

# Overview of Geriatrics Studies via the 14<sup>th</sup> EUGMS (European Geriatric Medicine Society) Congress 2018: From Turkey's Point of View

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## Abstract

New developments in the field of health should be organized according to aging and cover older people. For this purpose, the European Geriatric Medicine Society organized a congress titled "Advancing Geriatric Medicine in a Modern World" in this year. Symposium covered a wide variety of topics in geriatric medicine, such as geriatric approaches in common chronic diseases, new evaluation methods and treatments in geriatric syndromes. The aim of this study was to evaluate geriatrics studies in Turkey with a critical perspective in order to keep up with the evolving world. All multidisciplinary studies in Turkey involve collaboration among healthcare professionals only. Participants from different disciplines were not only informed of the latest developments in geriatric medicine; also, they had the opportunity to exchange views in this area through the congress. It is thanks to the congress, that geriatrics has been making efforts to be more inclusive in Turkey.

**Keywords:** Congress report, EUGMS, geriatrics studies

## Introduction

Human life span is prolonged with the new developments in the field of technology and medicine. Consequently, the population is aging in the whole world, especially in Europe. New developments in the field of health should be organized according to aging and cover older people. For this purpose, the European Geriatric Medicine Society (EuGMS) organizes a congress every year since 2005 to give geriatric viewpoint to all clinicians interested in advanced age patients. "Advancing Geriatric Medicine in a Modern World" was the name of 14<sup>th</sup> congress in October 2018.

The 14<sup>th</sup> EuGMS Congress was held from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2018 in Berlin, Germany, and had gathered more than 1800 participants from 65 countries. The 14<sup>th</sup> congress was opened with a concert of Johann Sebastian Bach music, after a great speech on the creativity of Johann Sebastian Bach on October 10, 2018.

The aim of this year's congress was to focus on developments that were significantly affected by technological and pharmaceutical innovations, and to present new concepts that have evolved from the traditional principles of geriatric medicine. Additionally, it emphasized the diversity of the expertise, and provided new ideas and insights for the clinicians working with older patients anywhere in the world. Also, the 14<sup>th</sup> EuGMS Congress provided the participants the opportunity to access to the latest experiences in the field of geriatric medicine in the entire world.

The data were compiled from the 14<sup>th</sup> EuGMS congress booklet and its abstract book. We examined oral and poster presentation distributions by determined topics.

## The Community Booth-The Global Europe Initiative

Since last year, EuGMS has expanded its span to all members of the World Health Organization European Region by including Belarus, Israel, Lithuania, Russia, and Turkey.

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Henceforth, Turkey is a full board member of EuGMS. At this year's congress, a new initiative, called "Community Booth", was launched. This community aimed to share more information about the work of the EuGMS and its national society members, and especially reinforce the relations and collaboration with new members in Eastern and Southern Europe. EuGMS stated that the "Global Europe Initiative" aims to make special efforts to increase the development of geriatrics in countries where it is still in its infancy. Another aim of the society was to be more inclusive of the parts of the topics in geriatric medicine which financial support is especially difficult. Therefore, the society has also provided travel and other grants to participants who make presentations on this topic.

### Special Interest Groups

The group had two scope as "Special Interest Groups" (SIG) and "Task and Finish Groups" (T&FG). The program of these groups was announced on the official website of EuGMS, for about one week prior to the event. SIG allowed members to share their ideas or networks, exchange views, share best practices with their peers, and develop scientific research on geriatric medicine (Figure 1). T&FG was designed to examine any service, research, policy or issue that influenced the SIG. SIG could be formed for any subject by at least five members from at least five different member countries. SIG topics of 2018 congress were; 1) Vaccines 2) Cardiovascular medicine 3) Systematic review and meta-analysis 4) Frailty 5) Education & Training 6) Geriatric rehabilitation 7) Long term care 8) Pharmacology 9) Nutrition 10) Sarcopenia 11) Palliative care. T&FG titles for year 2018 were "the fall risk increasing drugs" and "gerodontology". All participants can join to these groups, but they should be EuGMS members if they wish to continue attending meetings.

