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## NEWS ITEMS

# Barcelona World Congress achieves record attendance

The XVth World Congress of Cardiology in Barcelona set a record for attendance. Held from the 2nd to the 6th of September, it drew approximately 33,000 delegates – or approximately 12,000 more than the second-largest World Congress of Cardiology in Berlin in 1994. Both the Barcelona and Berlin congresses were joint ventures with the European Society of Cardiology.

In Barcelona, a total of 3917 abstracts were accepted and presented.

## Broad appeal

Some went for the workshops, panels, exhibits and symposia, some for the abundant networking opportunities and some for the highlight theme: ‘‘Cardiovascular Disease and Ageing’’. Some went to honor outstanding contributors to cardiology, like former World Heart Federation President Antoni Bayes de Luna, creator of World Heart Day. Others, like the members, officers and staff of the World Heart Federation, went to plot next moves in the campaign against the global epidemic of cardiovascular diseases.

## Fuster urges reformed global health agenda

World Heart Federation President Valentin Fuster used the Congress to urge governments to correct their failure to include cardiovascular and other diseases on the global health agenda.

With HM Queen Sofia of Spain and European Society of Cardiology President Michael Tendera standing by, he called on the United Nations to update its Millennium Development Goals to include cardiovascular and other chronic diseases.

‘‘Cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases are not mentioned’’, he said. ‘‘This omission can and must be rectified’’.

Later, the World Heart Federation and the European Society of Cardiology called for an ‘‘urgent’’ reevaluation of ‘‘the global health agenda, including the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, to embrace cardiovascular and other chronic diseases’’.

‘‘The focus of the Millennium Development Goals for health should remain on HIV/AIDS and malaria, but should also actively embrace cardiovascular and other chronic diseases’’, Dr Fuster said.

## Scientific Initiatives draw interest

The World Heart Federation organised 12 Scientific Initiatives:

- The Global Health Agenda: The Case for Cardiovascular Disease.
- Cardiovascular Ageing: Where does it begin?
- Women and Heart Disease: From science to action.
- Practical Management of Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease.
- Challenges of Cardiology in Africa.
- Economic Argument for Prevention and Management of CVD in Countries with Developing Economies.
- Global Impact of Cardiovascular Diseases.
- Heart Health Strategies in Countries with Developing Economies.
- Health Systems Challenges: Consequences of Ageing Population.
- New Initiatives in Secondary Prevention.
- Community Initiatives in the Reduction of the Burden of Cardiovascular Disease.
- Chagas Disease Symposium.

‘‘All were very well attended, very well received’’, said Scientific Advisory Board Chairman Sidney Smith.

## Fuster touts demonstration projects

Dr. Fuster focused attention on the World Heart Federation’s demonstration projects, describing them as ‘‘key’’ to containing the epidemic of cardiovascular diseases.

They were:

- The partnership with the popular television series *Plaza Sésamo*, through which Colombian and other Spanish-speaking children in the Americas are learning about heart-healthy habits.
- The Rheumatic Fever/Rheumatic Heart Disease project in the Pacific Islands, focused on secondary prevention, particularly for children.
- The Grenada Heart Project, through which the heart health of island communities and health systems is being mapped and appropriate community and health systems interventions designed and implemented.
- The “polypill” – a three-in-one pill that would be developed for post myocardial infarction patients at one fifth of the cost of current therapies.
- The China Bridging the Gap programme, through which the World Heart Federation and its Chinese partners are seeking to bridge the gap between cardiologic guidelines and actual treatment and care.

Dr. Fuster emphasized the importance of the World Heart Federation’s hands-on leadership.

“We cannot afford to wait for the world’s health policymakers to face the truth,” he said.

The next Congress will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in May 2008.

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## World Heart day 2006 asks: “How young is your heart?”

World Heart Day fell on Sunday, 24 September, and was observed with more than the usual high interest and enthusiasm. There were more than 4.7 million hits to the World Heart Day web site ([www.world-heartday.com](http://www.world-heartday.com)). Although the final tally has not been compiled, media coverage was extensive.

The day’s theme – “How Young is Your Heart?” – emphasized the importance of taking active measures to keep one’s heart fit into old age.

### Czechs, Estonians and Dutch enjoy World Heart Day events

In the Czech Republic, the day got off to a running start with the traditional “Bechovice Run” to

encourage jogging as a way to keep one’s heart young and healthy. More than 1000 Czechs participated. Five thousand red balloons were released into the air to symbolize the number of Czechs who die of cardiovascular diseases each month. The Czech Society of Cardiology’s mobile unit offered free cholesterol measurements and information about heart-healthy lifestyles. In the month before World Heart Day, the mobile unit visited 14 Czech towns and cities in every region of the Central European country.

In the Estonian capital of Tallinn, the Estonian Heart Association organized speeches, lectures, games, a presentation by the children’s book illustrator Asta Vender and live choir music. It also offered free cardiovascular risk assessments, T-shirts and World Heart Day diplomas. Researchers from the Estonian Institute of Cardiology and the University of Tartu lectured on such topics as the effects of lifestyle as a determinant of cardiovascular health. The activities were designed to inaugurate a year-long campaign of cardiovascular health awareness building in the Baltic country.



In the Netherlands’ Veluwe National Park, the Netherlands Heart Foundation organized a walking tour. The 2000 participants received free apples and cardiovascular risk assessments and were treated to a percussion concert.

A few days before World Heart Day, the Swiss Heart Foundation posted volunteers at major railway stations to hand out flyers, fruit and tapes for measuring waist circumference. The goal was to stress the importance of maintaining a normal body weight to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

### Honduras, Barbados and Kenya emphasize heart health

In the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, the Cardiology Society of Honduras posted volunteers in supermarkets to provide free cardiovascular risk assessments to 850 people.