



ATLS International is a monthly electronic newsletter that circulates the latest quality information on news and events across the ATLS global spectrum. Please contact Jasmine Alkhatib with questions or suggestions at jalkhatib@facs.org.

REGION XIV: LATIN AMERICA

International Meeting

The 2009 ATLS International Meeting took place in the Windy City last month at the historic Hilton Chicago. More than 100 representatives from nearly 40 countries attended the informative and productive two-day event, which was led by John Kortbeek, MD, FACS (ATLS International Course Director), and Karen Brasel, MD, FACS (ATLS Subcommittee Chair). The gathering subsequently split into regional meetings for more in depth discussion on local ATLS matters.

Renato Poggetti, MD, FACS, Region Chief of ATLS in Latin America, chaired the heavily attended Region XIV meeting, during which country representatives updated the group on the advances and challenges encountered in 2009. Also discussed was future editing of the Spanish *8th Edition Student Manual*, which will be directed by Esteban Foianini, MD, FACS (Vice-Chairperson for ATLS-Bolivia). Additionally, Elizabeth de Solezio, MD, FACS (Educator for ATLS-Ecuador), explained her new role as the Educator for Region XIV.

With Paraguay and Uruguay involved in the promulgation process, Latin American ATLS faculty members were encouraged to participate in their training. The much-anticipated initial training courses for these countries will be conducted in Sao Paulo, Brazil, early next year.



Members of Region XIV at the ATLS International Meeting in Chicago, IL.

Next year's Region XIV meeting will take place in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in either April or May of 2010. The first ever Region XIV meeting held in a Latin American country was in April 2009 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

ATLS-Brazil

by Renato Poggetti, MD, FACS

In October 1987, myself and five other Brazilian surgeons, along with surgeons from Australia, Chile, and South Africa, attended Provider and Instructor ATLS courses at the San Francisco General Hospital. The course coordinator was Irvne Hughes, the instructors were the ATLS founders, and the course experience helped plant a seed in our country. The first course in Brazil was conducted in 1989 with the help of Irwin Hirsch, MD, FACS, and the Chilean ACS Chapter, and the ATLS program began to grow more rapidly and continues to expand to this day.

All editions of the ATLS *Student Manual* since the fifth have been translated into Portuguese. The translation is invaluable in spreading the program across Brazil. After 20 years of hard work, 27 sites have been established, bringing ATLS to almost every Brazilian state. Since the program's inception, we have extended it from Brazil's metropolitan centers to the remote Amazon

and Pantanal regions. Our first Educator, György Böhm, MD, and Helga Bell, our former Coordinator, dedicated themselves to the promotion of ATLS-Brazil. Three ATLS updates in Brazil were coordinated by Jameel Ali, MD, ATLS National Educator, and Claus Stobaus, MD, our current Educator.

Brazil has 190 million inhabitants across its 27 states. We have trained more than 30,000 physicians and 1,000 instructors in more than 1,700 courses. This effort is just a start, as approximately half of Brazil's 300,000 physicians work in emergency services. Continued advances in the ATLS program, especially the e-learning project, will allow more doctors and nurses to acquire the skills needed for initial assessment of trauma patients.

Additionally, with the help of Will Chapleau and Scott Frame, MD, the PHTLS program was introduced to Brazil in 1996. Also, the ATCN-Brazil program was started in 2009 thanks to Richard Henn's contributions. Lastly, our ATCN and ATLS coordinator, Cristiane Domingues, provides strong support for our sites and faculty.



First ATLS-Brazil Provider Course, 1989



ATLS-Brazil 20th Anniversary Plaque at the ATLS International Meeting, 2009



Demonstration Course in Aruba

What's a surgeon to do when traveling to an exotic Caribbean island? Teach ATLS, of course!

On October 24 and 25, ATLS faculty from Colombia, Brazil, and the United States conducted a provider course at Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Hospital in Aruba. Twenty medical doctors and specialists from Aruba participated in the course, and 14 others observed. The Aruban medical community is unique in its linguistic diversity. Although Dutch is the official language, English, Spanish, and Papiamento (a local Creole language) are also spoken in Aruba due to its proximity to a number of countries. In fact, most medics are trained in Colombia, Venezuela, the United States, Mexico, and The Netherlands, resulting in a diverse group of ATLS course participants.

