

An Inside Look at ASNR's 2023 Annual Meeting

This year's Annual Meeting of the American Society for Neurorehabilitation (ASNR) brought together 275 attendees from across the country and around the world! We were excited to reconnect with old friends and welcome 107 first-time attendees to the meeting.

Pre-Conference Satellite Events

The National Center of Neuromodulation for Rehabilitation (NM4R) at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) hosted an excellent series of pre-conference presentations focused on advances and translation of neuromodulation for neurorehabilitation, as well as a social gathering afterwards. "It's been a great meeting from the start with a satellite meeting for the NM4R, the reception that they had over at MUSC, and today, it's been just a great program. Just really interesting speakers, lots of time for questions, and just a generally good buzz for the meeting. Everyone's very excited about what they've heard and with what's coming up," commented Dr. George Wittenberg on the first day of the meeting.

The Conference Program and Attendees

When asked what she was looking forward to most at ASNR 2023, Dr. Sangeetha Madhavan remarked, "I am excited about the work that is being presented, of course, but I think I'm more excited about seeing people, networking, and catching up."

The conference began with an inspiring presentation from Dr. Sharon Milgram on resilience and well-being for scientists as an introduction to the Professional Development Roundtables. After her presentation, Dr. Milgram echoed Dr. Madhavan's enthusiasm for reconnecting with colleagues. "I also really value the opportunity to talk about changing the culture of science and academia to be more inclusive of well-being and resilience, and taking care of ourselves and working to build a community that values everybody and welcomes everybody and gives us a chance to have a good life too," she added.



The roundtable discussions focused on the topics of setting boundaries and establishing work life responsibilities; navigating tricky situations in academia; diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in rehabilitation; and tenure and beyond. "This initial roundtable session that we've completed has been really awesome to be a part of," said Dr. Sam Nemanich. "I'm happy to be in person again at the meeting."

Many attendees, including Dr. Carolee Winstein, commented on the feeling of excitement from seeing colleagues again, and several attendees shared that this was the first conference they had attended in person since before the COVID-19 pandemic. "This is one of my most favorite meetings," Dr. Winstein remarked. "I get to see colleagues that I have interacted with for a long

time. And there's nothing that can replace the in-person environment. And you realize how much we sort of missed this being on Zoom.”

FIRST-TIME ATTENDEE PERSPECTIVES



“I love the warm atmosphere and the fact that everybody's so kind and willing to connect. I think the best part for me was meeting people that have read their papers, one on one, especially in the poster session yesterday. I also presented a poster and a lot of people came by and actually gave me good feedback about my methodology.”

- Olufisayo Aloba



“It's very welcoming, everyone's really friendly, but also they're asking really interesting questions, which is getting me to think more about my own research, but also making me excited for what some future research questions might be as well.”

- Emily Dalton

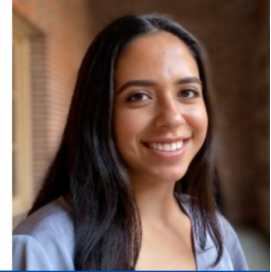
“It's been a really fulfilling experience, because the culture is very welcoming. Everyone is so friendly and engaged in all our conversations, and [they] really care what everyone has to bring to the table. And it's my first conference. So, I was nervous and intimidated. But it's been very nice to know that even though I'm early in my career, and I don't have as much experience as everyone in the room, that people are still willing to listen to my experience.”

- Alexandra Slusarenko



“I was really shocked by how welcoming everyone was. I'm very early in my career. So everyone was really encouraging. And even during my poster session, everyone had really kind things to say.”

- Maryana Bonilla



As a smaller, single-track conference, attendees are able to engage in all of the sessions, and there are a lot of opportunities to meet and connect with other attendees. “It's just a great conference. I do love that it's a bit smaller. I love that you can interact with the really big, influential names in the field,” remarked Dr. Jason Neva, one of the symposia presenters. “There's always interesting themes and topics...,and I've always had great feedback here,” he continued.



The conference program included symposia on remote assessment and intervention, gaze tracking, the effects of exercise on brain function and plasticity, the role of sleep in neurorehabilitation, mobility adaptations, and precision neurorehabilitation. In addition, over 140 research posters were presented across two poster sessions attended by conference participants and guests with neurological impairments from the Charleston community.