### Symposiums

A total of 70 concurrent symposiums (170 speakers), including eight presentations, were presented. Symposium covered a wide variety of topics in geriatric medicine, such as geriatric approaches in common chronic diseases, new evaluation methods and treatments in geriatric syndromes, long term care (palliative care and intensive care) and the importance of multidisciplinary study. Table 1 depicts whole list of topics. In particular, new developments have been witnessed more closely through sessions of associations such as the European Academy for Medicine of Age (EAMA), the International Association of Gerontology and the Geriatrics for the Europe (IAGG EU). There were three symposium sessions of EAMA; one of them was regarding "research and publication" and the other two were about sarcopenia and comprehensive geriatric assessment. With the fact that the EAMA was directed towards researchers who were at the early stages of their careers, the topics were

shed light on the young clinicians' current problems relating to academic life.

### The Organizers and Program Committee

Prof. Md. Jürgen Bauer served as the congress chair and Prof. Md. Anne Ekdahl served as the secretary general. The local committee consisted of 16 people, one of them being the congress chair, from various health care institutions in Germany. Countries with full board membership: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Turkey and the UK. The observer countries are Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Cyprus. IAGG-ER (International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics European Region) was represented by Mario Barbagallo, EAMA was represented by Nele Van Den Noortgate, UEMS-GMS (European Union of Medical Specialists Geriatric Medicine Section) was represented by Jaap Krulder.

One hundred and twenty-six oral presentations (Table 2) and 894 poster presentations were made in this congress. The presentations were selected by the program committee according to evaluation of the submitted abstracts. Oral presentations were organized in 14 sessions; 1) Metabolism and nutrition 2) Pre and post-operative care and geriatric rehabilitation 3) Frailty and sarcopenia 4) Longevity and



**Figure 1.** Targeted opportunities of SIG by EuGMS. SIG is interested in topics which are being foreseen as they will gradually become common problems of geriatric medicine. SIG ensures its members valuable contacts by giving them chance to meet the right people, work with people who are active in, and passionate about their field. Organizing seminars, workshops or symposia can help SIG's members to develop their knowledge, and so SIG's members may meet a wide variety of people to gain insight into topical, relevant and challenging issues in specialist areas

SIG: Special Interest Groups, EuGMS: the European Geriatric Medicine Society

	Topics
<b>SIG-T&amp;FG</b>	Diabetes
	Palliative care
	Gerontodontology
	On fall risk increasing drugs
	Long-term care
	Frailty and resilience
<b>EUGMS symposiums</b>	EDA-delirium
	IAGG-EU-meaning of ageing
<b>Submitted symposiums</b>	Osteosarcopenia
	Pharmacology (PIM)
	Education & training
	Cognition and dementia (2)
	Geriatrics in organ disease (calcium and vitamin D supplementation)
	Cognition and dementia
	Geriatric rehabilitation
	Gerotechnology
<b>Lectures</b>	Geriatrics in organ disease (osteoporosis)
	Geriatrics in organ disease (syncope & transient loss of consciousness)
	Pharmacology (polypharmacy)
	Frailty and sarcopenia
<b>Pros and cons session</b>	Cognition and dementia
	Frailty and malnutrition
<b>Sponsored symposiums</b>	Metabolism and nutrition
	Vaccines and immunization
	Frailty and sarcopenia
	Frailty and sarcopenia
	Urinary incontinence
	Vaccines and immunization
	Metabolism and nutrition
	Frailty and sarcopenia
	Vaccines and immunization
<b>EAMA workshops</b>	Education & training
	Frailty and sarcopenia
	Geriatrics in organ disease
<b>Other topics</b>	Geriatrics in organ disease (6) (anemia, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, atrial fibrillation etc.)
	Gerotechnology
	Cognition and dementia (3)
	Oral health in older adults
	Frailty and sarcopenia (4)
	Multimorbidity and comprehensive geriatric assessment (fall, oropharyngeal dysphagia)
	Metabolism and nutrition
	Geriatric rehabilitation (5)

