

Breathing new life into healthcare around the world



Delegates at the 2019 conference in Amsterdam, Holland. Photo courtesy of WAAM

Paul Kennedy

More than 1,000 medical experts from around the world will be in Hà Nội this weekend for the country's first ever international airway management conference.

Delegates from the UK, US, France, Italy and New Zealand, as well as representatives from Việt Nam, will take part in the two-day event which is supported by Vietnam Airlines.

The World Alliance of Airway Management (WAAM) is a not-for-profit educational alliance launched by the Difficult Airway Society (DAS), the Euro-

pean Airway Management Society (EAMS) and the Society for Airway Management (SAM) in 2020.

Following the global success and impact of the 2015 and 2019 World Airway Management Meetings (WAMM), The World Alliance of Airway Management (WAAM) was formed to create a globally accessible conduit and resource for all aspects of airway management.

Ventilation, breathing

Airway management is the assessment, planning, and series of medical procedures required to maintain or restore an individual's ventila-

tion, or breathing.

The conference is a chance to discuss best practice, share ideas and knowledge and understand challenges to resources in different regions.

It has been organised and facilitated by the UK charity Facing The World (FTW) in conjunction with hospital anaesthetists from the 108 Central Hospital, Việt Đức Hospital and Hồng Ngọc Hospital.

It will feature presentations from international and Vietnamese speakers, discussing airway management related topics such as the preoperative assessment of a difficult airway, multimodal ap-

proaches to manage the difficult airway, airway management of laryngeal tumours, paediatric difficult airways, advanced airway management in critical illness and airway management in special situations.

Deputy Minister of Health Trần Văn Thuần and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Lê Thị Thu Hằng will both speak at the opening ceremony.

Facing the World CEO Katrin Kandel said: "By facilitating the first WAAM conference in Việt Nam, FTW and its partners expect to create opportunities to share medical knowledge and skills through professional exchange and training programmes around the world.

"The organisation of the event in Việt Nam is the result of Vietnamese doctors visiting experts in the UK under FTW funded training programmes and seeing the benefits of guidelines for difficult airway management."

In the next five years, FTW plans to enable a further 40,000 operations to be performed by its trained Vietnamese doctors. It expects to send at least another 200 Vietnamese doctors abroad for training and continue to donate medical equipment.

Among the speakers at the conference is Anil Patel, a professor of anaesthesia and airway management at University College London Hospitals. He explained the importance of airway management: "Around the world patients come to serious harm including death and brain damage as a consequence of suboptimal airway management during elective and emergency surgical procedures, in critical care environments and in emergency departments. Na-

Facing The World

FTW is a UK-registered medical charitable foundation set up in 2002 to treat children from developing countries with craniofacial defects. FTW started operations in Việt Nam in 2007.

To date, it has helped provide surgeries for thousands of children with craniofacial defects across Việt Nam and sent Vietnamese doctors to world class medical institutions in the UK, Canada, the US and Australia for training.

The foundation has also donated more than US\$3 million worth of telemedicine technology and surgical equipment to its partner hospitals in Việt Nam.

Along with the World Alliance of Airway Management Satellite Conference, Facing The World and its partners create opportunities to share medical knowledge and skills through professional exchange and training programmes around the world. VNS

tional and international airway guidance aims to reduce the incidence of these devastating and avoidable cases."

"There is nothing more fundamental to life than a patent airway. Oxygen needs to enter the lungs from the environment as it passes from the nose and mouth through the airway to the lungs. Put simply, if the airway is compromised or blocked there is no oxygen getting to the lungs and we die.

"International Life support algorithms are ABC. Airway, Breathing, Circulation. Airway is first. No airway, no life."

Perfect opportunity

Professor Patel believes the WAAM conference is a perfect opportunity to learn from other renowned experts in the field.

He added: "Dissemination of best practice internationally, learning from each other, learning about challenges to healthcare in different regions. Understanding challenges to changing practise, how different regions have promoted change, drivers for and against this. Understanding resource challenges in different regions.

"The hospitals I have been to in Vietnam are as good as I have seen in most parts of the world, dedicated healthcare professionals working in a good environment. Equipment, practice, safety and quality are similar to most parts of the world. The dedication of Vietnamese healthcare professionals and their desire to learn and improve is obvious."

The conference will be held at Hồng Ngọc Hospital on Saturday, April 13 and at Việt Đức Hospital on April 14. VNS



Anil Patel, professor of anaesthesia and airway management at University College London Hospitals consults with a patient. Photo courtesy of Anil Patel