SCAI 10th Annual Interventional Cardiology Fellows Course

The SCAI 2015 Fall Fellows course took place in Las Vegas over four days in December and attracted fellows-in-training and an expert faculty from all over the world. Whilst the main focus of the course centred on percutaneous coronary intervention, there were also sessions dedicated to valve and structural therapy. We found the event to offer exceptional educational value. The course was meticulously tailored to the educational needs of interventional fellows achieving an ideal balance between overview of key trial data, procedural technical/strategic considerations, case presentations, as well as ethical and legal issues. Each day was divided into five main sessions with a central principal theme covered by a series of talks in an interactive setting.

The lectures themselves were both short (on average 12 mins long) and clinically relevant, with the result that the content was easy to digest. Moreover, the expert faculty was energetic, passionate and engaging; they were forever forthcoming in sharing their wealth of experience and the programme was punctuated by a multitude of invaluable “tips and tricks” regarding equipment selection, complication avoidance and “getting out of trouble” when complications do occur. Particular highlights included insights from Antonio Colombo derived from his personal journey in interventional cardiology, as well as a series of talks given by each member of the senior faculty on their most “instructive cases and complications of the year”. Although US centered, almost all of the procedural techniques discussed and guidance given were relevant to the British trainee. There were, however, some thought-provoking areas where the practice of our American counterparts differed from that routinely adopted in the UK. Examples included their readiness to use left ventricular support (most notably the Impella device) in “high-risk” PCI (Protected PCI), as well as their proactive approach to the perceived panacea of “complete percutaneous revascularization”.

Alongside the extensive core lecture schedule, there were several satellite symposia covering diverse topics such as guidewire design and engineering, mastering rotablation, the value and limitations of guidelines, and how to avoid/tackle legal challenges from patients or their relatives. Many of these sessions offered the chance for hands-on experience on an assortment of simulator demonstrations. During the refreshment breaks, there were further opportunities for learning about novel cutting-edge technologies and pharmaceuticals in the exhibit hall where all the major companies from industry were represented. Furthermore the international attendance and group dinners yielded plenty of opportunities for networking.

The location of the course, the modern ultrachic 5-star Cosmopolitan Hotel in the heart of the strip, was an ideal base to both relax and explore Las Vegas. We were housed in luxurious terrace suites with expansive views across the iconic Bellagio dancing fountain, city and mountains in the horizon. During the evenings there was ample opportunity to unwind and enjoy the Las Vegas amenities. Between us we took in a Cirque du Soleil show, visited Omnia -
Las Vegas' newest and largest (75,000 sq ft) night club, rode the “High Roller” (the world's largest observation wheel), as well as make/lose a few dollars in the casinos. Needless to say the buzz of Las Vegas complimented the dynamic SCAI course perfectly and we are most grateful to BCIS for making our attendance possible.

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