

Editorial

Will the Earth move during the 2020 Nordic Congress of Ophthalmology?

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The Nordic Congresses of Ophthalmology will be held in Reykjavik on 4–6 June 2020. Many of you remember two large earthquakes during the congress in 2000 in Reykjavik and the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull the months before the congress in 2010. The eruption in Eyjafjallajökull closed much of Europe's airspace during April 2010, and although the 2010 congress organizers had promised to do better than the earthquakes in 2000, the eruption in Eyjafjallajökull had subsided by the time of the congress. Once again, mother nature is participating in the congress planning. Rising of the earth's crust and repeated earthquakes have been detected since January just west of the Blue Lagoon and the fishing village of Grindavik.

The ground rising is unusually rapid and has reached 5 cm by early February, accompanied by 1300 earthquakes. This is most likely due to magma accumulation at a depth of just a few kilometres. The ground rising is occurring on plate boundaries and within an active volcanic system.

The last known eruptions in this area were during 1210–1240 AD. Several eruptions occurred on 1–10 km long fissures resulting in large fields of lava. These lava fields are clearly visible during the approach to Keflavik airport and during the short drive to Reykjavik. No explosive eruptions like the one in Eyjafjallajökull are known in this system. For those interested, www.icelandicvolcanoes.is is a catalogue of Icelandic volcanoes, a kind of smörgásbord of volcanoes.

According to scientists, it is most likely that the activity will cease

without further activity. The organizing committee can therefore not promise an eruption during the congress. We can only wait and see what mother nature brings us.

We can however promise an exciting congress programme with speakers from the Nordic countries and others, including the UK and the United States. There will be cutting edge keynote lectures and more than 30 symposia and courses.

Professor Anders Kvanta from Stockholm will lead us from biological treatment to gene and cell therapy in retinal disease. Professor Dr. Richard Collin from London, who has been an undisputed world leader in the field of oculoplastic for decades, will present interesting topics from his vast

experience. Professor Eugene de Juan from San Francisco will talk about innovation in ophthalmology and give insights from his extensive experience with innovation and invention. Professor Leon Herndon from Duke University will talk about advanced glaucoma – are we making a difference, Professor Mark Humayun from Los Angeles will speak during the opening ceremony on the development of the retinal prosthesis. Professor Emeritus Gerald J. Chader also from Los Angeles will summarize the talks on retinal dystrophies, during the closing ceremony.

All subspecialties in ophthalmology will be presented during the more than 30 symposia, including an ambitious programme from the Young



Ophthalmologists. The preliminary programme can be seen on www.nok2020.com.

Retina International World Congress (www.riwc2020.is) will be held at the same time and venue featuring prominent retinal scientists and clinicians along with leaders in patient advocacy and peer support. Participants of NOK2020 will have full access to the RIWC2020 congress.

A lot has changed in Reykjavik and Iceland since the last NOK meeting in 2010. In 2014, mother nature gave us Holuhraun, in the north-eastern part of the highlands, a lava field similar in area as the city of Copenhagen, or more than 85 km² and 1.4 km³, the largest in Iceland since 1783. The eruption in Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 drew quite a lot of international attention to Iceland, and many claim that was part of the reason for the rapid increase in tourism. Tourism is now

Iceland's largest export sector, having grown by some 390% since 2010. This has created a vibrant city centre in Reykjavik with numerous restaurants, museums, galleries and concerts.

The NOK2020 congress will be held in Reykjavik's new congress and concert hall, Harpa. Harpa means harp in Icelandic. It is also the Icelandic name for the first month of spring. Harpa is the home of the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra and the Icelandic Opera. The first international meeting held in the building was an ophthalmology congress, the 2010 meeting of the Club Jules Gonin.

Harpa was designed by the Danish architect firm Henning Larsen, and the design of the facades is based on a geometrical principle developed in Olafur Eliasson's studio, inspired by Iceland's characteristic basalt rocks. We ophthalmologists may very well see a resemblance with the corneal endothe-

lium, with the occasional cornea guttata, in the beautiful hexagonal pattern in the ceiling! Harpa has received numerous rewards for its architecture, including the Mies van der Rohe award in 2013, and has, for example, been chosen as Europe's best congress hall in 2016 by the magazine Business destination.

We look forward to seeing you in Reykjavik on 4–6 June 2020. We hope many of you will use the opportunity to bring your families and enjoy the Icelandic early summer time. Early June is one of the best times to visit Iceland, with bright nights and nature blooming. And who knows what else mother nature will bring us?

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