In this edition of the International Journal of Infectious Diseases (IJID), we celebrate the scientific abstracts of the 18th International Congress on Infectious Diseases (ICID)/XVIII Congreso SADI that was held 1-4 March 2018 in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires. The congress, like Argentina’s indomitable Tango, was a close partnership between the International Society for Infectious Diseases (ISID) and the Sociedad Argentina de Infectología (SADI) who together welcomed 2400 delegates from 94 countries to Buenos Aires. ISID’s close collaboration with regional societies is a fundamental driver for a successful conference, and we wish to acknowledge and thank all our friends at SADI for this wonderful opportunity.

The variety of topics covered by the more than 750 abstracts presented at the congress reflect ISID’s central mission, to focus on the burden of infectious diseases in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with particular emphasis on infections of paramount importance in the host country and region, and to provide a forum for healthcare professionals from all areas of infection-related practice to unite and interact. The 18th ICID/XVIII Congreso SADI therefore highlighted infections in Latin America, including established diseases such as Chagas Disease, Leishmaniasis, HIV, TB, and hepatitis, as well as emerging and re-emerging infections like Zika and its fellow arboviruses, and the dual challenges of increasing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Latin America, and the prevention measures needed to mitigate AMR. A rich mix of plenaries, symposia, and workshops all enhanced our learning.

The conference also provided a wonderful opportunity for ISID’s emerging leaders and young investigators to play an active role, not only in learning, but also by involving themselves in the organization of a dedicated Early Career track, which included some innovative sessions. For the first time, ICID held a ‘Dragons’ Den’ (known in the US as the ‘Shark Tank’) where young investigators were chosen to pitch their research projects to three fearsome ‘dragons’. Congratulations to Henock Ambachew from Ethiopia who survived their fiery breath to take home first prize!

Another first for the ICID was the incorporation of a mini Gorgas Course in Clinical Tropical Medicine into our scientific programme, led by the world-famous Gorgas Course leaders, Professors Eduardo Gottuzzo, Pedro Legua, Francisco Bravo, and David Freedman. The 4-session course was incredibly popular, and we were honored to host it. ICID also held its first 3-day Hackathon immediately prior to the main conference. Interdisciplinary teams came together to develop solutions to address infectious disease challenges related to the United Nation’s sustainable development goals (SDGs) and inadequate Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene conditions (WASH). The prestigious Elsevier Foundation Award went to the team “Mosquito Hunters” who proposed to develop a mobile application that could be used by school-aged children to help communities identify potential mosquito breeding sites and to empower them to take action. The program also included educational materials that coincided with Argentina’s “mosquito week” — designed to teach students about vectors and their contribution to disease spread. Many congratulations and thanks to our own John Ramatowski, the team Hacking Medicine from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and all our partners that made this possible.

More than 30 young investigators from 20 countries were able to publish their abstracts in this edition of the journal due to the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners, which ensured that these early career investigators from low-resource countries could attend the congress and present their work. We also acknowledge the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) who sponsored sessions on Leishmaniasis and HCV, our colleagues at the Japanese Association for Infectious Diseases for symposia relating to AMR, the International Society for Travel Medicine, and the International Consortium for Prevention & Infection Control who brought their respective ‘hot topics’ to the congress. Last but not least, thanks go to our industry partners and all our sponsors for their tremendous support.

At the President’s dinner, we were treated to a celebration of the history of Tango with its evolution from the late 1800s to the modern day. Although the congress too continues to evolve in content, it remains true to its focus on the burden of infection in low resource settings and representation for the healthcare professionals practicing in these challenging environments. Thank you to all who made the 18th ICID/XVIII Congreso SADI such a success.

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