

IPA 2023 International Congress: A Joint Congress with Great Results

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Key highlights:

- The 2023 IPA International Congress was a Joint Congress including the Spanish Society of Psychogeriatrics (SEPG) and the Section of Geriatric Psychiatry of the Portuguese Association of Psychiatry and Mental Health of Portugal (SPG/SPPSM).
- The Joint Congress model provides greater variety to the scientific programme and encourages participation and attendance.
- There was really positive feedback from attendees of the joint congress

From June 29th 2023 to July 2nd 2023, the IPA International Congress took place in Lisbon, Portugal. Following the previous positive experience of the IPA Congress held in Santiago de Compostela in 2019 (19th IPA/SEPG Joint International Congress), this year's congress was also a joint congress and special for many reasons: on the one hand, it included the Spanish Society of Psychogeriatrics (SEPG) and the Section of Geriatric Psychiatry of the Portuguese Association of Psychiatry and Mental Health (SPG/SPPSM) of Portugal; on the other hand, it is the first congress to be held in person after the pandemic. Attendees were able to meet again face-to-face to update and share knowledge on therapeutic developments from a multidisciplinary perspective.

It is important to highlight that part of the success of the congress was its location in a historical and traditional European capital such as Lisbon (Portugal), which has wide cultural variety. The spirit of being able to share new knowledge in a post-pandemic world led to establishing the theme of the congress: "New Perspectives in a Changing World: Social Connectedness, Aging and Mental Health". Congress organizers provided

participation data which stands out with 545 delegates from 44 countries, which speaks of its impact on an international level.

The different symposia and conferences (1 Keynote, 5 plenary sessions, 22 symposia sessions, 48 free/oral communications, 212 posters, 6 workshops) addressed aspects of care for the elderly from a general perspective. There were lectures addressing several topics including: updates on the diagnosis and management of dementia, cognitive impairment and late-onset psychotic disorders; antipsychotic use in older adults with advanced neurocognitive disorders and the use of ECT; and social environment in psychogeriatrics, including aspects such as digital health, artificial intelligence and euthanasia. Importantly there was an effort placed on promoting an active social role of older adults to improve quality of life and fight the stigma of ageism.

The SEPG Congress (the 20th SEPG Congress) was held on June 30th. Different round table discussions were held on a variety of topics which included: a review of the current situation and future perspectives of Psychogeriatrics in Spain; a symposium on the prevention and relationship between ageing and different mental disorders (psychotic, affective, cognitive); and a review of current perspectives on depression, dementia and addictive behaviours in the elderly. The SEPG's inaugural conference on Neuromodulation Therapies in the Elderly is also worth mentioning.

At the end of the Congress, following one of the traditions of the IPA, a visit to two institutions was made which included the Hospital do Mar, a hospital for elderly people with psychiatric and neurological problems, and the Geriatric Psychiatry Service of the Hospital Centro de Lisboa.

Thanks to the efforts and enthusiasm of the different committees, the congress organisers and all the speakers and participants; the feedback after the joint congress has been very positive. The fact that different scientific societies can participate in a coordinated and integrated way brings variety to the scientific programme and encourages participation, which follows the example of the congress' motto.

All this makes the joint congress experience a model that could be maintained for future congresses.

Javier Vicente

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