	Topics
<b>Other topics</b>	Geriatric rehabilitation (5)
	Longevity and prevention
	Pharmacology (polypharmacy)
	Vaccines and immunization (infections)
	Acute care (emergency department)
SIG: Special Interest Groups, T&FG: Task and Finish Groups, EUGMS: The European Geriatric Medicine Society, EDA: European Delirium Association, IAGG-EU: The International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics European, PIM: Potentially Inappropriate Medications, EAMA: The European Academy for Medicine of Age	

prevention 5) Comorbidity and multimorbidity 6) Geriatric education 7) Organization of care and gerotechnology/urology and continence management/Vaccines and immunization 8) Multimorbidity and comprehensive geriatric assessment 9) Acute care 10) Cognition and dementia 11) Biogerontology and genetics 12) Delirium/Geriatrics in organ disease 13) Ethics and end of life care 14) Pharmacology. Oral presentations were made from 27 different countries' representatives. According to number of oral presentations, the top four countries, also known as The Big Four in advanced global economies of Western Europe, were United Kingdom (UK), Italy, France, and Germany respectively (Table 3).

Popular culture is a concept that can be considered as one of the effects of social modernization in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The impact of popular culture was seen particularly on metabolism and nutrition topics, such as "eating more fruit and vegetables for happiness" or "fall risk by your body shape". Another noteworthy point was the perspective of successful aging. Kahn and Rowe (1997) defined that successful aging is combination of the avoidance of disease and disability, active engagement in social life and high cognitive, and physical functioning. However, the meaning of successful aging is changed according to multidimensional perceptions of older adults, accepting the aging process, culture, and so objective measures are required instead of subjective measures (1). The most of oral presentations were focused on successful aging based on longevity (aged 90 years and over). The reason could be the change of population distribution by age, by virtue of longer life expectancy. Also, the increasing research on telomeres and aging may be an impact of both the long-life expectancy and popular culture.

All oral presentations on geriatric education topics, except one, were intended only to medical students. On the other hand, studies about staff education were presented on session of ethics and end of life care. Studies supposed that healthcare professionals (except for the doctor) took part only in long-term care. As a result, geriatric training is requirement for all healthcare professionals. When PhD in older patient

care will become more widespread in all parts of the world, all healthcare professionals' training will be considered important.

Geriatric syndromes are the clinical conditions that are frequently seen in older patients and could cause impairment of quality of life and increased morbidity and mortality. Pre-existing comorbidity in older adults is negatively associated with functional rehabilitation outcome after surgical procedures, such as hip fracture (2), and pre-operative comprehensive geriatric assessment is important to reduce the rate of adverse

postoperative outcome (3). The majority of the presented surgical researches were about hip fractures. Hip fracture is associated with geriatric syndrome, such as falls, frailty, malnutrition, and it is approached as a new geriatric syndrome.

There was only a presentation about vaccines and immunization, although it's important in the population aged 65 and over. Immunization is an important part of health in older adults, not only in childhood. One of the aims of this congress is to create awareness. I strongly believe that vaccination studies should be more presented in congress.

**Table 2. Oral presentations**

Continent	Country	P	E	D	B	CD	AC	M	OG	CM	GE	LP	FS	PO	MN	n	%	
European	UK	1	1	2	2	1	1	-	1	1	3	1	-	2	-	16	12.6	
	Italy	1	-	2	-	-	3	1	2	3	-	-	-	2	1	15	12	
	France	-	2	1	3	1	2	-	2	-	1	-	1	1	-	14	11	
	Germany	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	3	2	2	3	14	11	
	Netherlands	1	-	1	-	1	1	2	-	-	2	1	1	-	1	11	9	
	Sweden	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	7	5.5	
	Finland	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	6	4.7	
	Spain	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	4
	Norway	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4
	Ireland	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3
	Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	2.5
	Switzerland	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	3	2.5
	Denmark	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.5
	Poland	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.5
	Romania	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.8
	Portugal	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.8
	Greece	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	0.8
	Iceland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	0.8
Turkey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.8	
<b>Total</b>																<b>112</b>	<b>89</b>	
America	Canada	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	
	USA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	
	Mexico	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	
	<b>Total</b>															<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	
Asia	Israel	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	
	Korea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	
	Malaysia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	
	Japan	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	5	-	
	<b>Total</b>															<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	
Australia		1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	
	<b>Total</b>														<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	

