillion) meditation camp in Northwest India run by Reverend Saint Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh Ji Insaan. Partho proposed that we organize an effort to perform echocardiograms on preselected attendees with signs and symptoms of serious heart disease, and before you could say "Vindaloo curry," the full volunteer machinery of the ASE had rolled into action. A call went out for sonographer volunteers, and over 200 applied for nine slots! GE Healthcare (Little Chalfont, UK) answered the need for portable echo equipment and support by generously providing GE Vscan, Vivid i and Vivid q ultrasound machines and on-site engineering support, as well as needed funding to make this project a reality. Core Sound Imaging (Raleigh, NC) provided a means of getting the images from India to ASE physicians with their "cloud" solution and expertise. ASE's passionate and highly engaged membership brought forth 75 willing members from all over the world to read these studies and issue reports within a 24-hour time period.

And so on January 23, Partho and nine sonographers: Thomas Van Houten, Bharat Patel, Barry Canaday, Sue Maisey, Minnie Thykattil, Georgeanne Lammertin, Robert Young, David Adams, and Ingrid Altamar along with Dr. Madhavi Kadiyala, representatives from GE Healthcare and Core Sound Imaging, and ASE's Chief Standards

Officer, Rhonda Price, arose from a modest guest house in Sirsa in rural northwest India, trekked their way through the 15 million attendees at the meditation camp, and began a long day of capturing echo after echo after echo, 526 on that first day alone.* All the while, GE's LeaAnne Dantin and engineers kept the equipment in excellent working order while Mark and Laurie Smith of Core Sound Imaging tirelessly uploaded the digital studies to the "cloud." ASE's VP of Research, Andrea Van Hoever, then assigned the studies to 70 readers in locations from North America to the Republic of Georgia to Hawaii. Yes, Hawaii, as in ASE's Echo Hawaii course, where 340 attendees were already enjoying world class echo education in paradise. Nine of our faculty read a total of 99 studies, enabling us to also use them to teach the audience about such amazing entities as critical rheumatic mitral stenosis (valve area 0.5 cm²!), a large ventricular septal defect with the lungs protected by pulmonic stenosis, a double-outlet right ventricle, and a large patent ductus arteriosus.

Over two days, our team performed 1,030 echoes, all read within 24 hours. Some diagnoses were serious enough to mandate immediate admission to local hospitals. For the rest of the patients, Partho has arranged with the Indian cardiology community, led by his brother Shantanu, and Manish Bansal and Rahul Mehrotra of Medanta Medicity, to provide medical and surgical therapy to those who need it. We learned so much from this experience; technical knowledge that we and others can use in future efforts in other parts of the world. For the patients, it was a life-changing experience, giving them access to

**Remarkably, the local organizers had the foresight to have an official adjudicator from the Guinness Book of World Records present, who declared that we had indeed set the world record for most Doppler-echo studies performed in a day!*



Tom Porter, MD, FASE, University of Nebraska Medical Center and James Thomas, MD, FASE of the Cleveland Clinic interpreted echocardiograms from India while serving as faculty at ASE's Echo Hawaii conference.

advanced diagnostic medicine, often for the first time in their lives. Finally, it was an extraordinarily rewarding experience for our team in India and around the world. As Robert Young, sonographer at the Mayo Clinic, said, "Our patients said 'thank you' in languages I didn't understand, but their smiles and hugs were easily understood. I am grateful for the opportunity to have been part of this international team of medical professionals."

While this Indian outreach is surely ASE's most ambitious international project this year, it is only a piece of a comprehensive strategy to extend ASE's reach around the globe and further the standardization of quality patient care. At the heart of this strategy is our Interna-

tional Relations Task Force, where we have carefully chosen individuals (like Partho) with particular contacts and expertise in specific parts of the world, to better target our efforts. For example, Feng Xie, our Chinese representative, has recruited an army of Chinese echocardiographers to translate our guidelines (at last count, seven) into Mandarin. Roberto Lang and Juan Carlos Plana, our Latin America representatives, were instrumental in the success of the First World Summit of Echo Societies last July in Buenos Aires. Jae Oh has helped greatly in chairing the Pacific Rim Symposium at Echo Hawaii, bringing nearly a dozen speakers from Japan and Korea to our meeting. Wael Jaber, a native of Lebanon who sits on our membership committee, has recently arranged ASE collaboration with several meetings in the Middle East, increasing our visibility in this important part of the world.

So there you have it: ASE Global, an incredible effort that is bringing real results to the echocardiography community around the world. Our experience with the India project shows that there is a massive volunteer spirit within ASE, and we hope to have opportunities for our members to contribute in the future in other parts of the world. What we also learned, however, is the critical importance of having a leader like Partho who really understands the region and can engage the local echo and cardiology community to assure success. If any of you reading this feel you may have the drive and connections to lead an echo outreach project somewhere in the world, please contact me or Rhonda Price, who staffs the International Relations Task Force for ASE.

Oh, and the answer to my time-travel riddle? It really was quite simple: with David Adams in India and me in Hawaii, the 15½ hour time difference meant that I was frequently finalizing the echo reports before the time-stamp on the study itself. As Einstein would say, "It's all relative!"

For a complete list of Focus on India volunteers, visit www.asecho.org/FocusOnIndia.