The ninth WEC will help to elevate the technical and scientific standards of endodontic research, practice and teaching”

An interview with IFEA congress president Prof. Hideaki Suda

IFEAS ninth WEC was held in Japan for the first time. What has the organisation been like, and what were your expectations for the event?

Prof. Hideaki Suda: The selection of the Japan Endodontic Association to host the congress in 2013 was a decision made by the IFEA general assembly in Vancouver, Canada, six years ago. Since then, the local organising committee and its five subcommittees have had over 30 meetings concerning the preparations for the congress. Each subcommittee has also
held its own meetings. We expect that the ninth WEC will help to elevate the technical and scientific standards of endodontic research, practice and teaching, as well as disseminate them throughout the world in order to improve the dental care standards in many nations.

“...a large part of the profession is very keen on learning about the latest scientific and technological developments.”

_In what regard this congress was different from that in Athens?
Looking back at the previous congress, one has to admit that it was not only extremely well organised but also very successful both at an academic and social level. At this point, we can already say that the ninth WEC was much larger in size and participation numbers, as we had over 1,100 registrations from 41 member and non-member countries. Almost 300 research papers have been accepted and was presented in Tokyo. Furthermore, there were nine symposia and 17 table clinic presentations, where the newest scientific methods and technologies were on display.

Owing to Japan’s unique hospitality, I hope that participants enjoyed their stay throughout the event.

_Japan is the country where the apex locator was developed, among other things. How would you describe the level of endodontic treatment and research in the country?
Another Japanese development was the application of adhesive dentistry principles to endodontic treatment. As you may also know, Prof. Shinya Yamanaka from the Kyoto University was awarded the Nobel prize last year for inducing pluripotent stem cells. Tissue engineering of the dental pulp has become one of the hottest topics for research in Japan and we may see the regeneration of the pulp become a reality in the near future owing to this development.

Unfortunately, there are still only a few general practitioners who are specialised in endodontic procedures, most of which are performed under the Japanese health insurance service. Therefore, the country has tended to be behind other markets regarding the introduction of the latest instruments and materials to daily practice. It is encouraging to see however that endodontic seminars and hands-on courses for general dental practitioners here are always well attended, demonstrating that a large part of the profession is very keen on learning about the latest scientific and technological developments.

_The theme of this year’s congress was “Shaping the future of endodontics”. Was the programme primarily focused on new techniques and treatment methods?
New techniques and treatment methods such as CBCT and the use of lasers and microscopes in endodontics were topics with which many of the papers are concerned.

Other topics included pain control, the newest apex locators, MTA, novel root-canal irrigation methods, the management of tooth fractures, as well as root-canal preparation and filling. Single-file preparation methods in particular were demonstrated during the pre-congress courses by four world-famous endodontists.

_Which presentations were you looking forward to most?
Highlights were definitely the plenary and keynote lectures, where the latest information on regeneration of the dental pulp, re- and auto-transplantation of teeth, biofilms in endodontics, treatment outcomes, and retreatment were presented. In addition, we were looking forward to the country representative speakers session, where the current trends in endodontic treatment in each member country were discussed.

_The general assembly met again during the congress. What will be discussed at this gathering?
Besides reports from officers and representatives from different regions, the general assembly meeting on Sunday, 26 May, selected the location of the 12th WEC in 2019 which will be announced soon. Last time, it was decided that the next congress (in 2016) will be held in Cape Town in South Africa. Future concepts concerning science and business were also discussed. Through those activities, we hope to foster international professional relationships and the exchange of information in endodontics.

Thank you very much for this interview.