



17th ESASO Retina Academy 2017

29 June – 1 July 2017, Berlin, Germany



Interview with Professor Francesco Bandello on the highlights of this year's Retina Academy

ESASO: You have been president over the last seven years of the ESASO Retina Academy. What are the highlights of this year's scientific programme?

We are very excited about the scientific programme this year, which covers a wide range of interesting and important topics. Of course we will be discussing AMD and DR, as two of the most important diseases that the retinal specialist will have to treat, but we will also have sessions dedicated to conditions such as optic neuritis and non-infectious uveitis, which aren't associated with as much industry research and development, but are still issues that the clinical eye doctor needs to know how to manage. We also have a session devoted to one of the hottest topics in ophthalmology currently, OCT angiography, a new imaging technology which provides a non-invasive way to reliably visualise the retinal and choroidal vessels. Other interesting topics in this year's programme include RVO, CNV caused by conditions other than AMD, CSC, and supplementation in macular disorders and autofluorescence in macular dystrophies. We will also be discussing a diverse selection of vitreoretinal surgical techniques and strategies.

How would you describe the range of different session formats included in this year's programme?

A key aim of the ESASO Retina Academy is to maximise the learning of participants, which we try to achieve using a variety of different types of session in order to provide effective education. This year there are several formats worthy of note. For example, Retinamour is a highly interactive session where practical clinical cases are submitted and presented by the participants and discussed by an expert panel. We also have a number of classic plenary sessions which begin and end with questions to the audience to evaluate learning in each session. Last year, these pre- and post-session tests revealed that, in some plenaries, participants' knowledge improved by 65% over the course of the session! In addition, we have a keynote lecture which is delivered

by a well-known expert on an important topic. This year Rupert Bourne (UK) will be making the keynote lecture, on the subject of glaucoma and AMD.

Then there's the Industry Innovations Session, which provides an opportunity for representatives of the pharmaceutical industry to present their ongoing research programmes and the development pipeline, allowing participants an insight into what therapies may be coming their way in the next 5 to 10 years. And that's not all! Our scientific programme for this year also includes debate sessions, medical and surgical masterclasses, an imaging workshop and a vitreoretinal video surgery session.

What are you personally looking forward to most during this year's meeting?

Personally, I most enjoy the ESASO MasterClasses. The masterclass format always rates very highly among the participants, as it allows a high degree of informal interaction between the participants and the expert faculty. This year there will be five medical masterclasses headed by Marco Zarbin (USA), covering topics such as intravitreal injection, micropulse laser, OCT and anti-VEGF therapy, and three surgical masterclasses led by Antonio Capone (USA) addressing clinical techniques such as scleral buckling, ab externo surgery and procedures and adjunctive therapies for macular hole.

Of course, I'm also very much looking forward to the plenary sessions, as these provide important insights from renowned experts into current knowledge and clinical practice on a range of hot topics in ophthalmology. And let me point out that the participants themselves can contribute to make the scientific programme even more interactive and interesting! We strongly encourage all participants to share their experiences by submitting abstracts and case studies. All accepted abstracts will be published in a supplement of the impact-factor rated journal *Ophthalmic Research*.



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What are the main reasons why people should come to Berlin for the ESASO Retina Academy meeting this year?

Attendees at this year's meeting will benefit from a wide variety of post-residency education provided by a large faculty of experts from around the world. Dissemination of new and effective learning and expertise will help participants to improve their clinical and surgical practice, using a range of approaches including in-depth exposition of topics, face-to-face didactical tutoring and hands-on experience. Of course, another important aspect of this international event is the opportunity it provides for young and more experienced ophthalmologists alike to meet, discuss and network in a relaxed environment and with collegial spirit.

Last but not least, ESASO support the XOVA Excellence in Ophthalmology Vision Awards to address unmet needs in eyecare. As in previous years, the winners of the XOVA will be announced during the ESASO Retina Academy meeting. Why is XOVA important to ESASO?

ESASO believes that the projects awarded funding by the XOVA programme aim to improve the quality of treatment of eye diseases in underprivileged parts of the world. For example by providing support and help to people with restricted access to medicine and improving training and access to surgery. Each year we see the results that these projects, have been able to achieve with XOVA funding sponsored by Novartis, and we are always impressed and encouraged at the progress that has been made towards changing the reality of management of eye disease in areas with a high level of unmet need. ESASO is proud to support this not-for-profit programme as it helps to make a real difference to eye care worldwide.