



Special Articles

From the North of Perú to the North of Africa: a long journey full of learning, inspiration and memories from the 34th ICOH Congress

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Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is still a challenge in Latin-America for all the professionals who work in prevention. Every year, physicians, engineers, lawyers, psychologists, and others in Perú are getting more involved but we still need to work more to make OHS a priority and a true fundamental right for everyone. To pursuit that goal, Education and Research in OHS is crucial. Not only at a regional level, but also at international level so we can learn from other contexts, exchange experiences and bring back new ideas for improving OHS systems in our home country. I found in 34th ICOH Congress a great opportunity for this, but during the process I got a lot more than that.

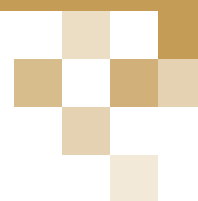
I had already participated in previous conferences organised by ICOH Scientific Committees (SC) and academic events supported by them. For example, the 23rd and 24th International Symposiums on Shiftwork and Working Time held in Ayers Rock, Australia (2017) and held in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, USA (2019), both organised by the SC Shiftwork and Working Time. Also, I attended to the Understanding Small Enterprises Conference held in Denver, Colorado, USA in 2017 which was supported by the SC of Occupational Health for Small Scale Enterprises and Informal Sector

(SCOHSSEIS). The 29th Symposium on Epidemiology in Occupational Health, organised by SC of Epidemiology in Occupational Health (EPICOH), in Mumbai (2023) was also a very high academic level event I attended to.

I also participated at previous ICOH Congress in 2022 which was held virtually. But the 34th ICOH Congress was a magnificent event and life experience, at the same time. It was held in Marrakech, Morocco and offered a great opportunity to engage with international colleagues from around the world who work very hard to improve working conditions, safety and health of workers from different sectors. The 34th ICOH Congress included the participation of the 38 Scientific Committees, Institutes, Professional associations and specialists with different backgrounds and expertise.

In December 2023, I received great news with the results of my grant application, being awarded by the Fundraising Committee. I had already been working in my preparation for the congress (with my abstracts submission, the ILO master fellowship competition, and others) but the last months prior to the Congress would be even more demanding. And it was definitively worth it.

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I was glad of the opportunity to participate with 2 oral presentations for the session of “OSH in Low-and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)-Sharing Good Practices” and for having chaired the oral session “Occupational Health in Small-Scale Enterprises”. Also, I participated in the Business meetings of 3 SC: SC on Occupational Medicine (SCOM), SCOHSSSEIS and EPICOH. During the business meeting of SCOM, I made the formal announcement of the 2nd Conference on Occupational Medicine “Future and Opportunities for Occupational Medicine” which will be held in Lima, Perú in November 2025. During the business meeting of EPICOH, I met with the members of the EPICOH Early Career Conference-Organising Committee (which I am also part of the committee, too) to coordinate activities about this conference that will be held in Barcelona in November 2024. During the business meeting of SCOHSSSEIS, I shared information and invitation for both events, EPICOH Early Career Conference and the 2nd Conference on Occupational Medicine. In the ILO Master Fellowship 2024 Competition, I placed 5th. It was a very high-level competition and I met other OHS professionals and researchers from different regions around the world with the same desire, aspiration and inspiration just like mine.

Everyday it was a whole new exciting episode for me. I met again with colleagues and friends that I met at previous events, after at least 5 years ago. Friends from America (including Latin-America), Europe, Asia,

Oceania and Africa gathered at 34th ICOH Congress. Through all this time, the common fact between all of us, was our determination for continue working in favour of workers ‘health, safety and wellness. We exchanged our experiences in OHS during the last years and told each other the current projects we are currently working at. It was very inspiring.

The 34th ICOH Congress also provided an incredible networking, so I met new colleagues and made friends from different countries. The Congress program included social events such as the Opening Ceremony, the Cultural Night and the Gala Dinner. All of them were very well organised and created relaxed space for sharing with the attendees, speakers and ICOH Board members. Besides, Marrakech was so beautiful and offered art, culture, religion, food, etc which made our experience even more interesting.

Finally, the Congress provided a forum to researchers, occupational physicians and other professionals for the discussion, critical reviews, networking, collaborations and education on Occupational Health and Safety for closing the gaps and being up for the future challenges. I came back to Perú with a big baggage full of knowledge and research results of course, but also with nice memories I will never forget, and stronger motivation for contributing to OHS not only in Perú, but also around the world.

Thanks, 34th ICOH Congress.



Top 5 at ILO Master Fellowship Competition



Oral Presentation at the the session of "OSH in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)-Sharing Good Practices"



Business meeting of SC On Occupational Medicine (SC OM)