Never lacking in motivation, Maria Fernanda Jimenez, MD, FACS (ATLS-Colombia Chairperson), began to organize the course with Edith Gommers, MD (Aruba), and Jasmine Alkhatib (ATLS International Coordinator) as far back as April 2009. Months before the course, Dr. Gommers led a local team in Aruba in preparation for the surgical skills and moulage scenario portions, joined by volunteers from Red Cross Aruba. Renato Poggetti, MD, FACS, directed the course alongside Dr. Jimenez and a number of Colombian faculty members, including Ligia Londoño, MD; Daniel Alvarez, MD; Luis Garcia Herreros, MD; Harold Ibagon, MD; and Laureano Quintero, MD.

A small country of 105,000 inhabitants, Aruba has one well-equipped hospital with 300 beds. While the Dr. Horacio E. Oduber Hospital is considered reputable, cardiac surgery is unavailable. Thus, the ATLS program is regarded as significant in guiding doctors through the initial assessment and treatment of a patient. Per



Edith Gommers, MD, and Maria Fernanda Jimenez, MD, FACS

Dr. Edith Gommers, "All students were really impressed and pleased with the instructors, who inspirationally guided the students through the skills stations and theory... The course was successful and a great adventure to organize. Aruba is ready for a future refresher course. All people involved who made this course happen: Thank you very much. In Papiamento: masha danki!"

REGION XV: EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA

North Pole, South Pole

Composed of more countries than Regions XIV and XVI combined, and with the addition of up to eight countries in 2010, Region XV is no stranger to the ATLS promulgation process. Moreover, representatives from surgical institutions in 14 additional countries have expressed interest in promulgating. With growing interest comes concern over workload delegations, development of new procedural guidelines, and the costs necessary to establish ATLS in a new country.

During the ATLS International Meeting, Claus Falck Larsen, MD, FACS (Region XV Chief and Chairperson for ATLS-Denmark), discussed issues raised by Region XV's rapid expansion. He regards the formation of the ATLS-Middle East organization as a tool to facilitate ATLS development within the region. With trauma rates expected to increase in coming years, cofounders of ATLS-Middle East, Saud Al Turki, MD, FACS (Chairperson for ATLS-Saudi Arabia), and Subash Gautam, MD, FACS (Chairperson for ATLS-United Arab Emirates), are dedicated to increasing the presence of the ATLS program in the Middle East. As with ATLS-Europe, the ATLS-Middle East group will ensure that surgical institutions aspiring to pursue the program are legitimate, well-informed about the process, and financially committed to ATLS promulgation. Presently, ATLS-Middle East is working toward bringing ATLS to Lebanon, Nigeria, and Oman by the end of next year.

An important topic of conversation among Region XV representatives was a proposed "ATLS Exchange Program," through which an instructor would participate in an ATLS course outside of his/her country of residence. Additionally, exchange program volunteers will work with Inger Schipper, MD, FACS (Program Director for ATLS-Netherlands), on funding initiatives. Pedro Moniz Pereira, MD, FACS (Chairperson for ATLS-Europe), who chaired the Region XV meeting, mentioned that the application process would be discussed further during the next meeting in Linköping, Sweden, in April 2010.



Representatives of the ATLS international group gathered together for a picture at the Hilton Chicago in October 2009.



ATLS-Denmark

by **Claus Falck Larsen, MD, FACS; Jakob Roed, MD; and Lars Bo Svendsen, MD**

Denmark, excluding the Faroe Islands and Greenland, is smaller than many of America's individual states. At 43,098 square kilometers in size, the population of Denmark is 5.5 million.

The establishment of ATLS-Denmark began in 1997 when the Danish Multidisciplinary Trauma Society, in an unprecedented cooperative effort with the Danish Defense, signed a contract with the ACS COT implementing ATLS training. In the autumn of 1997, Danish doctors attended a Student and Instructor course in Columbia, South Carolina, together with Swiss surgeons. With its November 1998 inaugural course, held in Copenhagen, Denmark became the 31st country to introduce the ATLS Student course.

The ATLS course is now recognized as fundamental for all Danish doctors involved in the treatment of trauma patients. More than 1,800 Danish doctors have completed the ATLS Student course. Since 2001, ATCN has been taught in conjunction with ATLS in Denmark. PHTLS

was introduced in Denmark in 2002, and the course is an integrated part of the education of ambulance personnel.

ATLS-Denmark held its 100th Student course in 2009.

