



KoreAnesthesia 2018 Meeting

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Abstract

The 95th KoreAnesthesia Meeting was held successfully over 3 days from November 8 to 10, 2018 at Seoul Dragon-City Hotelplex, featuring 62 overseas speakers and 2960 attendees from 26 countries. KoreAnesthesia is the largest annual event hosted by the Korean Society of Anesthesiologists (KSA). The KSA hopes that many members of the Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists and readers of the *Journal of Anesthesia* will join us at the forthcoming KoreAnesthesia 2019 from October 31 to November 2, 2019 at Paradise City Hotel, Incheon, South Korea.

Keywords Language · Programs · Republic of Korea · Seoul

Introduction

KoreAnesthesia has grown greatly in scale over recent years, and with 62 overseas speakers from 18 countries and 252 delegates from 26 countries, KoreAnesthesia 2018 greatly exceeded the minimum requirements to qualify as an international congress. Our aim in this article is to share the obstacles we encountered in transforming what was originally an academic conference limited to domestic participants into an international academic conference, and to report the various efforts and changes that were made to overcome them.

Preparing various academic programs with the latest knowledge

We sought to prepare a variety of academic programs with the latest knowledge, recognizing the increasingly fragmented and expanding scope of anesthesia medicine. The aim was to provide sufficiently interesting content and practical assistance to a large number of domestic and international participants.

The growing international profile of KoreAnesthesia, reflected in its increasing scale and the various countries represented by participants, enabled us to successfully invite eminent speakers in specific subspecialty areas. To emphasize the conference's focus on maximizing patient safety, the slogan "Patient-centered Anesthesia—One-step Ahead" was selected.

In the three main rooms that could accommodate the largest audiences, major themes such as perioperative medicine, regional anesthesia and pain, airway management, patient blood management, cardiothoracic and vascular anesthesia, anesthesia pharmacology, transplantation anesthesia, geriatric anesthesia, neuroanesthesia, education, and patient safety and outcomes were arranged evenly over two days. We also prepared a room section called Update & Issues, where attendees were able to access and share the latest knowledge on topics such as high-flow nasal oxygenation.

Thirteen different workshop programs, including difficult airway management, echocardiography, ultrasound-guided nerve block, and perioperative point-of-care ultrasound, were led by experts in each field, who imparted knowledge and valuable practical tips to attendees. Furthermore, to publicize simulation education—which KSA actively promotes—and to persuade members of the KSA as well as chairpersons of every major hospital in Korea regarding the necessity of education, we demonstrated this form of training using the simulator in the workshop. In advance of the conference, we arranged for specialist lecturers to attend simulation instructor courses, equipping them with the skills to provide this simulation training.

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Abstract sessions were organized in 21 categories, and 290 excellent scientific papers were presented by researchers from across the world. The best case report accolade was awarded to a paper titled, “Successful use of Fogarty catheter for sequential one-lung ventilation during the pediatric congenital heart surgery”; the best research prizes were awarded to “Short-term predictability of pre-operative hemoglobin A1c in diabetic patients who underwent off-pump coronary bypass surgery: a retrospective study” and “Use of a smartphone application (PaediCalc) to improve speed and accuracy in paediatric body-weight-based calculations.”

Inviting overseas speakers in various fields and expanding overseas participation

To internationalize the conference, it was essential to invite a large number of overseas speakers and participants. To this end, the KSA has worked tirelessly to collaborate with foreign national anesthesiology societies over the last 3 years. During this period, an international alliance was established between the KSA and anesthesiology societies of the USA, Taiwan, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Thailand, and Hong Kong, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding under which speakers from both the KSA and other international anesthesiology societies could be invited to either of their respective events. In addition, we have been actively promoting the KSA by organizing booths at overseas academic conferences to promote the KoreAnesthesia Meeting and the KSA. Based on these mutual friendships, we were able to invite 62 overseas speakers from 18 countries who are prominent in their respective fields. We were also able to invite 17 representatives from overseas academic societies—including Yuichi Kanmura, a vice president of the Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists (JSA), and James Grant, President of the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA)—to share their societies’ visions and give advice on which we could base the future development of our society.

Travel grants have been introduced for the KoreAnesthesia Meeting. Delegates attending to present their abstracts, including both resident and fellow trainees, as well as anesthesiologists certified in the 3 years preceding the conference, have their airfare and accommodation expenses covered and registration for the conference as well as for one of the conference workshop programs done for free. The introduction of this system was so successful that 252 overseas participants from 26 countries, including Japan, registered to present their abstracts. Allowing overseas participants to save money helped to widely promote the KSA and the KoreAnesthesia Meeting in foreign countries.