P: Pharmacology, E: Ethics and end of life care/cognition and dementia/acute care, D: Delirium/geriatrics in organ disease, B: Biogerontology, Frailty and sarcopenia, CD: Cognition and dementia, AC: Acute care, M: Multimorbidity and comprehensive geriatric assessment, OG: Organisation of care and gerotechnology/urology and continence management/vaccines and immunization, CM: Comorbidity and multimorbidity, GE: Geriatric education, LP: Longevity and prevention, FS: Frailty and sarcopenia, PO: Pre and post-operative care and geriatric rehabilitation, MN: Metabolism and nutrition

**Table 3. Poster presentations**

Country	P	PO	V	B	FS	GE	GR	GJ	L	M	R	O	AC	CD	CM	C	DE	E	P	i	N
UK	3	7	2	1	11	10	8	2	4	5	1	6	17	16	4	7	6	4	2	1	117
Spain	3	9	2		17	2	6	6		7		1	8	9	6	5	4	1	1		87
France	14	3	2	3	8	2	1	3	1	2		7	7	8	3	3	2	2	1	1	73
Turkey	2	1			15	1	3	3	1	5		2	1	7	8	12			3	1	65
Italy	2	3		1	7	3	2	1	3	1		2	6	5	10	9	5	2			62
Germany	7				6	1	13	1	4	1	2		4	5	3	9	1		1		58
Netherlands	7	3		2	4	4	8		4	2		2	5	5	2	1	2	6		2	55
Portugal	1		1		8		4		1	1			4	2	4	3	1				30
Belgium	4				8		1	1				4	1	1	3			1			24
Poland					4			1	1	1		1		1	2	7			1		19
Romania		3					1	3	2	1		1	1	1	2	2					17
Ireland	1				1				2					7		1	1		1		14
Denmark	2				4				1	1		1	2		2	1					14
Finland		1								2				9				1			13
Norway	1	1				1	1	1	3			1	1	1	1	1	1				13
Lithuania	1				1		2		1	3		2			1						11
Sweden	1				1		1	1	1					3	1	1					10
Iceland					3				1	4		2									10
Switzerland													1	2	1	2					6
Malta	2						1					1		1					1		6
Czech Republic	1		1					1						2							5
Croatia						3						1						1			5
Greece									1						3						4
Austria		1			1				1												3
Luxembourg									1									1			2
Slovenia															1						1
Belarus															1						1
Total																					725
USA			3			3	1		1	1		1	1	1	1			1			13
Brazil	1		1					1	1	1				1	2			1			9
Canada	4								1						2						7
Mexico					1	1							1	1							4
Chile					1									1							2
Argentina						1															1
Colombia													1								1
Total																					37



geriatrics which is a branch of medicine. Geriatrics should make efforts to be more inclusive in Turkey. Caregivers of the population aged 65 and older are also aging in Turkey, but even then, there is no presentation about the burden of caregivers. So, caregiver burden should be investigated now more than ever.

There are limitations of our article. Firstly, the data were compiled from the congress booklet and abstract book. Therefore, information, such as number of congress participants per country, could not be learned. In addition, poster and oral presentations were classified according to the first author's country, the multicenter studies have not been evaluated in a different table.

## Conclusion

Conferences and sessions on various topics related to the current situation, and future expectations of geriatric medicine were presented in the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Geriatrics Association. More than a third of the posters were sent from the European countries. The country with the maximum number of both poster and oral presentations was the UK.