Challenges

After 10 years, one could expect a certain "fatigue" in the organization, but this has not been the case for ATLS-Denmark. On the contrary, there has so far been a low dropout rate among our instructors. Still, challenges lie ahead in other areas.

1. The shortage of doctors in hospitals has made it increasingly difficult for instructors to find time to teach ATLS courses. Moreover, the need for ATLS instructors to meet the growing demand for the course aggravates this shortage. As a consequence, some departments carry a relatively large burden since, due to the high number of young doctors who apply for the course, many of their specialists must teach ATLS.
2. With a preponderance of young doctors, it will be a growing challenge to recruit instructors from ATLS courses who have a sufficient professional reputation. A need for alternative ways to recruit senior instructors will thus arise.



ATLS-Denmark Student Course

3. ATLS course costs are constantly increasing. One example is Simulab's TraumaMan[®], used for teaching surgical procedures. The company's development of artificial tissue that increases the "real life" experience for students is costly.
4. Due to the overall success of ALS and similar letter programs, a number of ATLS courses can be found in European varieties. The risk is that these programs are increasingly competing for the same instructors.

ATLS-Europe integrates Europe's desire for changes in course content and teaching methods. We believe that to continue the success of ATLS, the program must continue to develop at an international level.

REGION XVI: AUSTRALASIA

From Singapore to Chicago

With Jakarta to host the Region XVI meeting in early 2010, there was much to discuss during the ATLS International Meeting in Chicago this past October. Michael Hollands, MD, FACS (Region XVI Chief for Australasia), presented an overview of ATLS in Australasia covering regional demographics, the 2009 Region XVI meeting in Singapore, India's promulgation, future initiatives, and recent and upcoming activities.

During the Region XVI meeting, country representatives discussed the implementation of a proposed auditing process. This process would ensure that ATLS courses run properly and also serve to better integrate the region. For countries currently involved in promulgation, this environment gives prospective faculty members insight into how courses are conducted in other countries. Furthermore, ATLS faculty members have the opportunity to share experiences from their own countries and learn from those of others. For countries that come up against obstacles in the promulgation process (for example, lack of funds, shortage of potential faculty, and so on), region representatives can collaborate to assist them. If a lack of resources precludes promulgation, the region can perform a one-time demonstration course for the country. The recently assembled Educator group additionally supports regional integration by encouraging communication between region educators and other faculty.

Dr. Hollands stressed the importance of every country's participation in the Resident Paper Competition. The best Australasian resident paper will be selected during the Region XVI meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia (March 27-28, 2010), and submitted for review for the COT Annual Meeting in March 2011.



Malaysia's inaugural course will be conducted in January 2010. ATLS faculty members from at least four countries plan to participate.



ATLS-Australia and New Zealand

by Michael J. Hollands, MBBS, FACS

ATLS-Australia (also known as Early Management of Severe Trauma) is thriving. We run approximately 75 courses per year in metropolitan and rural centers across Australia, as well as in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji. Additionally, we run courses specifically for our defense forces. We organize and administer all ATLS courses from our central office in Melbourne. Phil Tuskett is our Program Committee Chairman and Lesley Dunstall is our Senior Coordinator. Our faculty, composed of more than 400 instructors, runs three Instructor courses per year to maintain itself. ATLS is compulsory for all surgical trainees, as well as all those doctors working in hospital A&E departments. Most of our courses are conducted on weekends and begin on Friday mornings. Since we believe a course dinner is an integral part of the ATLS experience, we hold one on the first night of each course to cement the relationship between course faculty and participants. I am sure all of you would feel quite at home teaching an ATLS course in Australia or New Zealand. I hope you come to visit us one day.



**Lesley Dunstall,
Senior Coordinator
for ATLS-Australia
and New Zealand**



**Office Staff in
Melbourne, Australia**

Gift from India

International meeting attendees received a bag from recently promulgated India. According to Mahesh Misra, MBBS, FACS (Chairperson for ATLS-India), they will create three to four new course sites every year after June 2010.



About Our Organization....

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) was founded in 1913 to raise the standards of surgical practice and to improve the care of the surgical patient. The College has worked to establish guidelines for the care of the trauma patient. The Advanced Trauma Life Support Course teaches a systematic, concise approach to the early care of the trauma patient. This course is vital to guiding care for the injured patient in emergency department trauma rooms. The course training provides a common language that can save lives in critical situations.