

New Meeting Encapsulates Significant Data and Information for Best Practices

The Best of Retina 2013 meeting, December 5-7, will feature named award lectures, peer-reviewed articles, and hot-topic issues from throughout the year.

BY RACHEL M. RENSHAW, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Without question, among ophthalmic subspecialties, retina has changed most dramatically in the past 10 years. The amount of information on new treatments, regimens, surgical innovation, and the totality of data that is presented at various meetings grow with each passing year.

The American Society of Retina Specialists (ASRS), American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) and AAO Retina Subspecialty Days, Retina Society, and Macula Society meetings are among the most prestigious and highly attended retina conferences held in North America. Society meetings in particular are known for their highly clinical and surgical content, but are often limited to include participation by their bona fide members. In combination with the sheer dilemma that faces many retina specialists when considering which and how many meetings they can attend, along with the plethora of information that is being disseminated in peer-reviewed literature, a looming challenge exists as how to balance the desire for the most relevant, up-to-date information against the day-to-day needs of a busy practice.

ENTER BEST OF RETINA

December 2013 will mark the inauguration of a new addition to the conference schedule. Best of Retina will be held in New York City December 5-7, at the Westin Times Square. Course director is Carl C. Awh, MD. Tarek S. Hassan, MD; and David R. Chow, MD are course co-directors.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Drs. Hassan and Awh regarding how they developed the concept for



BEST OF RETINA 2013

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Westin New York at Times Square
New York, NY

www.medconfs.com/conferences.php
bestofretina@medconfs.com

this meeting and to find out what attendees can expect from the program. The first question posed was, "Why another meeting?"

Dr. Hassan explained how Best of Retina has been planned to position itself among existing conferences. "This meeting is designed in a format that is completely different than any other," he said. "Best of Retina will provide the highlights from all the major retina meetings and peer-reviewed journals throughout the year, and represents a summary that is unique in our specialty."

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Friday, December 6. The Friday sessions will feature presentations from editors of the leading peer-reviewed journals, including *JAMA Ophthalmology*, *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, *Retina*, and *Ophthalmology*. To follow will be a panel discussion featuring the journal editors and moderated by Donald J. D'Amico, MD.

"Certain topics may lend themselves to a more involved discussion," said Dr. Awh. "Dr. D'Amico is a masterful moderator, so the discussion portion is sure to be interesting."

After the morning presentations, attendees may attend an optional field trip to Regeneron Pharmaceuticals head-

quarters in Tarrytown, a short distance from Manhattan. There, participants will have the opportunity to tour the facility with company scientists and executives, who will be available for questions regarding the in-depth processes of drug development and manufacture.

Saturday, December 7. Saturday will largely focus on the named lecture presentations from throughout the year, including the Jackson Memorial Lecture from AAO, the Schepens Lecture from AAO Subspecialty Day, the ASRS Founders Lecture, the Retina Society J. Donald M. Gass Award Lecture, and the ASRS Gertrude D. Pyron Award Lecture.

Although these have been presented previously, the audience has been limited. Further, the panel discussions to follow these presentations will be a distinguishing factor in the Best of Retina meeting setting.

"We are featuring the best and the brightest in the retina field, but we are not letting them off easy by having them just give their lecture," Dr. Awh said. "We will have a high-quality panel with energetic and inquisitive panelists who are not shy in discussing each of these presentations. The panel's duty will also be to address other issues that are timely during the year in this debate-style format."

There is also space allotted in the program for sessions on late-breaking data and news on drugs in the pipeline for retina and surgical innovations that they believe deserve discussion.

In recognizing the importance of the relationships between physicians and industry in research and development efforts, representatives from industry will have podium time to update attendees on their products and pipelines. These sessions will be interspersed throughout the clinical sessions in the Saturday morning and afternoon program.

SOCIAL PROGRAM

The social program for Best of Retina is not as structured as some other meetings, due to the expectation that because of the timing of the holidays and prime location, attendees may want to bring their families. There will be an opening reception on Thursday and a dinner at Celsius Bryant Park on Friday, but otherwise, there will be free time away from the meeting for attendees to take in sights and locations of their choosing in New York.

Add Best of Retina 2013 to your calendar by scanning this code with your smartphone. Access the meeting details to copy and paste into your calendar.



RETINA FELLOWS' FORUM REUNION

Another interesting aspect of the meeting is that it will also serve a Retina Fellows' Forum reunion of sorts. The Retina Fellows' Forum, held every January in Chicago for the past 13 years, brings together senior fellows in their second year of 2-year retina fellowships from around North America to participate in educational and social events that are geared toward providing a comprehensive and intensive review of current surgical and medical approaches in the vitreoretinal space. Among the goals of the Retina Fellows' Forum are to go above and beyond basic review courses, promote interactions between fellows and faculty, and to introduce fellows to representatives from industry.

"Those who have attended a Retina Fellows' Forum meeting in the past will be granted a discount to their registration fee," said Dr. Awh. "Over the years, we have considered the idea of holding an alumni event, but it didn't seem to be a strong enough reason to hold a recurring meeting."

ONE MEETING: THE BEST OF INNOVATION

The Best of Retina program is, according to the meeting organizers, rich with content that summarizes, quite simply, the best of retina.

"There has been no meeting that takes on the task of wrapping up a year of innovation in a location that is as central and attractive around the holidays," said Dr. Hassan. "We are hoping that our concept, as well as the location, will be a big draw for retina specialists around the country and the world."

Dr. Hassan stressed that the format of the meeting will be more open-ended than other meetings. The idea, he said, is to provide the best possible overview of important journal articles and presentations throughout the year, and to facilitate education and discussion on how to best incorporate this information within the clinical and surgical setting. ■

Carl C. Awh, MD, practices at Tennessee Retina in Nashville. Dr. Awh is course director for Best of Retina. He may be reached at carlawh@gmail.com.

David R. Chow, MD, FRCS(C), practices at St. Michael's Health Centre Eye Clinic in Toronto, Canada. Dr. Chow is course co-director for Best of Retina. He may be reached at davidrchow@me.com.

Tarek S. Hassan, MD, is a partner with Associated Retinal Consultants, PC, and a Professor of Ophthalmology at Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine in Royal Oak, MI. Dr. Hassan is course co-director for Best of Retina. He may be reached at tsahassan@yahoo.com.

