The eighth EANO congress was held from September 11 – 14, 2008 (hosted by the Spanish Group of Neuro-Oncology), at the Palau de Congressos de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain.

On Thursday 11th September, prior to the main congress, a satellite event organised by non-profit organisations interested in brain tumour research was held. The session was suitable for an audience of lay people as well as health care professionals. Subjects covered included the incidence and aetiology of gliomas in adults and children and new treatment modalities. The International Brain Tumour Alliance (IBTA) (www.theibta.org), was represented by their Secretary, Kathy Oliver, who discussed, what was important for the patient. She stressed the importance of maintaining hope and the importance of patients having equal access to treatment. A member of the audience had recently undergone surgery for an anaplastic astrocytoma and had set up the first support group in Lithuania (www.kartulengviau.lt). Her comment was that equity of care was aspirational rather than factual.

On Friday 12th September at 8am, the main conference began with a ‘Meet the Experts Session’. I was honoured to be invited to speak, along with Dr B Muller from Kreischa, Germany, covering the topic of “Supportive care in brain tumours”. Professor F Graus, President of EANO, officially opened the Congress and the audience were welcomed by; Dr I Roussos, President of the local organising committee and writer and brain tumour patient Mr Baltazar Porcel.

The topics throughout the conference examined current treatments and novel therapies, gliomas, non-glial tumours and metastasis, neuro-imaging, pathology and cell biology. All of these topics were delivered with a focus on the patient and the importance of their quality of life. The full programme can be viewed on www.eano.eu.

During the coffee and lunch breaks it was possible to view the posters and exhibitions and mingle with colleagues and meet old friends. I, however, was anxiously preparing for the nurses session, which was held on the Friday afternoon. Anxiety and preparation paid off, as the session was well attended and organised. The presenters were from the UK, the Netherlands and Austria and the evaluation was favourable. The full evaluation and presentations along with the abstracts can be viewed on the EANO website.

On Saturday 13th September, in the afternoon selected posters were presented. I was delighted to support my colleague Dr S Erridge from the UK. She described the Edinburgh experience in the impact of changes in pathological classification and referral patterns on treatment and outcome of patients with a glioma 1988-2002 (1).

At the end of Saturday sessions the EANO General Assembly took place at the congress venue. New board members were elected and those retiring from the board were thanked for their work. Professor Francesc Graus (Barcelona Spain) stood down as President and Dr Robin Grant (Edinburgh UK) was elected as the new President. Further information is available on the EANO website.

The Congress finished at lunchtime on Sunday 14th September. As usual it was slightly quieter than the rest of the conference but no less interesting. The weather remained sunny, as it had for the duration, for us to enjoy before departing homewards. At the congress there were commercial-funded Satellite Symposia and the opportunity to visit exhibition stands. The venue was a modern purpose-built facility and was in easy reach of the main attractions of Barcelona. Two social events were organised; the first of these was a Welcome Reception held in the beautiful gardens of the Rey Juan Carlos I Hotel, where we enjoyed local drinks and tapas. The congress dinner was held at the Marques de Comillas, Drassanes Reials de Barcelona. This venue was located near the port and dates back to the 13th Century. It was originally the royal shipyard. Following dinner we were entertained by Spanish folk singers, who sang with gusto and sentiment rounding off an excellent evening.

Barcelona was an ideal venue and the Congress a hit. I am looking forward to Maastricht, Netherlands in 2010, where I hope to expand the Nurses Session and provide translation for the benefit of non-English speaking nurses throughout Europe.

Meanwhile anyone with an interest in Neuro-oncology should look at the website and consider joining. Nurses have a reduced rate of 50 Euros for 2 years membership.

Shanne McNamara (EANO Executive Board Member for Nurses)

Reference