Considering the poster presentations, it was seen that "frailty and sarcopenia" was one of the most popular topics investigated in the Europe. Poster presentations on the topics of frailty and sarcopenia were sent mostly from Spain (17 posters) and Turkey (15 posters). Most of the presented studies in these topics were about the most appropriate criteria for the diagnoses. Sarcopenia and frailty have emerged as crucial problems in the population aged 65 and older, and they represent a rapidly expanding field of research. Sarcopenia frequently overlaps with frailty, and both of them are increasing the risk of negative outcomes, such as disability and mortality. Therefore, they are increasingly viewed as two sides of the same coin (4).

Patients who are at risk for cognitive decline should be identified for developing an appropriate strategy. Intervention and treatment options should be evaluated according to cognitive decline. As a consequence, studies on cognitive function indicated that age-associated chronic diseases and drugs used in treatment were investigated. Also, pharmacology is of interest in other common diseases beside cognitive disorders. Remarkable issues in the field of pharmacology were the use of platelet antiaggregants/anticoagulants, psychiatric medications and anticholinergic burden which is one of frequently overlooked problems, as well as polypharmacy and inappropriate drug use that still maintains its importance.

Orthopedics was the surgical specialty that evaluated the most frequent physical performance while the most popular topic in geriatric education was cognitive function. Overall, it can be said that all presented studies in congress aim to improve the quality of life.

Majority of poster presentations on the topic of the vaccination-immunization were about varicella-zoster vaccine (six posters) and awareness of health care providers (five posters). When examined poster presentations, we noticed that many countries have started to practice routine varicella vaccination for people 60 years of age or older, by contrast with Turkey.

About one fifth of poster presentations on the topic of the comprehensive geriatric assessment were sent from Turkey, and both polypharmacy/inappropriate drug use and depression seemed to be of equal interest. There was a similar situation in psychiatric symptoms and diseases, Turkey was among the top three countries to send poster presentation on the topic of psychiatric symptoms and diseases, and poster presentations of this topic were sent from only 12 different countries. One of these presentations was about depression and the other two of them were about sleep disorders. There was no poster presentation from Turkey on vaccination-immunization, biogerontology/genetics, delirium and ethics/end of life care.

In biogerontology and genetics, telomere, immune aging and microbiota were studied and one third of the poster papers were from France. However, the studies that were sent from Italy and UK were conspicuous. Cherubini showed that Zonulin, a protein synthesized in intestinal and liver cells, can be used to evaluate whether a polyphenol rich dietary pattern can modulate intestinal permeability. In addition, study of Scutt was about relation of adverse drug reactions and the *nuclear factor erythroid 2-like 2 (Nrf2)* gene, a regulatory antioxidant and xenobiotic defense gene, and was presented in both oral abstracts and poster abstracts. These researches have shed light on whether and how genetic predispositions influence with aging.

The least interest of the poster presentations topic was urinary incontinence, and only six poster papers were sent. Similarly, only one of the symposium issues was related to incontinence, and it was sponsored by a personal hygiene brand.

In summary, participants from different disciplines were not only aware of the latest developments in geriatric medicine, also they had the opportunity to exchange views in this area. It is thought that the synergy arising from the congress will contribute to the future applications of the geriatric medicine, while its importance is rapidly increasing all around the world. Moreover, the fact that the congress subjects are similar to the recent studies on geriatrics shows that the EuGMS congress stay up to date. In addition, attendance ratios of the congress from the United States (4%), Africa (3%), Australia and island countries (except Malta and UK) (2%) show that the European congress has an impact on the whole world. As expected, a broader vision of congress has emerged.

## Ethics

**Peer-review:** Internally and externally peer-reviewed.

## Authorship Contributions

Surgical and Medical Practices: F.Ö.K.K., S.Ş., S.F.A., Concept: F.Ö.K.K., S.Ş., S.F.A., Design: F.Ö.K.K., S.Ş., S.F.A., Data Collection or Processing: F.Ö.K.K., S.Ş., S.F.A., Analysis or Interpretation: F.Ö.K.K., S.Ş., S.F.A., Literature Search: F.Ö.K.K., Writing: F.Ö.K.K.

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