

Spanish Region (REsp)

XVth Spanish Biometric Conference and Vth Ibero-American Biometric Meeting

The XVth Spanish Biometric Conference and the Vth Ibero-American Biometric Meeting was held in wonderful Bilbao between the 22nd and 25th of September 2015. The University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) hosted this event with a total of 169 attendees. In this occasion, the meeting had the particularity of matching up with the 30th Anniversary of the Spanish Biometric Society, and an exposition of photos and materials of previous meetings commemorated this jubilee.



The material provided for the conference which included an interesting app containing the Scientific and Social Programmes and some useful information about the city.

The Local Organizing Committee was led by the President, Inmaculada Arostegui, who, together with the Secretary, Arantza Urkaregi, and their team are to be congratulated on the success of the conference. Also, the Scientific Committee, led by Vicente Nuñez Antón, deserves a special mention, given the high scientific quality of the conference.

In particular, the **Scientific Programme** included an introductory course (by Carmen Armero from Universitat de València); three plenary sessions (David Conesa from Universitat de València, Hélène Jacqmin-Gadda from Université Bordeaux Ségalen and Alvaro Muñoz from Johns Hopkins University); and three invited sessions. The first one was the **Young Statistician Showcase** where



Welcome Reception at the beautiful City Hall.



Opening Session, from left to right: Vicente Nuñez Anton (President of the Scientific Committee), David Conesa (president of the Spanish Biometric Society), Fernando Plazaola (Vice-chancellor of the University of the Basque Country), Julio Alejandro Di Rienzo (from the Argentinean Region, representing the Ibero-American IBS Regions) and Inmaculada Arostegui (President of the Organizing Committee).



Young Statistician Showcase (YSS), from left to right: David Conesa (YSS Selection Committee), Manuel Higuera (Spanish Region), Gustavo Giménez (Argentinian Region), Diego A. Ayma (Chilean Region), Luis H. Vanegas (Central American and Caribbean Region), Julio Alejandro Di Rienzo (YSS Selection Committee), Jhonny Demey (YSS Selection Committee) and Vicente Nuñez Anton (YSS Selection Committee).

young researchers, previously selected by the Scientific Committee among more than 20 candidates, presented their work. It is worth noting that these four young statisticians received a grant from the International Biometric Society to attend this meeting. There was also an **EMR-Italian-Portuguese-Spanish Session** (in line with the usual session between these Regions) and a **Latin-American Session** with five and four speakers respectively. The rest of the speakers (up to 78) participated at the 18 parallel thematic sessions (Multivariate Analysis, Statistical Methods in Medical Research, Mixed Effects Models, Clinical Trials, Bayesian Statistics, Spatio-Temporal Models, etc.). Finally, a total of 61 posters were presented and discussed in two very interesting sessions.

A nice social program was also planned. From the welcome reception on the evening of the 22nd of September at the beautiful City Hall to the **Gala Dinner** on Thursday the 24th in the old and nice Hesperia Zubialde Hotel (just by the new and brilliant San Mames Stadium). A very interesting guided visit to the city was also

performed on Wednesday the 23rd. In this visit (done by bus) we learned about the importance of the architecture in the city and the integration between the old and the new buildings. The visit also helped us to understand how much the city has improved in the last few years becoming one of the most beautiful cities in Spain.

Anabel Forte

Ugandan Region (GUgan)

2ND IBS – Ugandan Region International Biometric Society Conference in East Africa 12 – 13 November 2015

The 2nd IBS Conference took place at Mildmay, Uganda with the theme; “Applying standard and advanced statistical methods to public health data”. The first conference whose theme was “Modelling infectious diseases in Africa” was held in September 2013 in Kampala, Uganda.

During this 2015 IBS – Ugandan Region Conference, day one was divided into three main sessions – session one was mainly keynote addresses from different speakers; session two focussed on analysis of routinely collected health data; and session three focussed on Statistical Methodologies for datasets collected in medical research and public health settings. The second day had two parallel sessions – one being a short course in longitudinal data analysis given by Dr. Ann Mwangi from Moi University, Kenya, and the other was about Biostatistics collaborative initiatives in Africa. The discussions covered four main topics, which overlapped considerably: i) teaching and training, ii) research and analysis, iii) communication, and iv) software. This session was Co-chaired by Prof. Krista Fischer and Prof. Jim Todd.

The conference provided an opportunity for interesting presentations on biostatistical analysis applied to health data. It also gave the delegates the opportunity to network and share experiences and ideas for future collaboration. This is important when there are limited conferences on Biostatistics in sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, and very importantly, it gave delegates the chance to see a working hospital in Uganda – Mildmay – which collects large amounts of routine data and is seeking collaborative arrangements to help analyse their data and get the maximum value from their hard work.

A total of 90 participants applied to attend, and the majority applied through the conference website. Out of the 34 from outside Uganda that applied/expressed interest, we had 20 attending the two-day conference. Most of those who didn't attend could not mobilise funds for their flight. With the support of \$5000 received from IBS, the IBS – Uganda Region provided accommodations, meals and waived registration fees for participants from other countries. For Ugandan participants, we provided the meals and waived conference registration fees. The longitudinal data analysis course was free of charge for all. We thank the Makerere University School of Public Health, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology for the support of \$400 and Mildmay Uganda for their support of waiving the cost of a conference hall.

There were 16 abstracts submitted online, but some did not attend. In the end we had 16 presentations from both keynote speakers and other participants. To summarise sessions, the major highlights were: the presentations on routine data showed that there was need to characterise routine data well. There was a huge effect of missingness from attrition. It was suggested that researchers needed

to engage with service providers to understand the data they are provided. It was also recommended the need to check the model for malaria prediction because the result of uniform prevalence of malaria over the years may not be right. There were a number of PhD students who presented their work which was commendable. The presentations were basically divided into two types of analysis (survey and genetic). The presentations challenged statisticians to use complex methods like the Generalized Additive Models and GWAS. Presentations about genetic analysis by Linda and Prof. Krista was much appreciated, since this was still a field with very little analysis being done and hence very few statisticians in the field.

Country	Expressed interest	Attended
Botswana	1	0
Belgium	2	1
Estonia	1	1
Ghana	1	1
Kenya	9	6
Malawi	2	0
Zambia	1	1
Nigeria	1	1
Rwanda	1	0
Senegal	1	0
South Africa	7	5
Sudan	1	0
Tanzania	7	3
USA	1	0
Uganda	62	43
Total	95	62

On behalf of the conference organisers, we thank the participants who came from many countries (including Uganda), committee members, all the speakers for honouring the invitation to be a part of the conference. Many thanks go to the leadership of the IBS Executive Board for supporting the conference by sponsoring five participants to attend and sending a representative – Prof. Krista Fischer all the way from University of Tartu in Estonia. Special thanks go to specifically IBS President, Prof. John Hinde and Ms. Dee Ann Walker for believing in the Region President, Mr. Dan Kajungu and encouraging him to organize another international conference in the



Participants at the East Africa Conference pose outside the lecture hall in Kampala, Uganda. Dan Kajungu (front row, far right) developed a proposal to host the conference in Uganda and received partial funding from the IBS Executive Board and the Education Committee. The conference was a great success and good example of an innovative initiative by one of the IBS Regions.