

This year's annual convention of the Association of Ringside Physicians saw a two-day programme starting at 08:00 on Friday 25th September. The venue was the magnificent Hilton Riverside in New Orleans - a city with a rich and fascinating history, both uplifting and tragic all at once.

The first presentation was a comprehensive overview of blood borne illness, and its relevance to the combat sports. This theme continued, in part, with a lecture on skin diseases, including their identification and treatment.

The next session combined both lectures and a practical demonstration which introduced the attendees to detailed prefight screening from an orthopaedic perspective which was followed by a demonstration of arm and leg bars used in mixed martial arts.

Following a working lunch, which provided many first-time attendees with a chance to learn from the more experienced ringside physicians, the afternoon session examined the vascular and airway choke holds attendant to MMA; and, thereafter, post-bout evaluation of the cervical spine in a downed fighter. Having learned how a choke hold is applied by an MMA combatant, the attendees then learned how to manage the airway - a medical paradox, but a very well received series of lectures and demonstrations.

The first day concluded with an overview of the EKG in combat sports, and specific alerts to certain patterns which are not to be missed.

The second day began with an overview of the various consensus statements issued by the Association of Ringside Physicians; it was noted that all of the ARP Consensus Statements now can be viewed on the ARP website (ringsidearp.org). This was followed by the neurology panel; starting off with a kickboxing video, where the audience literally was put on the spot and asked to commentate on the video in real time, as if they were the ringside physician. This set the tone for the rest of the morning, with analysis of the videos of various, notable boxing and MMA contests, and the audience participation and interaction.

Next, a highly informative presentation and educational discussion, which included the importance of close liaison between referees and ringside doctors. ARP guest lecturers were Hall of Fame referees Pat Russell and John McCarthy, who managed to bring this subject to life by combining real video footage with questions and feedback from both panel and audience.

The afternoon started with an interactive panel on women's issues in the combat sports. This was followed by the annual presentation/discussion of "The Show Must Go On?". This year, attendees were asked to discuss real cases they have encountered; heart murmurs, ophthalmological issues, and neurological dilemmas were among the fascinating matters discussed. The session finished with a number of boxing and MMA videos; providing for more passionate discussion and debate amongst all those present.

The final presentation was a board review course for those who wished to take the ARP/ACSM Ringside Physician Certification Examination the following day.

What distinguished this ARP medical conference apart from those held in previous years was the use of numerous videos and practical demonstrations as a means to engage and involve the audience. Thus, the presentations included lectures, videos and practical demonstrations, all mixed together, with the intention of involving the participation of the attendees while providing education and training at the same time.

Planning for the 2016 ARP Medical Conference already is underway. Please contact the ARP to let us know what you want to be included in next year's Medical Conference, and we will try to accommodate these requests.

Looking forward to meeting up with many of you again.

Best wishes,

The ARP