Selection of official language and professional interpreters

To internationalize this conference, it was very important to overcome language barriers. Although most Korean participants could understand lectures in English, requiring them to do so was likely to suppress the dynamism of the conference since it is not only tiring to listen to lectures in one’s second language but also requires much patience and considerable effort to ask questions and listen to answers in that language. Therefore, it was necessary for Korean attendees to be able to listen to, ask questions of, and receive answers from overseas lecturers in Korean. It was of course, not feasible to expect overseas speakers to themselves deliver lectures (and answer questions) in Korean. This issue was relevant to not only the relationship between speakers and audiences but also the ease of communication during these sessions, which combined domestic and overseas speakers.

Although English was selected as the official language, in recognition of the conference’s international status, we provided a simultaneous Korean–English interpretation service in important sessions attended by large audiences in order to make this conference a true forum for domestic and international participants to communicate freely and actively. This service was delivered by 12 professional simultaneous interpreters with 10 years of experience each in numerous pharmaceutical and medical events; they contributed significantly to ensuring the smooth progress and delivery of the event. In addition, when simultaneous interpretation was required for more than six continuous hours, interpreters took turns to enhance the speed and accuracy of this service. The simultaneous interpreting service proved very successful, and the system was praised by many overseas speakers. We plan to provide a simultaneous interpreting service at future international conferences and we are also considering providing simultaneous interpretation for the languages of countries with many participants, alongside Korean–English.

Selection of venue considering accessibility for participants and event size

Considering accessibility for both domestic and overseas attendees, we selected Seoul Dragon City as the event venue: it is located next to Yongsan Station, which is the main hub for subways and trains—both major transportation means in Korea. We utilized nine rooms spread across the 3rd to the 5th floor of the venue, and attendees commented positively on convenience and the short distances between the rooms.

However, as the available area of the venue proved insufficient, it was necessary to devise a space-utilization strategy to accommodate the scientific sessions, the sponsor and promotional booths, and auxiliary facilities. Accordingly, we placed the registration desk in the center of the lower floor, where it would be easily spotted by participants, and allocated the corridors to booths to satisfy the sponsors and promoters. As KoreAnesthesia has grown greatly in scale since becoming an international conference, the number of advance registrations was higher than in the previous year, and with more than 1000 participants expected on the first day of the conference, we recognized that there was not enough space for lunch. To solve this problem, we checked each registrant's status in the morning and secured more dining places at the hotel in addition to the main event venue, so that all participants could have meals. In addition, since a shortage of parking spaces was expected due to the limited capacity of the hotel's parking lot, we secured an additional parking lot next to the venue, which the attendants could use. As the considerable increase in the scale of the conference has created various practical difficulties regarding the venue, the far more spacious Paradise City Hotel has been selected to host KoreAnesthesia 2019.

Efficient program guide and information

At most academic conferences, many program guides are printed and wasted. We believe that organizations should take the lead in preserving the natural environment in order for humanity to survive, given the ever increasing environmental pollution. Therefore, we decided to reduce the number of program guides printed to pursue an environment-friendly agenda. We created an official app for the first time and guided all participants with real-time push notifications. Participants were able to quickly and easily view conference announcements and programs in real time

on their smartphones, and a photo gallery was available to which they could freely upload photos taken at the conference site. Even when faced with the unexpected shortage of lunch places on the first day of the conference, problem resolution was facilitated by sharing content in real time through the official app, complemented by placing staff in each part of the venue to offer guidance in person. Apart from the official app, we provided participants with a printed booklet upon registration, which gave them an overview of the whole program; the booklet received positive feedback.

Conclusion

Overall, KoreAnesthesia 2018 was a very successful event, reflecting the great efforts and investment in a long-term master plan created and implemented by President Il-ok Lee and her board members. The generous support and cooperation of our allied national societies also greatly contributed to the conference's success.

We are deeply grateful for this opportunity to report on KoreAnesthesia 2018 in the *Journal of Anesthesia*—the official journal of the JSA. The KSA hopes that many JSA members and readers of the *Journal of Anesthesia* will join us at KoreAnesthesia 2019 from October 31 to November 2, 2019.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The author declared there is no conflict of interest.

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