Many of the meeting attendees also took advantage of the educational sessions on days two and three, focused on selecting an optimal control group and managing research studies, respectively. We were pleased to formally recognize those selected for our Diversity Fellowship Awards, Presidential Abstract Award, Fletcher Abstract Award, Outstanding Neurorehabilitation Clinician-Scientist Award, Kenneth Viste Jr., MD, Memorial Lectureship Award, and the two new Fellows of the American Society of Neurorehabilitation in award ceremonies throughout the meeting.

ASNR 2023 AWARD RECIPIENTS

<p style="text-align: center;">Diversity Travel Fellowships</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>Ermytrude Adjel, PhD Student</small> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>Davetrina Seles Gadson, PhD</small> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>Michelle Corkrum, MD, PHD</small> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>Jasmine Hope, PhD</small> </div> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">Kenneth Viste, Jr., MD Memorial Lectureship Award</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>Jyutika Mehta, PhD, CCC-SLP</small> </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Presidential Abstract Award</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>Maria Bandres, PhD Candidate</small> </div> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Fletcher Abstract Award</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>Sam Nemanich, PhD, MSCI</small> </div> </div> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">ASNR Fellows</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>Heidi Schambra, MD</small> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>Tom Carmichael, MD, PhD</small> </div> </div>
<p style="text-align: center;">Outstanding Neurorehabilitation Clinician Scientist Award</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>Steve Cramer, MD, MMSc</small> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <small>AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEUROREHABILITATION</small> </div>

Social Events and Networking

In addition, the Program Committee planned a vibrant welcome reception held on day one of the conference, an outstanding scenic boat tour and dinner reception on the second day, and informative tours of the historic Old Slave Mart Museum on the final day of the conference. Beyond the regular program sessions, these social events provided even more opportunities for the group to connect and network. It was wonderful to see attendees striking up casual conversations over coffee during the breaks and engaging in in-depth discussions during the social events. “The reason I love the ASNR annual meeting so much is because it's the one meeting that I go to where I feel like the whole room can have a conversation. We really grapple with the hardest issues that we have in neurorehabilitation. And there are many, because we haven't had the sorts of success in translating treatments into the clinic. So it's great to be together with collaborators and pushing towards that mission,” said Dr. Jason Carmel, the Program Chair for ASNR 2023.



These conversations can spark new collaborations, novel research questions, and important innovations in the field of neurorehabilitation. “I always leave ASNR with so many new ideas, so many new ways to think about a problem, which I think is the most exciting part — that we all are working towards [solving] a single problem,” explained Dr. Shailesh Kantak.

ASNR’s collegial spirit is a point of pride, and our organization is dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our Annual Meetings are a great environment for stimulating discussions among leaders in the field, as well as introducing trainees and early-career scientists and clinicians to exciting neurorehabilitation research. “We brought a lot of trainees with us this year..., and they’ve really had, I think, a fantastic experience. Certainly the poster sessions have been unbelievable, they have been packed. There’s been great energy and excitement and a lot of really good conversations that I think the trainees have enjoyed a lot. And then I think this addition of these professional development morning sessions was very well-received by folks that have come with us this week,” said Dr. Brett Fling. “Another good thing I’d like to mention is how inclusive it is,” emphasized Arianna Alston, a trainee and first-time ASNR meeting attendee. In describing her experience at the conference, she noted that there was also diversity in age and career stage represented in the presenters. “Seeing that diversity among the ages is pretty nice. And pretty encouraging as a young person who also doesn’t quite know where they’re going, but to see other people who know what they’re doing or are finding their way. It’s really nice.”

Looking Forward to 2024

As we reflect on our experiences and the feedback we received from our 2023 Annual Meeting, we want to thank the Program Committee for their work in organizing this excellent meeting, the presenters who shared their insights and expertise, and every attendee for joining us in Charleston. Together, everyone made this a truly unforgettable event, and we look forward to seeing you next year. We are excited to announce that our next Annual Meeting will be held from April 10-13, 2024 in San Antonio, Texas. Mark your calendar now, and stay connected for updates as the meeting approaches!

