

# Congress Interview



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**D**uring the ESC 2018 Congress, we met with *EMJ Cardiology's* Editor-in-Chief, Dr Çetin Erol, to ask about his experience of this year's event and his general thoughts, including the main focus of the congress, important sessions to attend, and a look at the 2019 meeting.

## **The focus of this year's ESC Congress is valvular heart disease. Why do you believe this topic was chosen?**

This topic was chosen because the population is getting older and the elderly are commonly diagnosed with aortic valve disease, which can be very dangerous if it is not treated when the symptoms begin. In addition, atherosclerotic heart disease includes myocardial infarction and can cause mitral regurgitation, either functional or organic, which is another important problem in our time. That is why I think they chose this topic. Of course, rheumatic heart disease is less of a problem for developed countries but is a significant problem in underdeveloped countries.

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## **What other diseases, techniques, and therapies are currently under the spotlight in cardiology research?**

Aspirin is a topic of great interest this year and has always been a problem for patients and doctors, especially in regard to primary prevention and whether it is useful. I think this problem will be solved at this meeting, as study results will be revealed and strict European guidelines will be announced on aspirin use for primary prevention.

## **Are there any other scientific meetings you attend in addition to ESC?**

Of course, ESC is the best meeting because it is the largest, most famous, and is attended by >31,000 people from around the world; we are very proud of our society. However, I try to attend American College of Cardiology (ACC) meetings as well as ESC because I want to be aware of what the Americans do in their field. Furthermore, because it is a clinical meeting, I prefer to go to ACC rather than American Heart Association (AHA) meetings.

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Also, if I have time, I would like to go to the European Association of Cardiovascular Imaging (EACVI) meeting because I am principally an echocardiographer; I became an invasive cardiologist later in my career.

**Before arriving in Munich, what part of this year's congress programme were you most looking forward to?**

Of course, there are many late-breaking trials and hotlines at this year's congress but unfortunately so far I haven't been to any of these sessions. However, it is easy to follow-up with the results on the ESC website where all the details are available, so we will look at all of the results when we return home. In this meeting I have many jobs to do because I am a chairperson of some sessions, a member of

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the ESC jury, and an Editorial Board member, so I am very busy. If I find time then I will attend extra sessions, but most I will read about when I am home.

**For your colleagues who have not been in attendance at this year's congress, what are your key take-home messages from the event?**

A key message is to always put the patient first and that we have to be careful when considering new drugs or treatments; we have to wait for long-term results and more information.

**Finally, are there any additional sessions that you would like to see added to the 2019 ESC Congress programme in Paris?**

Next year the topic is global health and the focus will be on prevention, which is the most important thing in cardiology. We have to prevent the diseases because it is easier to prevent than to treat. We must look at risk factors and deal with these factors. The first thing to consider should be lifestyle interventions, including stopping smoking, losing weight, and maintaining a healthy diet.

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