

Presidential Address

Dr Stanley C White

President, International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine

Air Chief Marshal SK Kaul, Air Marshal PC Sharda, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Academicians, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a pleasure that the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine is able to join hands with the Organizing Committee from the Indian Society of Aerospace Medicine in presenting the 42nd International Congress of Aviation and Space Medicine. This annual meeting held by the Academy has traditionally been a high point of our scientific and professional effort for its members each year. As part of this tradition, the Academy has tried to schedule our meetings each year around the world, as a way of allowing us to meet those who are practising, conducting research and teaching Aerospace Medicine. The best way for us to learn and to get to know each other is to visit, discuss and in some cases to commiserate on what is going on nationally during our visit to a host country.

Face-to-face discussions mean much more than just reading another article in the journal. More importantly, talking about the real problems confronting the practitioners in the host country often breaks down communication barriers and can provide the host professionals some additional help. A by-product of these exchanges is the long-lasting professional relationship which continues after the meeting has become history. An interesting observation is that many problems prove to be common rather than exclusive and all benefit from the solution.

As for the Academy, we also have a selfish motive in visiting the many nations who act as

our hosts. Not only do we benefit from visiting very interesting places around the world, we also get a chance to meet and know the younger practitioners of Aerospace Medicine in each of the host countries. It is from this pool of professionals that the future members of our Academy must come. For those who are attending and for our younger academicians that should be all the incentive you need to come up and meet the academicians and be sure that we get to know you and understand you. It is for this reason that the Academy is quite pleased to receive and to accept the application from the Indian Society of Aerospace Medicine to host this Conference. I know that the Organizing Committee has worked hard because we kept the Fax machines hot between my house, our Secretariat General and their house. They have also undertaken some new initiatives this year; for example, in United States it is rather important for physicians to maintain a demonstration of their qualification by receiving continuing medical education. So this Congress has initiated a new programme of giving continuing medical education credit. This is available to any one at the end of this meeting. We have done this through the good offices of one of our academicians from the United States.

I am looking forward to this week from both the professional and the social point of view. It looks like a good week. I haven't had a chance to look with great depth at the abstracts as yet, but I can hardly wait to get on with them.

Thank you.